HOUSE OF COMMONS DEBATES

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COMPRISING THE PERIOD FROM THE NINTH DAY OF NOVEMBER, 1989
TO THE NINETEENTH DAY OF DECEMBER, 1989

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, November 9, 1989

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the three parties and we have agreed to have a statement at this point regarding Remembrance Day, rather than at the usual time. Any time taken to provide for the statement this morning will be added on to the time at three o'clock.

Mr. Speaker: The House has heard the motion. Is there agreement?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

* * *

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Hon. Gerald S. Merrithew (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour and pleasure today as Minister of Veterans Affairs, to remind all hon. members that Saturday is Remembrance Day, and this year, 1989, is a very special day in that it marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the beginning of the First World War and the fiftieth anniversary of the Second World War.

[*Translation*]

This year two special anniversaries emphasize just how much is owed to those who did their duty for their country in war.

First, 1989 marked the 75th anniversary of the start of the Great War, the one that was called "the war to end all wars".

[*English*]

One in every 10 Canadians fought in the First World War. Historians have said that Canada came of age in the mud and the blood of the trenches of Europe. Certainly, the Commander of the Canadian Corps, Lord Byng, took that view. Recalling the Canadian capture of Vimy Ridge he said, and I quote:

> There they stood on Vimy Ridge that 9th day of April 1917, men from Quebec stood shoulder to shoulder with men from Ontario, men from the maritimes with men from British Columbia, and the prairies, and there was forged a nation tempered by the fires of sacrifice and hammered on the anvil of high adventure.

These are noble sentiments, and I think of them when I listen to cynics who sometimes question the patriotic commitment of Canadians.

[*Translation*]

This Saturday at the National War Memorial and at hundreds of cenotaphs and monuments throughout Canada, we will be remembering those who cared a lot about their country and were prepared to risk their lives to keep it free.

• (1010)

[*English*]

We will also be remembering those who made the same commitment when the Second World War began 50 years ago this year. Over one million of our men and women carried freedom in their hearts, and are still hailed as "the Canadian liberators" on our pilgrimages overseas.

We will also be honouring the Canadian volunteers who served under the United Nations flag in Korea and helped to preserve independence for strangers in a then largely unknown and foreign land thousands of miles away.

Well over 100,000 Canadians died in those three wars and many, many more returned home sick in body and mind. Even today Veterans Affairs is assisting 144,000 men and women for disabilities incurred in wartime service.

Many years ago these words were inscribed in the Memorial Chamber in the House of Commons, and I quote:

They are too near to be great but our children shall understand when and how our fate was changed and by whose hand.

[*Translation*]

It is good to know that the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of those veterans do indeed appreciate those who changed the fate of a nation. A recent opinion poll found Canadians have an impressive knowledge of what our country accomplished in war and 89 per cent of those polled think it is important to remember what our wartime role was.

[*English*]

They are not alone in that view. An English lady recently sent a letter to our High Commissioner in Great Britain. I want to quote from that letter. She said:

I was 15 years old when the 1939 war broke out and so I am quite well able to remember the immediate and totally generous support which Canada gave to this country 50 years ago.

Writing as one among so many, I can only send those volunteers in all the services from Canada my heartfelt thanks.

On Saturday, let us all add our heartfelt thanks to those who gained so much respect at home and abroad.

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, as the official opposition critic for veterans affairs, it is my distinct honour today to rise on behalf of my colleagues to pay tribute to the more than 100,000 of our men and women who sacrificed their lives in three wars to make this country free, and to those veterans who survived, as the hon. minister said, and who are still struggling against the pain and the loneliness brought on by this conflict.

In preparing for this tribute today on the seventy-fifth anniversary, and in an effort to convey a feeling for the depth of personal sacrifice and the raw courage involved, I wish to read a short, but very poignant letter that I recently obtained from a family in Newfoundland, and I read it with their permission. It is a letter written to his mother from a young army lieutenant serving in France on the eve of a great battle on August 7, 1918. If the emotion felt is the same that one receives from reading this kind of letter, I think it will do great justice in helping us remember this occasion today.

Dearest Mother,

This is the evening before the attack and my thoughts are with you all at home, but my backward glance is wistful only because of memories and because of the sorrow which would further darken your lives should anything befall me in tomorrow's fray. Otherwise my eye is fixed on tomorrow with hope for mankind and with visions of a new world. A blow will be struck tomorrow which will definitely mark the turn of the tide. It will be one of a grand series of victories which will humble the selfish and barbarous enemy and will exalt the hearts of those who are suffering for freedom. I have no misgivings for myself in tomorrow's encounter. It does not matter whether I survive or fall. A great triumph is certain, and I shall take part in it. I shall strike a blow for freedom, along with thousands of others who count personal safety as nothing when freedom is at stake. In a few moments I shall make the final address to my men, and shall strengthen their hearts, if they need strengthening, with the language of men at war. We shall strive only to achieve victory. We shall not hold our own lives dear. The hour is all the more dramatic for me because for the first time since I came to France, I am close to the spot consecrated by the blood of our gallant dead. It was here that noble Raymond fell and Joe and Kenneth shed their blood in freedom's cause.

These were his three brothers.

I trust to be as faithful as they.

I do not think for a moment that I shall not return from the field of honour, but in case I should not, give my last blessing to father, and my latest thanks for all he did for me. Give my blessing to my brother Roland and his family and to the others who may survive me.

I have no regrets and no fear of tomorrow. I should not choose to change places with anyone in the world just now, except perhaps General Foch.

How glad I am that at last the hour has come for me to taste vengeance! I shall be my mother's and father's son tomorrow. Again God bless you all.

Your son, Hedley.

Lieutenant Hedley Goodyear, in his early twenties, was killed the following day.

As we witness from the extraordinary surges underway today freedom and peace cannot be addressed just by legislative bodies or by armies. As we have seen in this letter, these are personal matters, to which Remembrance Day is a testimonial and to the attainment of which it is a challenge.

On Saturday, November 11, we will mark our respect by wearing poppies, by attendance at church and memorial services, and parades, and by the laying of wreaths at cenotaphs. Let us remember that because these courageous Canadians conscientiously discharged their duties

we have peace today. We survive because they were more concerned with their duties than they were concerned with their rights. Let the poppies be worn, let the parades march on, let the cenotaphs be visited, but let there be freedom and let there be peace.

The strength and unity of our country rests on its past. Let us remember this also in the days ahead.

We should remember, we must remember, we will remember.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina—Lumsden): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me as a veteran and as critic for veterans affairs for my party to take part in this tribute to our veterans who served in three wars.

I want to start by quoting Greg Hogan who is Secretary of the Royal Canadian Legion, Dominion Command, when he was asked: "What are the veterans trying to teach today's students?" He said that the Legion made that clear when it pointedly ignored the fiftieth anniversary of the start of the Second World War last September. He went on to say: "Veterans don't mark the beginnings of wars. They celebrate their end".

Colonel McCrea's poem says, in part:

> If ye break faith with us who die
>
> We shall not sleep, though
>
> poppies grow
>
> In Flanders fields.

We must continue to enlarge our efforts not to break faith. Ever improving benefits for veterans and their families is an important part of keeping that faith. Even more important in keeping faith is what we do to promote and work for disarmament and peace. Peace is more than just the absence of war. Maintaining peace wherever it is achieved is a never-ending struggle.

• (1020)

Developments in Europe and between the superpowers over the past few years have opened the doors wider than ever to huge reductions in arms, both nuclear and conventional. It is past time for Canada to take a more leading role in those efforts.

Canada can keep the faith with those who died by offering to be among the first to take part in the reduction of conventional forces in Europe. We must resist more than ever those who would have us keep up the outdated thinking of its "us" or "them", that forces must be kept as large as they are as some kind of a deterrence.

Mr. Speaker, to quote Matthew, chapter 5, verse 9, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said:

> Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

I submit to you, Sir, and to this House, equally blessed are the peacekeepers: for they carry on the keeping of the faith with those who served and died in those three wars.

I want to include in this tribute those many hundreds of Canadians who have served our country and the world so well with the United Nations Peacekeeping Forces.

Beginning some 25 or 30 years ago, Canada was among the first to play that peacekeeping role. We have served in the Middle East, we are still in Cyprus keeping the peace. We have just sent several hundred peacekeeping troops to Namibia, including 100 men and women from the RCMP, to assist a new nation that is having its first election and gaining its independence and freedom.

That to me, and I think to all hon. members, is the best way to keep the faith with those who died, by working harder and harder to keep the peace.

Mr. Speaker: I would ask hon. members to stand for one minute's silence.

[*Editor's note: Whereupon the House stood in silence for one minute.*]

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S. O. 81—VIA RAIL

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte) moved:

That this House approve the recommendation contained in the Second Report of the Standing Committee on Transport, calling for a moratorium in the Government's proposed cuts to VIA Rail.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not take a moment to congratulate my three colleagues in the House, the Minister of Veterans Affairs, the member for Bonavista—Trinity—Conception, and my colleague from Regina for their most eloquent words. In fact, they are the most eloquent words I have heard in many a year in this House from three members on the occasion of Remembrance Day.

I am pleased to speak to the motion which stands in my name on behalf of the Liberal Party, but I suspect it stands in the name of many members of Parliament from all three political parties. It is quite traditional on an opposition day when a motion is put before the House that the motion would read along the lines that the opposition condemns, or the House condemns the government, et cetera. I want members to note the way in which this particular opposition motion is written. It states:

That this House approve the recommendation contained in the second report of the Standing Committee on Transport, calling for a moratorium on the government's proposed cuts to VIA Rail.

It is a motion that is cast in the affirmative. It is a motion that does not ask for approval of the work of a particular political party. It is a motion that does not seek partisan advantage for any political party or ideology, but rather it is a motion that seeks the approval of the whole House for the work of a standing committee of this House, a committee comprised of members from all three parties, Liberals, New Democrats and Conservatives.

It is a motion that calls for the approval of the consideration and the judgment of the group of members from all three parties in this place who are charged with the responsibility to reflect upon, study and to pass comment on the transportation policy of the government. It is a non-partisan motion. It seeks no advantage for any party; it seeks to strike no blow at any party.

In the spirit of parliamentary reform, it calls upon Parliament to take note of the observations of a group of members, men and women, charged on behalf of Canadians to examine the estimates and to examine the policy of the Department of Transport.

Why am I taking the time to point that out? Why am I making such a fuss about that? I will tell you why, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a rare day in this place when a standing committee is prepared to say of a government initiative, and it takes great courage on the part of all of its members, including Conservative members, that we have given consideration to that government initiative, in this case the cuts to VIA Rail and the elimination of 50 per cent of the routes and 2,700 jobs. We have given that government initiative our consideration. We do not come out with a report that says it is an evil design, it is a brutal measure, it is an arrogant decision. We could have, but we did not.

We comment substantially as a committee, as a non-partisan group, on the cuts. We make some very compelling arguments to the government, as members from all three parties, that the decision that has been taken has been taken in haste, the implications of those cuts are not well understood, and the future of VIA Rail is, at best, and that is putting it very kindly, highly questionable, if these cuts proceed as they are ordered to do in just two months time on January 15.

• (1030)

Let us review for a moment what the government has put before the people of Canada. The Prime Minister has said that they have developed a plan which he believes will save VIA Rail. Intrinsic to that plan is to eliminate 2,700 jobs at VIA Rail; to eliminate every service other than the major corridor service in Atlantic Canada; to reduce the frequency of VIA Rail services on the major corridor routes between Windsor and Quebec city dramatically; to eliminate The Canadian train, historic not only in this country but renowned around the world; and to do all of that at a time when there is no new money to purchase new equipment or to revitalize VIA Rail.

The worst critics of this decision have said that it is a plan designed to fail. This is a built-in obsolescence policy. As you cut the feeder routes, eliminate the frequencies in the major corridor cities and eliminate routes like The Canadian, a great tourism draw for Canada around the world, surely that is a plan which in 18 months will result in yet a further decline of VIA ridership. Finally, the government will come to the House 12 to 18 months from now and say that the new statistics show ridership has gone down yet again, so let us now sever entirely the lifeblood of VIA Rail.

This committee, made up of members from all three parties, heard from spokespeople from right across Canada about the future of VIA Rail. The people who came before us represented every single possible political stripe. We heard from the mayors of all the major corridor cities, representing every political stripe. We heard from all of the railway unions. We heard from the major tourism associations of Canada. We heard from business organizations in Canada. We heard from provincial governments representing a variety of political stripes. The testimony we heard was almost unanimous in saying that VIA Rail, that ribbon of steel that built this country, is fundamental to maintaining this country.

As I stand to address this motion concerning the future of VIA Rail and to beg the government in an non-partisan way to listen to what members of Parliament have said, it is ironic that across the street today 10 Premiers and a Prime Minister are sitting down to discuss the economy of this country and to discuss as well the constitutional future of this country.

As they discuss legal terms defining the potential constitutional renewal of Canada, and as they look at macro and micro economic models for Canada's economic development, it is ironic that if we go across this country today and ask Canadians to give an example of something that contributes to nation building and holding this nation together, the vast majority of them will not revert to macro or micro economic models, nor will they present us with an alternate plan for constitutional renewal, but they will say that a rail service linking this country, as vast and as sparsely populated as it is, is fundamental to national unity.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, who is being hurt when the Government of Canada decides to eliminate VIA Rail? It is ironic indeed that we paid tribute today to the 100,000 veterans of Canada. A majority of those veterans are senior citizens. Together, with millions of other senior citizens, they depend on VIA Rail.

Today on the Hill there is to be a rally by the Canadian Federation of Students. It will be a large demonstration, demanding that the Government of Canada at least pay attention to their concerns. Millions of students in Canada depend upon VIA Rail. The poor and the disabled depend upon VIA Rail. For all these citizens VIA Rail is not a luxury item. It does not represent a pleasant disposal of a few hours on the train; it is a fundamental, basic and affordable means of transport.

The Minister of Transport says; "But that's okay. If they can't take VIA Rail, they can fly." Well, it may be true that the Minister of Transport can fly. It may be true that I can fly and most of my colleagues can fly. It may be true that the business community can fly because it is charging it back to the office account, but senior citizens do not have office accounts and our young people do not have office accounts to use as a tax write-off. The poor and the disabled do not have office accounts. What they have had and what they depend upon is VIA Rail.

What does this report say to the government? Does it say: "Let's maintain VIA Rail in its current form forever"? Does it say: "Let's run the deficits the Prime Minister says he is concerned about forever?" No, it does not. It says clearly that VIA Rail as currently constituted with the equipment it has is not acceptable and it says clearly that the solution is not destroying a rail passenger service in Canada. It is rebuilding a rail passenger service in Canada, building a modern, efficient, high speed, environmentally friendly mass means of transport rail passenger service.

It points out that every other nation in the western and industrialized world is entering the year 2000 with a modern, high speed, efficient, environmentally clean rail passenger service, save one. Every other nation in the world as an investment in their future says that they cannot go on congesting airports, congesting highways and polluting our environment. Every other nation in the world, it seems, understands the Haida saying: "We don't inherit the land from our ancestors. We borrow it from our children." Every other nation in the world wants to give back the land to their children in good shape, environmentally clean, with affordable means of transportation.

Canada alone among the nations of the world says: "No, we are going to go backward. We cannot do it. We do not have the resolve. We do not have the finances. We do not have the technology, nor do we have the vision". The standing committee rejects that concept by the Government of Canada. We believe we do have the vision. We do have the know-how. We do have the resolve, and Canadians are prepared to make a proper

investment in their future by building a modern, efficient rail passenger service.

What do we recommend in this report? We recommend that the government impose a moratorium on those cuts that are to be implemented on January 15. We say it ought not to go ahead. We say, as well, that the royal commission on transportation announced by the Prime Minister on the same day that the government announced the VIA Rail cuts ought to be given a mandate to examine the future of VIA Rail. The royal commission should tell this Parliament and through Parliament all Canadians what role, if any, VIA Rail or rail passenger service has in the future of this country.

What could be more reasonable than that? We did not establish the royal commission on transportation; the Prime Minister did. He did it on the same day that he announced the VIA Rail cuts. The Prime Minister has said he has great confidence in the chairman of that commission, confidence in all of its members, confidence in their ability to give us a blueprint for transportation in Canada.

He asks us to accept his statement at face value. Surely if you are to have a royal commission and listen to what it reports, it is foolish to cut train service first and ask a royal commission after the fact whether you have done the right thing. If the government has the confidence it says it has, if the Prime Minister personally has the confidence he says he has in this royal commission, then refer the whole question of the future of VIA Rail to the royal commission and in a year from now they can tell this Parliament what they think the role of rail passenger service is in Canada's future.

• (1040)

I am not used to taking that kind of non-partisan approach. I have to admit that I have a few partisan bones in my body. I have to tell you that there are other words I could use to describe this decision of the government. I will not do that today because you know I am appealing, not for the votes of the people who are watching, but appealing to members opposite. I am appealing to Conservative members of Parliament to take a stand in exactly the same way that Conservative members of the transport committee took a stand, exercised their best judgment, exercised their individual conscience, heard what their constituents, who had reason enough to doubt this decision, were saying and were prepared to buck the party line.

I am not used to saying anything nice about Tories. It is a rare day. It could cost me the vote of a few right-to-the-backbone Liberals in Newfoundland talking this way, but the issue is bigger than partisanship. The issue is bigger than merely making sure that those who are upset about VIA Rail will not vote Tory. The real issue for us here is to see whether or not we can save a rail passenger service in this country.

Across the street today at the conference on the economy the premiers of Canada, representing every political stripe, are saying to the Prime Minister this morning that they agree with the report of a lowly, humble collection of members who make up the Standing Committee on Transport. They are saying: "We think they have done good work. We think their recommendation is worth considering and we, too, call upon the Prime Minister to pay attention to the report of the Standing Committee on Transport and to declare a moratorium on the cuts to VIA Rail and to refer this matter to the Prime Minister's royal commission for consideration." I ask members in this House and, in particular, I ask members on the government side to find a way to get a message to the Prime Minister, to the Minister of Transport, to the cabinet, that this decision to slash, cripple, and cut VIA Rail is wrong. It is a decision not to cut fat, not to cut muscle, but to cut beyond the muscle and into the bone marrow and bleed it dry. This decision is wrong. Canada deserves better. As a nation we need a modern, efficient mass transportation system, a rail passenger service. We have an obligation to those least fortunate among us and those who most depend upon this rail service to ensure that it continues.

I cannot help but note, as many members would note because we are politicians, what has been happening in the public opinion polls these days. I dare to offer some advice to my friends opposite. The polls are not a reflection, as much as I would like to think they are, of the tremendous and overwhelming job that we in the opposition benches are doing. They are not a tribute to the tremendous ability at Question Period, either in this party or in that party. They are not a tribute to our oratorical skills. They are not a tribute to our powers of persuasion but we do our job as honestly and as effectively as we can. The polls are a reflection of government policy. The goods and services tax is a policy being

imposed upon the people of Canada despite the opposition of every premier of Canada and every region of Canada—

Mr. Wappel: And the people of Canada.

Mr. Tobin: -and the people of Canada. Then there are the cuts to VIA Rail, again a fundamental service to Canadians, that could give us a chance to go into the future confident and prepared for the year 2000. Those cuts are opposed by every premier of Canada, opposed by the people of Canada. I say to members opposite, and particularly to members who support this cabinet, the back-benchers, that the eyes and the ears of the people of Canada are on those back-benchers. They are watching them. They are weighing their words. They believe the time has come that members have to speak and reflect the values of their constituents and stand up and be counted, not in the name of opposing a particular political Party or supporting another, but in the name of the legitimate aspirations of Canada.

I say to those who choose to remain silent, and I know that many share my views, the people of Canada are becoming increasingly impatient and you ought not to try their patience too far. Make a stand for parliamentary reform, make a stand for Canada, stand for yourself because I know, in your conscience, those opposite cannot support these brutal cuts to VIA Rail.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Before I recognize the hon. member for Lachine—Lac-Saint-Louis, I wish to inform the House that because of the ministerial statement Government Orders will be extended by 15 minutes.

Mr. Layton: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte has today reopened the debate relating to subsidies for VIA Rail. These subsidies totalled over $600 million in 1988 and supported travellers on some lines to the tune of hundreds of dollars per trip. The hon. member supports the motion that was passed by a committee to the extent that a moratorium be applied to the reductions in the costs of VIA Rail. My question to the hon. member would be: How does he propose to pay for it?

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Layton: No, I am going to ask two or three questions. I know that the member is anxious to be on his feet and answer another question, but I really wonder about my young friend's position on this. Is he aware that every $100 million we add to the debt is one day going to be on the backs of our children and grandchildren? How would he propose, other than by fiscal management which this government is introducing, that we reduce the cost of government and reduce the debt in the future?

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, I want to say to my "not-so-young" friend, who has been here since 1984, that in my experience since 1980 governments at the end of the day have to make choices. I find it really somewhat amazing that my colleague opposite would say: "How are you going to pay for this?" Canadians are asking how it is that when the government makes choices it has no problem displacing three million Canadians—and those are the government's own estimates, not mine—three million Canadians who rode the rails in 1988 and will not do so next year because there is no space for them. Canadians are asking how the government has no trouble displacing those three million Canadians for $600 million a year, and the government equally has no problem spending $1 billion so that we can give a couple of Canadians a ride on the American space shuttle program.

The space program cost $1 billion. I am just giving some examples. It cost $1 billion to get the Minister of the Environment elected in a by-election. To give one guy a ride, a ticket to the House of Commons, the government laid out $1 billion during a by-election. I did not hear members opposite saying: "That is an awful ungodly price to pay for Lucien Bouchard". We could ride six million people, over two years, for the cost of getting the Minister of the Environment into Parliament.

• (1050)

What I am saying is it is very misleading for the member to stand and say that a figure that represents 0.6 of 1 per cent of the total budget is a tremendous amount of money, and then ask what are we going to cut and how are we going to pay for it. I am suggesting and what the committee is suggesting is that the government is going to have to spend more than the $600 million. If it truly believes that Canada alone among nations must go into the year 2000 without a rail passenger service, then follow this decision. Let us follow this decision. Let us put more cars and millions more people on the highways,

let us congest even more Toronto International and other airports around the country. Let us pollute this environment. The government has obviously come to the conclusion that with the destruction of the tropical jungles of this planet, there will not be a planet in 15 or 20 years anyway. Let us save our pennies in the piggy bank now.

When I go to buy a house, I expect to have to pay a great deal of money up front, more than I would like to pay of my disposable income because I am making an investment in my future and the future of my family. I believe that that kind of investment is necessary in Canada.

The reason VIA is losing money today is that the equipment is 35 years old. VIA has been raped—a strong word but I have to use it—by CN. VIA pays four to five times as much to ride CN rails as Amtrak in the United States is charged to ride American company rails. Why is that? VIA Rail has a president who is also president of CN. It is like the Liberal party having a president who is also president of the Tory party. We would be laughed out of town. This government has no problem appointing a president of VIA Rail who is also president of CN, and CN charges VIA Rail several hundred million dollars a year to ride its rails. What kind of a conflict of interest is that?

I said I did not want to be partisan but the member is sorely tempting me. I had better bite my tongue and sit down.

Mr. Pagtakhan: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague from Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte for his eloquent pleading that this House approve the recommendations contained in the second report of the Standing Committee on Transport calling for a moratorium on the government's proposed cuts to VIA Rail. He argued we should have a moratorium while the Royal Commission on a National Passenger Transportation System proceeds with its study. In contrast the government has indicated that the commission will proceed even after the VIA cuts had happend.

I am reminded of the story about asking an orthopaedic surgeon to first amputate the legs of a patient and then do a study as to whether the operation was required to begin with. That is the wrong approach. I can see from the member's presentation that indeed this government has a policy of annihilation of VIA for this country.

Could the member indicate to the House the composition of the Standing Committee on Transport as to who constitutes the majority on this committee in terms of the representation from the three political parties? Second, is this very issue on the top agenda of the First Ministers' Conference now ongoing?

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, the member asked about the composition of the standing committee. The standing committee is made up of eight Conservative members, four Liberal members and two New Democratic Party members. So the Conservatives have a clear majority. All of the votes that could have been exercised that day were exercised. A full complement was in place when the committee took this vote, and it had a clear majority. I do not want to say which Conservatives voted for or against. I do not think it is appropriate in the spirit of reform. The meeting was *in camera*. It was private. I do not seek to embarrass any individuals, but it should be clear to everybody that this report, which was laid before the House yesterday, and this debate which is occurring today, could only have occurred if Conservative members of Parliament joined with opposition members in saying that the decision of the Government of Canada was wrong.

I want to re-emphasize that this is not a partisan statement. This is a statement from the members who have been charged by Parliament to examine transportation policy. These are people who make it their business every single day to be involved in transportation issues, people who have on many other occasions approved of government initiatives, people whose first role in Parliament in terms of their obligations beyond their constituency is the transportation policy of Canada. That is the group, with the majority Conservative members, that has said this decision to proceed with cuts on January 15 is wrong for Canada.

All I can say is now is the time for Canadians right across this country to get out their pen, get out their paper, to write their members of Parliament to once again tell us how you feel because I think there may be a thaw occurring across the way and perhaps as a consequence there is some chance for VIA Rail.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I will entertain a question from the hon. member for Nepean and then the hon. member for Edmonton—Strathcona, and if we could get in with the hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona, we will, before eleven o'clock. Point of Order, the hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona.

Mr. Blaikie: A point of order, Mr. Speaker. I have raised this many times in the House. The instruction with respect to the question and comment period is clear. The Chair is advised to recognize members of parties other than the person who is speaking, if such members are rising. In the absence of members rising from parties other than the person who is speaking, the Chair is free to recognize people from that party.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Generally it can be that practice, but the hon. member for Winnipeg—Strathcona was not in the House, then sitting there and not rising. The hon. member for Nepean was rising. The hon. member for Edmonton—Strathcona was rising. I said if there is time I will call upon the hon. gentleman.

Mrs. Gaffney: First of all, I would like to congratulate my colleague from Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte for a very compelling speech on the reasons for relooking at VIA Rail and the needs of Canadians right across the country.

My question arises from the statement from the member on the government side of the House and I would like my colleague's opinion on how we would propose paying for VIA Rail. We have all known that the manufacturers' sales tax—and the government side of the House has known this since 1984—that there is a $350 million loophole annually where moneys were being lost in revenue to the Government of Canada. The government has known this since 1984 and has not plugged this loophole.

I would like my colleague's comments with regard to the deficit for operating VIA Rail. Does he see that this money could have been moved over toward the VIA Rail deficit and it could have reduced that in some manner?

Mr. Tobin: I want to point out that the committee—and I do not have time to go into details—does not believe the government will save one penny on the deficit by cutting VIA Rail. We had some very noted economists come before our committee—again non-partisan contributions—who said that when you have taken the loss of tourism dollars, the loss of jobs, the loss of direct and indirect spin-offs to the economy, the pay-out in social welfare programs and unemployment insurance, the additional cost in having increasingly clogged highways and airports and building new runways, you are not going to save a cent. All you are going to do is spend more money in other areas and in the process congest highways, congest our airports, and most shocking of all, pollute this fragile environment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It being 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 35, the House will now proceed to statements by members under Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, according to an article in today's edition of *The Gazette* of Montreal signed by Andrew McIntosh, a Granby engineer would have been given assurances by the Office of the Prime Minister that an RCMP investigation in the Gravel case would not result in any charges being laid against the individual in question. Those are very troubling allegations, particularly in view of the fact that this House has heard of similar accusations as a result of incidents earlier this week. Because of the *sub judice* rule, I cannot describe those incidents in any great detail.

In the space of a few days we have heard of possible political interference by the government in two separate RCMP investigations. The independence of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police from any political interference or possible political interference is of paramount importance to the proper administration of justice in this country.

These allegations must be looked into. If they are unfounded, so much the better. If they turn out to be true, the House will have to deal with this issue and more particularly the government should respond as soon as possible.

S. O. 31

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, in terms of the situation in Lebanon I am pleased that the Minister of Employment and Immigration has accepted a number of recommendations proposed by the immigration committee.

Yet, by refusing to accept that a special designated class be created to assist the Lebanese with resettlement, the Minister of Employment and Immigration sent a clear signal that the government is not seriously prepared to extend a hand of welcome to those afflicted by strife. Her outright rejection will certainly further the 80 per cent rejection rate of Lebanese trying to escape the hardships of civil war.

Clearly, by accepting only Lebanese with family members in Canada, the signal the minister and her government is sending out is that those Lebanese without family members need not apply. The minister's mixed response to the report and her rejection of the special designated class is truly perplexing since, after all, it was the high refusal rate of Lebanese citizens to Canada which initially triggered the standing committee's report.

In light of her actions I urge the minister and the government not to reject categorically the option of creating a special designated class, should the fighting resume and intensify and should the accepted changes not ameliorate the situation in Lebanon significantly.

* * *

NORTHERN TAX ALLOWANCE

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, northern and isolated Canadians could soon be gouged and screwed twice over, not only by the upcoming goods and services tax but also by the savage cuts to their northern tax benefits. The task force on these benefits has recently recommended that the Minister of Finance simplify the northern and isolated benefit system. The task force has drawn the northern line across this country in such a way that 83 per cent of all communities now receiving benefits will lose them.

On behalf of these communities and the caucus of northern New Democratic members of Parliament, I say that this is completely unacceptable. We do not need a so-called simple benefits system. We need a fair system that takes into account the extremes of isolation and climate in Canada.

New Democrats have initiated a petition campaign against this unfair government tax grab. Canadians from northern B.C., Alberta, northern Ontario and elsewhere who do not have a New Democratic Party MP can call or write any of our offices to receive this petition and to fight this government tax grab.

* * *

ECONOMIC REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENTS

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the Minister of Agriculture for the effort they put into the signing of the recent ERDAs in my province. Both agreements total approximately $50 million.

I know that I speak on behalf of the minister of fisheries and the minister responsible for agriculture in the province of New Brunswick as well as the Premier.

These are very important agreements for the province of New Brunswick, so I do thank the federal government, the Minister of Agriculture, and our federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans for expediting these very important agreements.

* * *

TRANSPORTATION OF DANGEROUS GOODS

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East): Mr. Speaker, Friday is the tenth anniversary of the great train derailment in Mississauga in which 250,000 residents were evacuated from their homes.

CP Train 54 was carting a shipment of toxic chemicals and the accident had the potential of becoming one of the most devastating man-made disasters in history. Ten years later a similar accident could still occur.

According to the union representing railway car men and train safety inspectors, CP and CN railways have laid off more than 2,000 safety inspectors since the 1979 derailment. When this government made the decision to deregulate the Canadian transportation industry, it accepted a responsibility to increase the emphasis on monitoring safety standards.

On the anniversary of the Mississauga derailment and after hearing the preliminary conclusions of the Dryden inquiry, the minister should assure this House that the Royal Commission on Transportation will set a priority on establishing new national safety standards for the industry.

* * *

[*Translation*]

KIDNAPPINGS

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Michelle Duquette of Val d'Or is under great stress today because she is trying to get her son back who was taken away by her ex-husband, a U.S. citizen of Egyptian origin living in the United States.

Last May, the Superior Court of Quebec gave Mrs. Duquette custody of her six-year old son for the duration of the school year. On June 24, Mrs. Duquette, acting in good faith, sent Kareen to his father's home in New Jersey for the summer holidays. The child was supposed to come back in time for the new school year, but his mother has not seen him since.

Mr. Speaker, I know this is a legal matter, but it is above all a human tragedy. Will the decision of our Canadian courts be respected, in accordance with the Convention of The Hague in effect since July, 1988, between Quebec and the United States?

* * *

[*English*]

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, today the Canadian Federation of Students is converging on Parliament Hill. Students are here from every part of Canada to protest the frontal attack this government has made on post-secondary education.

Education is not just a concern for students. Canada's future prosperity is dependent upon a highly educated workforce, trained men and women who are prepared to confront the rapidly changing world economy and ensure Canada's place in international markets.

Yet the response of this government is to slash spending on education. The government has introduced Bill C-33, which together with cuts implemented by the government three years ago will cut nearly $7 billion from education over nine years.

This follows the disgraceful record of the Liberals who slashed university funding in the infamous 6 and 5 program of former Finance Minister MacEachen. This is a full retreat from education by the federal government. The regions are being hung out to dry and the groundwork is being laid for privatization of universities.

Education will soon be out of reach for ordinary Canadians. Along with student representatives from across Canada, I and the New Democratic Party demand a return to fair and adequate funding for post-secondary education.

Rhetoric from the Prime Minister is not enough. The government needs to commit itself now to Canadian students, to Canadians in general, and to the future of the country.

* * *

EXTRADITION

Mr. Larry Schneider (Regina—Wascana): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Minister of Justice for his decision to extradite the suspected mass murderer, Charles Ng. This decision will send a strong message that Canada is not a safe haven for criminals from other countries.

In a survey of my constituents they massively supported the position that criminals like Ng be returned to their own countries. It is clear that Canadians will not tolerate our laws being used to shelter foreign criminals.

It is clear to me that discretionary power granted to the minister under Article 6 of the Canada-U.S. Extradition Treaty serves to protect Canadian interests. It is also clear that the decision to block extradition must be carefully considered.

In this case the decision to allow extradition was a proper course to follow. I am still disturbed that Mr. Ng may yet remain in Canada for some time to come. I trust the minister will take whatever action is necessary to ensure that in the future the extradition process will proceed much more quickly.

S. O. 31

PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE OF CANADA

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, for two weeks now 1,500 parole officers have been on strike. The salaries of these parole officers are 14 per cent behind those of their counterparts in Ontario and 24 per cent behind those in Quebec. Is it any wonder they want a better deal?

For two and a half years the government has been negotiating this contract. It took until this week to put a serious offer on the table and get the unions back to the bargaining table. Tension is building in the prisons across Canada. There are 8,000 parolees out in our communities without normal supervision. Tempers are rising and patience is wearing thin. Inmates are being denied family visits; absences for Christmas may be jeopardized. People eligible for parole are being kept in prison.

Just as important, included in this group of workers are those who provide services to our veterans and their survivors. They ensure that they get the social, health and financial assistance they need. It includes those who serve native Indians across Canada with alcoholism treatment programs and child protection programs. All are being denied services while the President of Treasury Board plays games.

• (1110)

I urge the minister and the government to ensure that these negotiations conclude quickly so that these people can get back to work.

* * *

FIRST MINISTERS' CONFERENCE

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): Mr. Speaker, today marks the beginning of a very important First Ministers' Conference here in Ottawa. It is obvious that there are serious problems and disagreements across our country. We would encourage all participants to look at our nation as a whole rather than as individual provinces or regions, because it is only as a whole that we will be a strong and viable nation.

I would encourage the Prime Minister to maintain his position of strong national leadership and policies of reconciliation and fairness to all Canadians. As a proud British Columbian I am firmly convinced that we need Quebec and Quebec needs us.

Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister, for your hard work and leadership in keeping us together.

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[*Translation*]

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Jean-Guy Guilbault (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the most important industrial investment in Drummondville's history. CDM Laminates Inc., a branch of Uniboard Canada, intends to set up a new plant in my riding that will produce decorative paper facings for low-pressure panels. This is part of an industrial project that will cost over $81 million and is expected to create 145 new jobs in the next few years.

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted with the plans for these new facilities, whose production will be mostly exported to overseas destinations but will also help replace imports.

The activities of this company will result in a major transfer of technology from Europe, which will benefit not only Drummondville but the whole country.

This project represents new industrial activity in Drummondville that will have a very positive impact on current economic development, thanks to the involvement of the Canadian Government.

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[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I told the House that the best estimates of the amount of new carbon dioxide that will be produced by the OSLO and Hibernia projects range from 20 to 35 million metric tons. That is an increase of between 4 per cent and 7 per cent of Canada's current total CO_2 emissions.

Unfortunately these estimates are necessarily vague because as incredible as it may seem no one has yet undertaken anything approaching a thorough study of probable CO_2 emissions from OSLO and Hibernia.

The environmental impact study done on the Hibernia project in 1985 does not even mention CO_2 emissions. And, so far, no government department has yet begun a serious assessment of CO_2 emissions from OSLO.

We are tired of hearing the environment minister utter pious platitudes about the importance of the environment in government decision making when every major action undertaken by the government shows a literally breathless disregard for the environment.

As a bare minimum the government must now commit itself to a thorough assessment of CO_2 emissions from both projects before they proceed.

* * *

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Brian O'Kurley (Elk Island): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to those Canadians who sacrificed their lives for our country during war. While many brave soldiers did not return, many others did, and to the ones who did return I want to thank people like my father and thousands of other Canadians who fought for Canada so that I and many others of my generation would not have to experience the horrors of war.

Yes, this is a great country, strong and free, one of the greatest societies in the world. On behalf of all the people in Elk Island, I wish to recognize the tremendous sacrifice of the previous generation for my generation.

Let us all teach our children about the futility of war so that they will also experience a Canada of peace.

* * *

FINANCE

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, Canadians awoke this morning to the news that the Canadian dollar has reached an all time 10-year high.

Some people think the strength of the dollar is a good thing. The fact is that the stronger the dollar, the weaker the economy. That can be seen in the deplorable state of our export markets. Our current accounts are now at the lowest rate they have been in 10 years. The fact of the matter is that for every additional cent added to the dollar we lose $1.3 billion in exports.

I know members opposite do not care about our export market because they have already sold out that market, but the fact of the matter is that every time the dollar rises it is the regions that produce our resources, our export earners in wood, fish, grain, potash and minerals, that suffer.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker: it is about time the Minister of Finance forgot his foolish obsession to the goods and services tax, his ill-begotten attempt to force this country into bankruptcy, and started to really manage the economy, to get the interest rates down and get the dollar down so that Canada can begin competing again in world markets.

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AGRICULTURE

Mr. Ken Monteith (Elgin): Mr. Speaker, on November 7, the Minister of Agriculture released a discussion paper entitled *Growing Together*. This paper incorporates the concerns expressed by farmers over the past four years and lays the foundation for an effective dialogue among partners in agriculture—the producer, the federal government and the provincial governments.

This paper outlines pillars essential for growth in the Canadian agri-food industry. These pillars are market responsiveness, self-reliance, regional sensitivity and environmental sustainability. They are essential to Canada and Canadian farmers maintaining the leading edge as producers of high quality foods.

I encourage all producer organizations, individual farmers and politicians from all levels of government to examine this document carefully. Now is the time for communication on this important issue. Let us get our thoughts on the table so that fruitful discussion can take place and a new comprehensive agricultural policy can be put in place for the 1990s and beyond.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Douglas Young (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, I will direct my question to the Deputy Prime Minister. There is a great deal of confusion with respect to the goods and services tax, and it is becoming a question now of who Canadians can believe on this matter. I think they deserve to know the truth about the goods and services tax.

In an interview that we have referred to in this House this week the Minister of Finance was asked about the province's position on the goods and services tax and he said: "They have agreed. Behind closed doors, they will say you've got to go ahead with this, Mike; no question of that."

The minister has said federal studies show that the effect of the goods and services tax on nine of the provinces would be neutral to positive. The provinces, as the Deputy Prime Minister will know, released a report last night in which it is stated that the goods and services tax could cost the provinces in this country $6.9 billion and result in the loss of 434,000 jobs between 1991 and 1993.

Will the government now at last make public its studies so that Canadians can determine exactly what the impact of the goods and services tax will be on them? In other words, let us find out who is telling the truth about the goods and services tax.

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the hon. member that my colleague, the Minister of Finance, this morning described the analysis which was made yesterday as a ridiculous distortion of reality, and I stand by that. It is based on a study made by the Conference Board, and I would like to remind the hon. member that over the last few weeks the Conference Board has been all over the place.

A few weeks ago it said that the GST would probably result in a loss of 200,000 jobs. Then later it said: "Oops, we've made a mistake. It will not be 200,000 jobs. It will be 40,000 jobs." Now it comes back with a new number, so this analysis is flawed. I would like to inform the hon. member that we have made public this morning a document which will be very helpful to him.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Young (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, the question still stands. To whom is the government listening in this debate on the GST? They now tell us the provinces don't understand. They say the Conference Board of Canada did not provide realistic figures, but it has been months since we first asked the Minister of Finance to produce the figures to justify his claim that only Alberta would be punished by the GST. My question is this: Considering that the House of Commons, the Canadian Labour Congress, the Consumers Association of Canada and Canada's ten Premiers are opposed to the GST, to whom is the government listening in this debate on GST, if it disagrees with the data produced by all the intervenors I just mentioned?

Mr. Loiselle: The government has been extremely attentive to all the information it has received. When you say that Alberta will be punished—-we never said that. All regions in Canada will benefit under this reform. I would advise the Hon. Member against taking at face value, positions that just before a conference or negotiations are probably used by the provinces as a bargaining stance. I may recall that every time this Government announced economic measures in its Budget, Members on the other side of the House have said they were a disaster. His leader said—

An Hon. Member: They should know about disasters! That's what it was like for 20 years!

Mr. Loiselle: —when we brought down our 1985 Budget: "Your Budget, this $4 billion cutback, will put between 125,000 and 150,000 Canadians out of work". Mr. Speaker, this Government created jobs in 1985, and in fact, since 1984 it has created 1.5 million jobs, and we intend to keep up the good work.

* * *

• (1120)

[*English*]

VIA RAIL

Mr. Douglas Young (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that we cannot seem to get any clarification on the confusion around the goods and services tax, maybe because we have the support of a considerable number of Conservative members on this issue, the Minister of Transport might be able to address this question that I would like to put to him.

We have heard mayors from all over Canada, representatives from the handicapped in Canada, and representatives of students and senior citizens discussing the cuts to VIA Rail. I wonder if the Minister of Transport would tell us today whether or not he is prepared to accept the recommendation of the Standing Committee on Transport which includes a majority number of members from his own political party?

Will he recognize the motion that has been put and accepted by the transport committee that a moratorium should be put on the cuts that he proposes to VIA Rail? With respect to the cuts to VIA Rail, will the government at least listen to its own members if it will not listen to us?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, parliamentary reform has been done in a way that members can express their views to the government. I think that is what the transport committee did yesterday. Unfortunately it is a sad way to express their views, using the transport committee as a place to play political football. If new views have to be presented, they should have been presented to the ministers yesterday.

I looked carefully at the report. Nothing is new in that report. The per passenger kilometre cost for air, considering international flights, is absolutely wrong. I challenge my friend to contest figures which have been presented by my department. For that reason I repeat what I have already said. We will not have any moratorium on VIA Rail.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that the provincial governments of Canada are here today to discuss the economy, including the premiers of the major provinces of Canada. They are saying that they agree with the report of an all-party standing committee in its request for a moratorium on VIA Rail cuts. The mayors of all the major cities are saying that they agree. The disenfranchised millions of Canadians who are losing VIA Rail service are saying they agree.

My question to the Minister of Transport is straightforward. Given that a standing committee, operating in the spirit of reform, has said it is not convinced by the government's environmental assessment, is not convinced by the government's numbers with respect to the deficit and is not convinced that VIA Rail can survive at all if these cuts go ahead, why will this government in the spirit of conciliation it promised when it came to power not listen to Parliament and members from all parties, declare a moratorium and give VIA Rail a chance?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I met the same mayors my colleague met this week. This morning I heard the Premier of Ontario say that he was in full support of the report tabled yesterday, and I have respect for the Premier of Ontario. Neither the mayors nor the premier this morning could say that they were ready to put up $100 million for a moratorium.

The committee does not say that we should have a moratorium of such and such a length. It could be open to three or four years. For three years it would cost over $500 million. Once again, when I asked the question of the mayors of Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal this week "are you ready to put money into VIA Rail", there was total silence in the room.

When I heard the Premier of Ontario this morning, he did not say that he was ready to put the money in. If I may, I would like to say what was said after the cuts the Liberals made in 1981, by one of the Liberal members:

"No one wants his or her favourite program reduced or eliminated. The government's deficit will be reduced through the elimination of highly unprofitable services and unfortunately will hurt the travel facilities of a few. But what else in the end is to be done?" I quote the Liberal member for Etobicoke North in 1981. That is the same rationale today. We do not have the money. We will not have the money. We will not have any moratorium.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, the cuts of 1981 were restored in 1984 by the member for Winnipeg South Centre who was then Minister of Transport.

My question to the Minister of Transport goes to the heart of this government's credibility. On the same day that this minister opposite, the Minister of Transport, announced the VIA Rail cuts, the same minister announced the Royal Commission on Transportation in Canada. The minister and the Prime Minister have said they have confidence in the members of this royal commission, have confidence in their integrity and in their ability to do a job, and will listen to their advice.

How can the minister expect Canadians to believe that he has that kind of confidence if he is going to destroy, gut, terminate, assassinate VIA Rail first and ask for advice on the decision later?

If the minister believes in what he says, he should accept the recommendation of an all-party committee, listen to Canadians, give the royal commission a chance to do its job and put an end to this bare-faced hypocrisy on VIA Rail.

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, I would hope that the member could understand the mandate of the commission. We have been very clear about the mandate of the commission, which has been set up by the Prime Minister to determine the vision of integration of all transportation modes for the future. Exactly what we are trying to avoid is the short view proposal made by the member.

If we deal, as the Liberals did for 20 years, for three or four months, if we deal for another three or four months without any kind of vision for transportation, we make a decision for the day and the day after. We just wake up with a $300 billion debt with the deficit that the Liberals created. This is what we can avoid. The Royal Commission on Transportation has been set up to deal with the future of transportation. The mandate is clear. The members have been selected and the commission will work in the way that we have decided that it will work.

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PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister, and it too is on what the chairman of the finance committee has called the gouge and screw tax.

What I want to know from the Deputy Prime Minister today is: What are the federal government figures in terms of the impact on the provinces? We saw the study released yesterday in which the provinces say that they will lose some 400,000 jobs and $7 billion worth of provincial revenues. We know the Minister of Finance has now confirmed that Alberta will certainly be a loser.

I want to know how many jobs will be lost. How much money will be lost? Is the minister really saying in this House today that 10 Premiers representing about three or four political parties are wrong and that he is right, that he knows it all? Can he put up or shut up in the House today?

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, what we are saying is not that 10 Premiers are wrong. We are saying that their analysis is wrong, the analysis that has been produced for them. They did not produce it themselves. The Conference Board study on the same subject has varied tremendously over the last few months.

• (1130)

I would like to remind the hon. gentleman that the same accusations were made of us in the past by his leader. In 1984 he said that the Minister of Finance knew that his program would lose between 50,000 and 100,000 jobs. He said of the minister, "Rather than admit it, the minister is trying to keep the truth from the people". We are not keeping the truth from the people, Mr. Speaker. We created jobs in 1984. We created jobs in 1985, 1986, 1987, and we will continue to create jobs this year and next year, thanks to the GST which is a modern way of organizing our fiscal system.

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, I am sure that even you will remember that a year ago the Minister of Finance was saying that the world was beautiful, the economy was booming, and jobs were being created. Yet they will not even give us the documents on which they base those statements.

The minister has said that the analysis that was done for the provinces is wrong. The Minister of Finance has also said publicly that many premiers agree in private with the GST, yet every single premier has said no. I want to know today whether the minister can get up and identify those premiers who agree with the GST. If he cannot do that, will he stop misrepresenting the premiers of this country. Put up or shut up.

Mr. Loiselle: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member will recognize that for practically two years, the provinces worked with us very closely on preparing what is the GST; a very similar tax, the same model. The fact that it is provincial and federal does not change the basic issue. On that subject, we stand by that.

As far as the analysis is concerned, I would like to advise the hon. member that we have, and we are very proud to have, a very sophisticated method, which has been explained in more detail publicly today, which takes into account the IMF and OECD inputs and which has given results which indicate, without any doubt, that in the short term, and even more in the medium and long-term, this will be beneficial for the economy.

The Minister of Finance, my colleague, said it is a nice world because job creation is a nice thing.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister who once was a staunch defender of rail passenger services.

Today at the First Ministers' Conference the premiers are raising with the Prime Minister their request, which parallels that of the mayors and that of the Standing Committee on Transport, for a moratorium on the cuts to VIA Rail until such time as the royal commission has had an opportunity to review rail passenger services and report, in order that the government, rather than the biased information it has been working with, has a clear and independent review.

Will this government finally listen to the will of the provinces and the Canadian people it represents and declare a moratorium on the VIA Rail cuts?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I will repeat what I said before. As he knows very well, the reason why VIA Rail has been rationalized in terms of the support we give financially is that we could not afford any more. We could not afford to put much more money into a system which basically people do not use.

I asked the mayors this week if they were ready to put forward the money necessary to keep the service. That question was asked of the mayors at the committee, at which my friend was present, and unanimously the mayors said "No".

If we do not have the money we have to cut services. The reason we do not accept any moratorium is that we have to apply the decision by January 15, 1990.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

Mr. Speaker: I wish to draw to members' attention the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Mikolaj Kokakiewicz, the Speaker of the Polish Sejm.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. The report released last evening by the provincial governments indicated that more than 400,000 jobs would be lost as a result of this goods and services tax. Put that together with the Minister of Finance's budget speech on April 27 when he said that next year unemployment would increase to 8.5 per cent. Then we have the report of the Bank of Montreal which says that next year unemployment will increase to 9 per cent. As well we have a recent report of the Conference Board of Canada which says we are on the brink of a recession.

In these circumstances, why is the government proceeding with this goods and services tax which is going to hurt so many Canadians? Why is the government putting its right wing Tory agenda ahead of jobs for Canadians?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, for the very simple reason that the agenda we have had has worked very well. It has produced the best job-creation rate of the industrialized world, the best growth rate, the best increase in productivity and the best climate for investment. A million and a half new jobs have been created since this government assumed office. The unemployment rate has been brought down from 11.7 per cent to 7.3 per cent and it is declining. We have just gone through a period that has been reported as one of the strongest periods of growth in the last six months.

What is the hon. member complaining about? Is he complaining about the fact that jobs are being created and there is growth in the economy? If that is what he is complaining about then he is on the wrong side of the issue.

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, unemployed Canadians will not be happy with that answer. Canadians no longer believe this government when it talks about the jobs it has created and the economy it is managing, and that is evident from the poll released this morning which indicates that 69 per cent of Canadians do not believe that this government is doing the job that it should do.

If the government does not accept the report of the provinces that 400,000 jobs will be lost as a result of this goods and service tax, why does the government not put on the table in this Parliament its impact studies? How many jobs does it think will be lost as a result of the goods and services tax? Tell us the truth.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, I can tell my hon. friend that the people who have jobs today who did not have jobs in 1984 are a lot happier than they were when the Liberals were in office when there was stagnation, high unemployment, high inflation and a feeling of desperation across this country. That has changed. Ask the young people, within whose group the unemployment rate has dropped by about 7 or 8 per cent in the last four or five years.

The fact is that the figures do not lie. There has been an outstanding performance by the economy. In 1984 when the Minister of Finance outlined his program for economic renewal, this member's leader said that we were going to lose 125,000 to 150,000 jobs. They were wrong then and they are wrong today.

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VIA RAIL

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): Mr. Speaker, only this government would claim recovery from a world economy as it professes to do.

My question is to the Minister of Transport. VIA services in Ontario are the most used and supported and vital to the economy of Ontario and Canada in the areas of tourism, business and jobs, not to speak of the well-being of our seniors, students and travellers.

Municipal leaders, the transport committee, the premiers and millions of Canadians have called for a moratorium. The minister knows that a moratorium for one year will not cost hundreds of millions of dollars, as he has just professed, if you do not have to lay off those people.

• (1140)

I ask again, will the minister wake up, see the light, listen to the people, listen to his own piece, and invoke this moratorium?

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say, first of all, that the trains will continue to run in Ontario as in any other province except Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island. We will have passenger train service everywhere in the country.

I know that Canadians want the train, but Canadians have agreed too that for the last five years this country, for once, has been managed by expending the money we have. We do not mortgage our money for 25 years as was done before. We want to expend the money we have.

I want to manage the transportation system in a way in which we can consider all modes of transportation. To do that, we must consider cuts where necessary in order to have a balanced, fair, good and efficient service in the country.

[*Translation*]

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the Minister of Transport. Does the Minister realize that his decision, which is also his government's decision, may cause the province of Quebec to lose 10,000 jobs? Why does he keep saying no to the Premier of Quebec, the mayor of Montreal, the mayors of Quebec, the former and the present mayor of Quebec, the mayor of Trois-Rivières, the municipal councils of 300 towns and municipalities in Quebec, including the City of Chicoutimi which is represented by the Chairman of the Quebec Caucus, and no as well to the *Front Commun des Syndicats du rail-FTQ*, all of whom want a one-year moratorium? Is the Minister prepared to put his credibility as Minister of Transport on the line and keep saying no to all these people who are asking for a one-year moratorium?

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I am sure the Hon. Member did not intend to be unnecessarily alarmist, but when he talks about 10,000 jobs in Montreal, that is just not true—

Mr. Ouellet: In the province of Quebec.

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): —in the province of Quebec, but the Hon. Member, who is from Montreal, knows perfectly well that 95 per cent of the railway jobs in Quebec are in Montreal. So whether he says in Quebec or in Montreal, Mr. Speaker, it is still not true. We have given the exact figures. Exactly 962 jobs will be abandoned in Montreal, but these lay-offs will be handled with all the resources available under collective bargaining agreements, as the Hon. Member is well aware. Second, both in Quebec and elsewhere, and this applies to the Premier of Quebec as well as to the Premier of Ontario, to the mayor of Montreal and to the mayor of Toronto, none of these people, when they approached the government, were able to tell the federal government that they could invest the necessary funds. On the

contrary, this morning the Premier of Ontario talked about technological development in connection with high speed trains. We agree with that, provided we do not support services that are scarcely used today by Quebecers and other Canadians.

* * *

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources as the minister responsible for the Atomic Energy Control Board of Canada. At 12.45 p.m. last Tuesday, Cameco Corporation reported a spill of 440,000 gallons of untreated mine water containing arsenic and radium 226 from its Rabbit Lake mine in northern Saskatchewan.

I understand that preliminary tests indicate that the danger is presently contained but some serious questions need to be answered. Why did a spill of this magnitude go unreported for 11 hours, even when the monitoring equipment was functioning? Is this spill related to the layoff of 96 workers since June in preparation for privatization? Were Atomic Energy Control Board personnel on the scene at the time this was happening and what was their role? And will the minister immediately call a public inquiry to look into what looks like a total breakdown of the nuclear regulatory system?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for asking the question. We have been examining the matter at the Collins Bay mine, located near Rabbit Lake, Saskatchewan, very carefully. The first point I would like to make to the hon. member is that the Collins Bay mine had been shut down for approximately three months. Pumping was taking place so that the mine would not be flooded. Second, the water in question is primarily seepage and rainwater. The AECB has a person on site.

The only thing the hon. member said in his question that is at variance with the information I have received is that the monitoring system was functioning. The information that I have received is that it was not functioning and that is part of the question the AECB is trying to determine.

As to the level of arsenic, nickel and the radioactive materials, the information that he had in his question, namely that preliminary studies show that it is well within the Saskatchewan limits, has been given to me today, but obviously I want more questions answered with respect to this issue.

Mr. Funk: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for his answer. As he knows, there is a real question as to whether those limits in fact are safe in this day and age, knowing what we do.

My supplementary question is to the same minister. As he knows, this water is now in Wollaston Lake. Twelve hundred people depend on Wollaston Lake for their food, their livelihood and their drinking water. Why were these people not informed immediately? Why did Ed Benoanie, the chief, not get a straight answer until 20 hours after the spill was discovered, 18 hours after he flew over the site, and 14 hours after he phoned the mine for information? Was it the recommendation of the AECB personnel on the site that the chief be stonewalled?

Mr. Epp: Mr. Speaker, in response to that second question I will refer my friend to the last part of my answer. I cannot answer the allegation that was in the question. My position as minister is that AECB in fact discovered the leakage. As I said, the information I received was that the monitoring system was not working for between 15 and 17 hours. At the present time AECB is on site.

We have met with company officials and the province of Saskatchewan. The Minister of the Environment and I have discussed this issue today as well. We want answers for what has happened. We want that fully aired, fully investigated. I am sure my colleague, the Minister of the Environment, and I would be very interested, not only in having that information but in making it public to assure people what happened, what the danger level, if any, was, and how it can be corrected in order that we do not have the incident repeated.

AIRPORTS

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. The previous Liberal government gave an unprecedented 49–year lease on the Boundary Bay airport in Delta when it was re–activated in 1983. Since the lease was granted there have been many complaints both from individuals and companies who utilize the airport. Until recently all of these complaints had been essentially stonewalled in the political and bureaucratic system.

In order to clarify the situation at Boundary Bay, would the minister consider an inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the granting of the lease and the operating record of the lease holders? In view of the fact that a new group wants to take over that lease, would the minister consider either cancelling or renegotiating the lease so that the municipality of Delta would be involved in the operation and management of this very important economic generator in Delta?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend my friend for his question. I know that he is a former alderman for the city of Delta. The airport of Boundary Bay represents one of the key factors in the development of air transportation in the Vancouver area.

I know that the officers of the department are working particularly on this file but I would like to undertake, on his request, to make my own investigation about this lease. I will report to the member later.

* * *

FORESTRY

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Forestry. Given the fact that forestry is the single largest sector of the economy in New Brunswick, employing approximately 38,000 people and accounting for 47 per cent of the total exports in the province of New Brunswick, I am interested to know from the minister when the ERDA, the economic agreement between the federal and provincial governments, will be signed. Given the fact that the fisheries and agricultural agreements have already been signed, can the minister expedite this as quickly as possible?

• (1150)

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of State (Forestry)): Mr. Speaker, I am able to confirm that sufficient resources have been identified to construct and negotiate an agreement with New Brunswick. In fact $91 million has been earmarked for a new agreement. Such an agreement will satisfy the needs of the forestry community as well as accommodating certain important national objectives.

I want to thank the hon. member for his constructive input and I can tell him that negotiations are going very well. I should be in a position very soon to announce and sign the agreement.

* * *

EDUCATION

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Secretary of State. The Canadian Federation of Students is here today in Ottawa from all across Canada. Representatives from colleges, universities and other institutions of higher learning are here to fight the brutal attack of government on higher education. There has been a $7 billion slash of transfer payments over eight years, less money for training and retraining, and the government has not honoured its promises in research and development.

What will the minister and this government do to ensure that we do secure the future of our youth, that we protect our competitiveness, that we not put the nation at risk, that we have the human intellectual capital to be leaders and not followers?

Hon. Gerry Weiner (Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Citizenship)): Mr. Speaker, we recognize this as a very high priority; it is a national priority. Our human resource development is very important for our international competitiveness. It is not necessarily the amount of money that is being put into the program. We now have the second highest public sector spending in the world, from what I understand, second only to Sweden.

What is important to note is that there is a desire by many Canadians to examine the full system and see whether we are effectively getting the maximum use of the resources available.

Mr. Duhamel: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is to the same minister.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I do not question the Minister's comments, and in fact I think he makes some very good comments, but I question the action that was taken. You know perfectly well that the Federation objects to this government's brutal attack on the quality of education and on the access our young people have to colleges and universities. Does the Minister agree that students are Canada's future and that we must invest more in order to ensure that we have the knowledge and skills we need to become leaders?

Hon. Gerry Weiner (Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Citizenship)): Mr. Speaker, on November 21 I intend to meet both students and professors for an in-depth discussion. I am very much aware of the situation. I merely want to repeat that this governement has introduced a number of initiatives.

[*English*]

—the network of Centres of Excellence, $240 million; the Canada Scholarship Program, $80 million; the literacy program; the increased funding to the granting councils. There is absolutely nothing this government has to be ashamed of in the area of the development of human resources.

In addition, there is a desire by Canadians to have a full examination of what we are doing. I hope that the member who has just raised the question will be able to participate in the dialogue and that, in a co-operative fashion, we can find out how we can deliver a fully effective system for the resources that are now available.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Deputy Prime Minister. Yesterday, in a hearing before a Quebec disciplinary committee of the Engineers' Order, we learned that a Granby engineer paid former Conservative member of Parliament, Michel Gravel, $5,000 in cash in exchange for helping him to win federal government contracts.

During the hearing yesterday the engineer in question indicated that the former chief of staff to the Prime Minister, Bernard Roy, contacted the engineer in question while the RCMP investigation was under way, and I quote the engineer: "He told me this would only be a little in-house investigation and Gravel would quietly resign. There was not supposed to be any charges or any big scandal".

Could the Deputy Prime Minister explain to the House and to Canadians why the former chief of staff of the Prime Minister was involving himself directly in an RCMP investigation, an investigation which ultimately led to charges and a guilty plea on corruption on the part of a Conservative MP?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, this matter has been before the courts. The charges were fully investigated by the police and a court hearing was held. The individual has been found guilty and served his sentence. As far as we are concerned, justice has been served.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, the question was not whether justice has been served with respect to Michel Gravel. The question was why on earth was the Prime Minister's former chief of staff directly involved at the level of an RCMP investigation into serious charges of corruption? That is the question. Particularly in light of recent allegations, who in fact directs the RCMP in this country today? Is it the commissioner of the RCMP, is it the Solicitor General or is it the Prime Minister's office. Who runs the RCMP?

Mr. Lewis: The commissioner of the RCMP runs the RCMP. If my colleague has any evidence which he wishes to bring before the RCMP he should do so.

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Mr. Speaker, I would like to address my question to the Minister of Finance. In his absence perhaps his parliamentary secretary could try to give me an answer.

With increasing tuition fees and higher costs of living, more and more Canadians are finding it difficult to attend post-secondary educational institutions. Yet maximum student loan levels have not increased since 1984, funds for aboriginal post-secondary students have been capped and the GST will hit books and other educational materials. According to the Canadian Federation of Students, who are in town today, less than 1 per cent of

Canada's 450,000 part-time students found student aid adequate for their 1987-88 needs.

If millions of dollars were made available to sell Canadians through daily newspapers, a tax that they do not want, why can the government not increase funds for student financial aid?

Hon. Gerry Weiner (Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Citizenship)): Mr. Speaker, we have a Canada student loan program which this year, from what I understand, will have about $400 million available. Some 42 per cent of all post-secondary students are now taking advantage of the Canada student loan program.

We do make a significant contribution to post-secondary education. From what I am advised close to 58 per cent of the dollar is our share of the contribution.

As far as comments on whether more can be done with the existing program, there is a current examination of the plan. We are trying to see how it can more effectively meet the needs of the part-time students, the disabled and women. Hopefully, we will have the advice of the member and all members of Parliament in seeing that we help those who really need the help.

* * *

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is to the Minister of Youth since the Secretary of State does not answer questions. It is in relation to the government's inaction on the GST.

Under the GST, people who earn more than $61,100 a year are eligible for a larger sales tax credit than those who make less than $61,100. That provision deliberately discriminates against students of this country. Why has the Minister of State for Youth remained silent on this issue? When is he going to start standing up for students of this country, the future of this nation?

• (1200)

Hon. Gerry Weiner (Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Citizenship)): Mr. Speaker, all Canadian university and college students are exempt from the payment of the GST on tuition and tutoring fees.

In addition, universities, colleges and public libraries will receive substantial subsidies on their purchases to ensure that their tax burdens do not increase.

Of course, to the extent that students make purchases as consumers, they will pay the tax on the same basis as other Canadians.

Mr. Speaker: A single question, the hon. member for York Centre.

* * *

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. In light of evidence being obtained on a number of fronts, including the developments at the engineering professional hearing that is referred to in the media this morning, an atmosphere of doom is developing over the RCMP which recalls the momentous resignation of Commissioner Nicholson of the RCMP who refused to obey the political direction being given by Prime Minister Diefenbaker.

In light of these developments, I ask the Minister of Justice for his assurance that any members of the RCMP who come forward with evidence against their superiors, or against officials in other departments, will be protected in their careers by the Minister of Justice. I want to ask him to take steps and what steps he will take to assure those members of the RCMP who are coming forward to tell the truth will not be harassed.

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I think that question is much below the dignity of the member who levied it. I think that we all have high respect for the RCMP for truth, and for justice. We are trying in this place to maintain that. That is why we have fought to make sure that nothing that is said in this place in any way endangers a fair trial for anybody.

I think it is about time that my friend concentrated on fair trials rather than muck-raking.

POINT OF ORDER

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I thank the House for its co-operation. In response to questions asked by the member for Prince Albert—Churchill River, I received some additional information which, hopefully, will be reassuring to the native people about whom he asked.

First, a community meeting was held last night to discuss the situation at the Collins Bay mine and the affected area. If the water is found to be unsafe for drinking, arrangements will be made for alternate water supplies.

Regional officials of the Department of Indian Affairs have been trying to contact the chief and are on their way to the community. Due to bad weather they have been delayed but should arrive shortly. We will keep on monitoring the situation.

Mr. Funk: Mr. Speaker, in response to the minister's statement, I wish to point out to him that in Cameco's release yesterday it says it was established that the monitoring equipment performed as designed and that the situation could have been reported shortly after the problem occurred. That is the information I have from Cameco.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

EXCISE TAX ACT AND EXCISE ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed from Wednesday, November 8, consideration of the motion of Mr. Loiselle that Bill C-20, an Act to amend the Excise Tax Act and the Excise Act be now read a third time and do pass; and the amendment of Mr. Manley (p. 5750).

Mr. Speaker: It being twelve o'clock, pursuant to the order made Tuesday, November 7, 1989, the House will now proceed to the deferred division on the amendment to Bill C-20, an Act to amend the Excise Tax Act and the Excise Act.

Call in the Members.

The House divided on the amendment (Mr. Manley), which was negatived on the following division:

• (1230)

(*Division No. 127*)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Angus
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bélair
Benjamin
Black
Blondin
Caccia
Catterall
Duhamel
Funk
Gagliano
Gray (Windsor West)
Harb
Heap
Hovdebo
Karpoff
Kristiansen
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
Maheu
Marchi
Mifflin
Mitchell
Nault
Nystrom
Pagtakhan
Parker
Proud
Rideout
Robinson
Rodriguez
Speller
Stupich
Tobin
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—71

Anawak
Arseneault
Baker
Bellemare
Bevilacqua
Blackburn (Brant)
Boudria
Callbeck
Dionne
Fontana
Gaffney
Gauthier
Guarnieri
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hopkins
Jordan
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)
MacAulay
MacWilliam
Manley
McGuire
Milliken
Murphy
Nunziata
Ouellet
Parent
Peterson
Prud'homme
Riis
Rocheleau
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Stewart
Taylor
Wappel

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Beatty
Bertrand
Bosley
Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Brightwell
Cadieux
Cardiff
Champagne (Champlain)
Chartrand
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cole
Cook
Corbeil
Crosby (Halifax West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dick
Domm
Epp
Feltham
Fontaine
Friesen

Atkinson
Belsher
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bouchard (Roberval)
Bourgault
Browes
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Charest
Clark (Yellowhead)
Clifford
Collins
Cooper
Corbett
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Dobbie
Duplessis
Fee
Ferland
Fretz
Gérin

Gibeau
Greene
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Hogue
Hudon
Jacques
Kempling
Langlois
Lewis
Loiselle
Marin
Mayer
McCreath
Merrithew
Monteith
Nicholson
Oberle
Paproski
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Sparrow
Tardif
Thompson
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vien
Weiner
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Guilbault
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Horner
Hughes
Jourdenais
Koury
Layton
Littlechild
MacDonald (Rosedale)
Masse
Mazankowski
McKnight
Mitges
Moore
Nowlan
O'Kurley
Plamondon
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Robitaille
St-Julien
Siddon
Stevenson
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Quebec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van de Walle
Vézina
Vincent
Wilbee
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Winegard—118

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I declare the amendment lost.

[*English*]

Mr. Masse: Send a message to Ottawa.

Mr. Mazankowski: Go to the UN, that's where you can abstain.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I just want to make sure that the people listening do not think the heckling is for me.

I was going to suggest, Mr. Speaker, that in the customary habit of this House to save time and to make it more understandable that we apply the vote just taken to the main motion on third reading.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am sure the member for Ottawa—Vanier meant in reverse order.

Is there unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Miss Grey: Of course, I would like it also to be noted, Mr. Speaker, that had I voted on this I would have voted no on the main motion. But, of course, I am concerned about saving time in this House as well.

The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:

(Division No. 128)

YEAS

Members

Anderson
Beatty
Bertrand
Bosley
Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Brightwell
Cadieux
Cardiff
Champagne (Champlain)
Chartrand
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cole
Cook
Corbeil
Crosby (Halifax West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dick
Domm
Epp
Feltham
Fontaine
Friesen
Gibeau
Greene
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Hogue
Hudon
Jacques
Kempling
Langlois
Lewis
Loiselle
Marin
Mayer
McCreath
Merrithew
Monteith
Nicholson
Oberle
Paproski
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Sparrow
Tardif
Thompson
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Vankoughnet
Vien
Weiner
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Winegard—118
Atkinson
Belsher
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bouchard (Roberval)
Bourgault
Browes
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Charest
Clark (Yellowhead)
Clifford
Collins
Cooper
Corbett
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Dobbie
Duplessis
Fee
Ferland
Fretz
Gérin
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Guilbault
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Horner
Hughes
Jourdenais
Koury
Layton
Littlechild
MacDonald (Rosedale)
Masse
Mazankowski
McKnight
Mitges
Moore
Nowlan
O'Kurley
Plamondon
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Robitaille
St-Julien
Siddon
Stevenson
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Quebec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van de Walle
Vézina
Vincent
Wilbee

NAYS

Members

Allmand
Angus
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bélair
Benjamin
Black
Blondin
Caccia
Anawak
Arseneault
Baker
Bellemare
Bevilacqua
Blackburn (Brant)
Boudria
Callbeck

Catterall	Dionne
Duhamel	Fontana
Funk	Gaffney
Gagliano	Gauthier
Gray (Windsor West)	Grey
Guarnieri	Harb
Harvey (Edmonton East)	Heap
Hopkins	Hovdebo
Jordan	Karpoff
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)	Kristiansen
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)	Lee
MacAulay	MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacWilliam	Maheu
Manley	Marchi
McGuire	Mifflin
Milliken	Mitchell
Murphy	Nault
Nunziata	Nystrom
Ouellet	Pagtakhan
Parent	Parker
Peterson	Proud
Prud'homme	Rideout
Riis	Robinson
Rocheleau	Rodriguez
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)	Speller
Stewart	Stupich
Taylor	Tobin
Wappel	Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—71

Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Bill read the third time and passed.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

WEEKLY STATEMENT

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, before the House moves back to the opposition day motion, I would like to ask the government House leader to give us a statement of the business that will be dealt with by the House when we come back.

Second, I would like to ask the government House leader if he and his colleagues would be willing to agree to have the House sit until four o'clock instead of three o'clock. We already have to sit a longer period of time to make up for the statements with respect to Remembrance Day. We have had some time taken up by the vote. In view of the co-operation we have extended in not asking for a second vote, I am wondering if we could have the indulgence of the House in that regard.

The reason I ask this is that there are a number of members who would like to express their views on the subject matter of the opposition day motion.

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, if I could address the last item first. Yes, the government would be prepared to have the House sit until four o'clock today in order to allow for full debate on this matter.

I would like to advise the House that when we return on Monday, November 20, we will commence debate on Bill C-28. Further to the notice given on October 17 of this year, I give another notice, pursuant to Standing Order 57 that at the next sitting of the House, immediately before the reading of Orders of the Day for resuming debate on the motion of the Minister of Finance for second reading and reference to a legislative committee of Bill C-28, an Act to amend the Income Tax Act, the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Federal Post-Secondary Education and Health Contributions Act, the Old Age Security Act, the Public Utilities Income Tax Transfer Act, the War Veterans Allowance Act and a related Act, and any amendment thereto in any other Acts, I shall propose a motion that the debate thereon not be further adjourned.

Some Hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Lewis: On Tuesday, November 21, we will continue debate on Bill C-43, the abortion legislation. We will also continue debate on Bill C-43 on Wednesday, November 22.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 210 petitions.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE—FIRST REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Hon. John W. Bosley (Don Valley West): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade (Situation in Namibia).

BILL C-36—REPORT OF LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Mr. Girve Fretz (Erie): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the report of the Legislative Committee on

Bill C-36, an Act to amend the Advanced Payments for Crops Act and the Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act, with amendment.

STRIKING COMMITTEE—TWENTY-SECOND AND TWENTY-THIRD REPORTS

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the twenty-second and the twenty-third report of the Striking Committee. If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence in the twenty-third report later later this day. I would ask that we dispense with the reading of that report by the Clerk at the table as that report concerns only membership changes to committees.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

* * *

MEMBERS OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF COMMONS CONFLICT OF INTERESTS ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Doug Lewis (for the Deputy Prime Minister) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-46, an act to provide for greater certainty in the reconciliation of the personal interests and duties of office of Members of the Senate and the House of Commons, to establish a Conflict of Interest Commission and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Shall the hon. minister shall have to leave to introduce the bill?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-277, an Act to amend the Criminal Code (destruction of the foetus).

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Shall the hon. member shall have leave to introduce the bill?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this bill, entitled an act to amend the Criminal Code (destruction of the foetus), would make it illegal in Canada to destroy a foetus and would provide for serious punishment for those who destroy a foetus.

There is an exception in this bill to provide for where the life of the foetus was ended as a result of medical treatment necessary to prevent the death of the mother or to remedy a condition that, if left untreated, would likely cause the death of the mother.

Motion agreed to, bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

* * *

• (1240)

[*Translation*]

STRIKING COMMITTEE

CONCURRENCE IN TWENTY-THIRD REPORT OF STRIKING COMMITTEE

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, if the House agrees, I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier):

That the twenty-third report of the Striking Committee presented earlier today be adopted.

[*English*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

PETITIONS

SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present today petitions gathered through the offices of the *Seniors Today* weekly newspaper in Winnipeg, Manitoba. There are over 18,000 of names of people who have gathered together to protest the April 1989 budget of this government which would undermine the principle of universality in Canada, which would discriminate against recipients of old age security and family allowance benefits by making them bear an unfair burden of tax, irrespective of geographical location or other factors, and which would tax back old age

security and family allowance benefits in part or in their entirety, depending on the recipient's income.

All these people from Manitoba have joined together in calling upon Parliament and the government to change these measures suggested by the government, and to preserve the principle of universality in Canadian social policy.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Gus Mitges (Bruce—Grey): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour and the privilege to table 13 more petitions in the House containing the names of 1,891 residents of Guelph, Chatham, Wallaceburg, Blenheim, Tilbury, Ridgetown and Thamesville, Ontario, who strongly believe in the right to life of the unborn.

The petitioners ask Parliament to legislate a law to protect life from conception, a law which seeks to save the life of both mother and child. I strongly support the petitioners' position.

Mr. Girve Fretz (Erie): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition which contains the names of many people from my riding who are concerned that there is no legislation in Canada to define and protect the life of the unborn child, and who now call upon Parliament to enact legislation which will effectively protect the life of the preborn child without distinction as to the stage of development.

* * *

[*Translation*]

OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, today it is again my duty to table 20 petitions signed by residents of the riding of Ottawa—Vanier in which petitioners wish to express their dissatisfaction with the government's proposal to put a 9 per cent tax on goods and services.

Your petitioners point out that the Conservative Government has saddled Canadian taxpayers with at least 31 taxes or tax increases since it came to power in 1984; that it raised the existing sales tax on manufactured goods from 9 per cent in 1984 to 13.5 per cent; that it now wants to introduce a 9 per cent sales tax on goods and services, a tax that will be hidden and will apply to practically everything; that this new universal tax on goods and services will cause financial problems for small business; that it will expose Canadians to a very real possibility of higher inflation, higher interest rates and higher unemployment.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, your petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to reject the goods and services tax.

[*English*]

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour and duty to present a petition on behalf of a number of petitioners from Saskatoon and area who point out that the proposed goods and services tax is an unfair form of taxation because it is so regressive. The petitioners call upon the government to put in a real tax reform and reject the current proposal for a goods and services tax.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today. The first is signed by 352 residents primarily of the city of Thunder Bay and adjoining area, and also from a number of areas in British Columbia, certified by the Clerk of Petitions, with regard to the future of VIA Rail.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to maintain the existing VIA network, upgrade VIA equipment and guarantee VIA sufficient support to carry out its mandate to provide passenger service.

I am sure, had these been signed after the transport committee tabled its report, the petitioners would agree with the recommendations in that report.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I also have a petition signed by 257 residents in the city of Thunder Bay and adjoining areas regarding the proposed goods and services tax. They point out that the government is now trying to tax reading, haircuts, diapers, coffins and home heating fuels. They call upon Parliament to reject the current proposal for a goods and services tax.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Robert E. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from 750 residents of my riding who live along the VIA Rail right of way. They call on Parliament

to maintain the existing VIA network, upgrade VIA equipment, and guarantee VIA sufficient support to carry out its passenger service mandate.

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from a number of Canadians resident in Toronto, Hamilton, Stratford, Kitchener, Stoney Creek, Sudbury, London, St. Thomas, Etobicoke, Ingersol, Woodstock, Windsor, Oakville, Wheatly, Leamington, Wallenburg, and points west, asking that the government cancel its plans for cancelling VIA, modernize the equipment and build a high speed passenger train between Montreal and Windsor. As in duty, your petitioners will ever pray.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiaq):

[*Editor's Note: Member spoke in Inuktitut.*]

I have the honour of presenting a petition signed by residents of Clyde River, pursuant to Standing Order 36, objecting to the proposed GST which was so eloquently defined by the member for Mississauga South as the "gouging and screwing" tax.

EXTRADITION

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of presenting today, pursuant to Standing Order 36, 2,279 signatures of people calling for a shortening of the extradition process. This brings the amount that I have presented in the House to well over 10,000 with almost 100,000 signatures of people across Canada calling for a shortening of the extradition process.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition here signed by 300 citizens of the great riding of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell from such magnificent communities as Wendover, Rockland, St. Paschal and other fine places in my riding. The petitioners are objecting to the GST, the grief and suffering tax which will be imposed on my constituents with the recent proposal of the Conservative government, and they are indicating that this GST is inappropriate.

DAIRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I also wish to present a petition on behalf of dairy producers in my riding who are quite alarmed by the fact that this government has been weak kneed at the GATT in presenting the views of Canadian dairy farmers.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Ross Belsher (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, it is my duty and honour to present on behalf of several hundreds of people in British Columbia two groups of petitions. The petitioners ask the government and humbly pray and call upon Parliament to formulate and legislate a law to protect life from conception, a law which seeks to save the life of both mother and child, which I heartily endorse.

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure today to present a petition, certified by the Clerk of Petitions to be correct, on behalf of Saskatchewan residents from Luseland, Strasbourg and Weyburn, Saskatchewan. The petition protests the removal of oats from the marketing jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board. It calls upon the government not to remove oats from the jurisdiction and to place oats and barley under the Canadian Wheat Board Act so that in future farmers and their organizations must be consulted before changes are made in the marketing of these products.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to rise and present five petitions signed by over 150 constituents of Winnipeg North. They feel that the proposed goods and services tax will truly impose great suffering and grief on them and that the tax will gouge and squeeze them. Hence, they pray that Parliament will reject the proposed goods and services tax.

• (1250)

FISHERIES

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour today to table a petition signed by many of my constituents. These people realize that there is a crisis in the Atlantic fishery, that the livelihood of tens of thousands of Atlantic fishermen and plant workers is in jeopardy and that the whole fishing industry is in grave danger.

These constituents call upon Parliament to request the government to extend its jurisdiction to the very edge of Canada's continental shelf so that Canada can protect

and regulate the fishing stocks so vital to the Atlantic area.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition from over 250 constituents in Ottawa West and friends and colleagues whom they have also contacted. Most of these signatures were gathered at a public meeting in Ottawa West to oppose the goods and services tax. People are objecting to the impact on bowlers, students, music teachers, on reading and numerous other factors and ask the House to reject the goods and services tax.

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today to present to this House three petitions, each of them dealing with the proposed goods and services tax. Of course, it will come as no surprise to anyone in this House that the petitioners are opposed to the proposed goods and services tax. They call upon Parliament to categorically and unequivocally reject any legislation which is brought forward for the purpose of implementing this gouge and scrape tax.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to Standing Order 36. I have a petition certified by the Clerk from residents of Bonavista, Fortune, Catalina, Little Catalina, Elliston, Newman's Cove, Amherst Cove, and Birchy Cove, all areas very close to my home town.

The 39 signatures on this petition represent a group of people who are very concerned with the government's proposal to withdraw its $2.9 billion contribution to the unemployment insurance fund, and in particular the transfer of the $8 million into training. While they are aware of what the government is attempting to do, and that it may well have application in larger areas of the country, it is nevertheless taking money essentially out of their pockets because they will not be able to receive the benefits of this money.

They humbly pray and call upon Parliament to reject these cuts and try to come up with a better policy.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions I would like to present today from my beautiful riding of Nepean. Pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am pleased to present yet another petition with no less than 600 signatures on it from people of my riding. They are very concerned over the possible imposition of the goods and services tax. These are people from all over Nepean who are part of our adult population, or from our business community. In fact, they are from all walks of life in the city.

These petitioners believe the implementation of the GST will cause serious and unfair hardship, place an onerous burden on business and is inflationary. These petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to reject the GST.

OLD AGE SECURITY

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): The second petition, Mr. Speaker, is from 134 petitioners in my riding and it is with regard to the old age security cut-backs in the federal budget. Whereas the senior citizens earning over $50,000 will have their old age pension taxed back, as a result, in 20 years a clawback of OAS will start at $28,000 and affect two million Canadians.

Therefore, the undersigned petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to abolish the clawback of old age security and reaffirm its commitment to universality.

VIA RAIL

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, as the son of a former employee of the railroad who came to this country 40 years ago to help build the railroad, I take great pleasure in presenting to this House several petitions calling on the Government of Canada to come to its senses and not cancel passenger rail service in Canada.

The petitioners totally approximately 200.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table a petition signed by several constituents in the riding of Kingston and the

Islands. Your petitioners are opposed to the goods and services tax and humbly pray and call upon Parliament to reject a tax that is unjust and unfair.

[*English*]

VIA RAIL

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to Standing Order 36 to present four more petitions in a lengthy series of earlier petitions on the subject of VIA Rail. The petitions are signed by many citizens of the community of Revelstoke, and also a number from Nakusp, British Columbia.

My friend, the member for York South—Weston presented a petition on the same subject a few moments ago, and he referred to his father. Revelstoke was the community he came to to work on the CPR a number of years ago.

These petitioners call upon Parliament to maintain VIA Rail, Canada's present national network, to upgrade VIA Rail with new equipment and to give VIA Rail a sufficient budget to maintain its national mandate for passenger service. These petitions come from a community that is at least three hours drive from the closest commercial airport and its roads are cut off by snow and avalanches more than any other community in Canada.

* * *

ORDER PAPER QUESTIONS

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, Question No. 150 will be answered today.

[*Text*]

CANADIAN RESIDENTS—PAYMENT OF FEDERAL INCOME TAX

Question No. 150—**Mr. Wappel:**

As of October 1, 1989, what number of Canadian residents (a) pay federal income tax (b) have paid federal income tax for twenty-five years or more?

Hon. Otto John Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue): (a) Statistics on taxfilers are maintained by taxation year, the most recent year available being 1987. For the 1987 taxation year 13,026,180 Canadian residents paid federal income tax.

(b) No statistics are maintained on the number of Canadian residents who have paid federal income tax for twenty-five years or more.

[*English*]

Mr. Cooper: I ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question enumerated by the parliamentary secretary has been answered. Shall the remaining questions be allowed to stand?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY S. O. 81—VIA RAIL

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Tobin:

That this House approve the recommendation contained in the Second Report of the Standing Committee on Transport, calling for a moratorium in the Government's proposed cuts to VIA Rail.

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Before the Minister contributes to the debate, there have been some discussions among the parties that following the speech by the Minister of Transport and the hon. member for Regina—Lumsden, there is agreement that although we will observe the normal rotation between parties, each party will use its time as it sees fit.

It is my understanding that the government will probably use the normal 20 minutes, plus a 10 minute question and answer period, and that the two opposition parties will split that time ten minutes–five minutes in their case. I would ask for unanimous consent to allow that to occur.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier), on the same point of order.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, in order to assist the Chair during the proceedings, I think Hon. Members should advise the Chair of their intentions before they start to speak. I hereby give notice that I will use ten minutes plus five minutes for questions and comments, so the Chair will not have to guess whether the 10 minutes are up or not. If it is 12, 13, or 14 minutes, it might be a

problem. So I think Hon. Members should say whether they intend to take 10 or 20 minutes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In that case, if Opposition Members use this system, they will have two in a row, which makes 30 minutes. I thank Hon. Members for their comments. Resuming debate. The Minister of Transport (Mr. Bouchard).

[*English*]

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the New Democratic Party for giving me the opportunity to speak immediately. Normally, the hon. member for Regina—Lumsden would speak first, but he graciously agreed to let me speak first.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, for five years the Government of Canada, the present government, has been trying to build a strong economy in this country that will be able to compete with what is becoming a very strong international economy among all trading nations. To succeed, it is imperative, in our view, that the economy continues to prosper in the years to come. I say imperative, not just desirable. The measures we introduced to control the deficit and reduce the national debt were designed with that goal in mind.

The government's commitment to reduce spending and control its finances obviously applies to all sectors, and especially, as far as I am concerned, to the transportation sector.

• (1300)

Mr. Speaker, it is also a fact that transport has always been and always will be an essential component of Canada's economic development. It is also quite clear that we will have to ensure that this network is efficient and that Canadians are able to use it efficiently. If we are to understand the initiatives and decisions being made in the transportation sector today, they must be seen in this perspective. We must consider the financial aspects while at the same time ensuring that we have a transportation network that reflects the deverstity of the country in which we live. The government's initiative are therefore designed with this perspective in mind, while at the same time we must consider that this transportation network must develop in circumstances that provide for a network that is reliable, efficient and profitable, thus giving Canadians a better chance of competing in an increasingly competitive world.

What we must not forget, in the course of today's debate, is that railway transportation is not the only transport mode in this country and is not even the type of transportation Canadians use the most. It is a more traditional mode which has been used for a number of reasons, and those reasons have been around for some time. In 1961, the McPherson Commission recommended abandoning rail passenger services. For 30 years there were a number of studies and attempts to resolve this matter. Once again, when we look at transportation in this country, there is as much air transportation as railway transportation. But there is also marine transport and the automobile which is being used more and more today, and when we talk about freight, trucks have become an essential component, and finally, we also have buses for passenger tranportation.

Mr. Speaker, one principle has always guided the government's actions, as it does now in the transportation sector, and that is; never invest more than we can afford, in other words, invest what we can in a transportation mode, especially one that is being used less and less and is costing us more and more. And we must remember that Canadian taxpayers are footing the bill!

Mr. Speaker, in 1988, and I have often quoted this figure but I would like to remind people: $641 million was spent to prop up VIA Rail, which means a cost of $100 per passenger, and between Jasper and Prince Rupert as much as $483 per passenger. Mr. Speaker, this subsidy does not come out of the blue. It is paid for by all Canadians, although only 3 per cent of them travel by train.

Mr. Speaker, whether we admit it or not, whether we like it or not, whether we want to change it or not, we have to realize that Canadians have given more and more and will give more and more, unless the Royal Commission of inquiry proves the opposite. I am open to any recommendations, but today, Canadians have shown a preference for other modes of transportation.

The automobile is obviously the preferred type of transportation, with, to a lesser extent, air transport and

buses. Eighty five per cent of Canadians travel by car. People will say: The Minister could change that. Mr. Speaker, ministers do not create the trends. Ministers manage the trends. The Minister manages what Canadians want to use as a means of transportation. Contrary to what everybody has been saying, and I am not arguing just for the sake of arguing, VIA Rail is not improving. There has been no improvement in 1988 and 1989. The situation is getting worse, Mr. Speaker. In 1988, revenues went up 13 per cent but the government spent $68 million on subsidies. Mr. Speaker, this is not a fairy tale thought up by the minister. These are figures that cannot be challenged. These are the figures we have produced time and time again, and unfortunately, the report produced yesterday by the Transport Committee says: Figures can be interpreted in many different ways, and we are not sure about the figures that were provided. Not all figures provided by Transport Canada or VIA Rail have been systematically and affectively challenged.

[*English*]

Prompt action had to be taken to stop this drain on the public purse. The motion before the House today would seek to impose a moratorium, a moratorium which could cost the taxpayer any amount of money because there is no limit. It means it could be $500 million, it could be $1 billion; it could be more. We do not know because the committee does not recommend any time limit for the moratorium. As the Premier of Ontario and many others, including mayors of the cities, said this morning a moratorium would cost money. The bottom line is that the committee does not say where we will get the money. I would be interested if the committee had not only proposed a moratorium but stated where we would take the money as well. Almost everybody in this country admits that the deficit is too high, and we have to make cuts. My friends on the other side are totally opposed to the GST or any increase of tax. If you do not increase the tax you have to cut, and you have to cut where people are the least affected by the cuts. In other words, where just 3 per cent of Canadians are using the service.

We would have expected the committee to say, if it is against the tax: "We are for the cuts, but we don't want to cut VIA Rail, so we will go elsewhere." Where, Mr. Speaker? That is the question. Neither the mayors nor the premiers this morning, nor anybody on the other side, said where we should cut. There is no miracle to get money for the deficit.

I can only assume that Canadians would be expected to pay the bill again. And I don't believe that this government could accept that. That is why I say I am sorry but I could not agree with any moratorium. We will not provide the millions of dollars needed to subsidize VIA Rail again.

I believe that the committee should have taken the opportunity in this report to look at the future of rail passenger transportation in the long run, not in the short term, on the verge of the premiers' conference. The committee's timing in terms of the report is interesting. It is very strange that the last witnesses appeared at noon, Mr. Speaker, Tuesday. Yesterday morning the report was ready. The timing is good. I expected the committee to give me a perspective of the future of transportation and on the way the government and the Canadian taxpayer could have a more affordable alternative to what we have today.

We hear references to Amtrak. Of course many other countries are making decisions concerning rail passenger services based on their own demographic and geographic reality. When we talk about Amtrak I am amazed that the report does not say that Amtrak has the ability to abandon any route when it wants. That is not the case in Canada, Mr. Speaker. When they use an example like Amtrak they should say also that in 1971 it cut 75 per cent of the network. We want to cut 40 per cent and we are accused of being unCanadian and not having in mind the spirit of Canada. I believe we must always be consistent. When we do something, we live with the consequences. I will give an example. We cannot have the tax system in the United States along with the services in Sweden. We would sometime have to consider using a system with all it represents.

The decision has been made in light of the fact that Canada is the second largest country in the world while, at the same time, we have a population of 25 million people. VIA service must be consistent with the reality of the country and the density of the Quebec–Windsor corridor. At the same time we have different needs. In Saskatchewan it is not like Toronto or Montreal and we have to provide service in the best way that we can afford. At the same time the mayors of cities along the corridor say "We have 60 per cent of Canadians living here and we want all the services here". I believe the government has been wise in its decision that, in the perspective of the reality of Canada, it should share the

benefits everywhere. All Canadians are aware that we must reduce the burden of the debt. Canadians have been asked to tighten their belts, and VIA could not be an exception. Should we ask Canadians to do something and say that VIA is an exception? It is not viable. It is terribly expensive. Canadians do not use it. But we keep VIA Rail for $641 million, $800 million or $1 billion a year, it doesn't matter. We spend that money when we have other modes of transportation that need to be supported.

• (1310)

The government has distinguished itself during the past year through fiscal responsibility and judicious allocation of federal financial resources.

Mr. Milliken: After doubling the debt.

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): The member opposite should know that there are so many examples to take on this side of the House on the management of the country and its finances. The member should cry over the legacy that his party left to the country. Canadians have to pay today for errors made at the time the Liberals were in power. They never knew that when money is scarce it has to be spent in the best way, where it is most needed and where it is most likely to produce results.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues opposite and all my fellow citizens to look at the record, to judge the facts and accept them. Of course we have had hard decisions to make since 1984. Mr. Speaker, I have been a Minister in this Government for five years and every year, difficult decisions have had to be made in every department. We made them because we did not want the situation we inherited in 1984. It is not what I would have wanted to inherit, but it is what we got.

Mr. Speaker, about a year ago now, Canadians recognized the hard choices the Government made and the decisions it took. Today Canadians accept responsible financial management combined with sound economic policies that lead to economic growth. This morning at the opening of the First Ministers' Conference, the Prime Minister recalled that Canada's economic growth is one of the best in the world, especially in the last five years. Of course we see the break in 1984 and we understand why.

Mr. Speaker, I tell Canadians, I tell my fellow citizens and my colleagues in this House that as responsible people, we do not have the right, even in transport, even with the difficult decisions that have to be made for VIA Rail, to leave a legacy for which Canadians would hold us responsible for not making decisions when the time came to make them.

[*English*]

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the minister, as I always do. We do not see eye to eye on a number of things, and certainly on VIA Rail we do not see eye to eye.

I want to respond first to the minister's challenge when he says that opposition members have not said where we would cut. We have said where we would cut. We have said that if you lower interest rates you would save $1 billion a year on your deficit. A drop of 1 per cent would save a billion and a half dollars. We say drop it down. There are answers out there if you look for them.

I want to put to the minister a number of very specific questions arising out of the report of the committee. He answered in the House today that a moratorium was not acceptable to him. We regret that, but for now I accept that as his view and hopefully we will be able to convince the Prime Minister to intervene.

The other part of the recommendation was a change in the royal commission to specifically ask it to look at rail passenger service and to come up with an interim report that deals with things like a legislative mandate and future equipment requirements. My first question is whether the minister will agree to the second part of the committee's report, which are the changes to the royal commission.

The second question is this. Is the government going to bring in a bill to give VIA its legislative mandate? Now, the third question. Under the minister's predecessor, Trans-Consortium—which was Bombardier and UTDC Cancar—came up with a design for transcontinental passenger equipment, a price that was acceptable to VIA and to the companies, but was eventually turned down by cabinet. Trans-Consortium then offered to finance the construction of those cars and rent them to VIA Rail. I want to ask the minister in all seriousness

whether he would now consider going back to Trans-Consortium and saying yes, that the government will look at that kind of private sector involvement.

The final question, again coming from the report and the testimony, was the whole matter of the protected routes. We can quibble on the figures, whether it is $45 million or $50 million or whatever, but in terms of a principle, would the minister agree with the thought that came through the committee that the funding for the public good should not be part of his budget but should come from general government financing so that it does not distort VIA's books? I would like some very serious answers to those four serious questions.

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, I think the questions are good and I will try to do my best to give what I consider my best answers.

I want to say, first, that I think it is a big temptation to believe that we can just with our hands make a decision to reduce the interest rate. I know something though.

Mr. Benjamin: Did it before?

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, the member from Regina—Lumsden was there at the time when Canadians were so upset about the rate of inflation, 12 and 13 per cent. Canadians would perhaps have agreed at the time to have a 12 per cent interest rate but with a 4 or 5 per cent inflation rate, as we have today. I believe the policy of the Minister of Finance is good at a time when he can control the inflation. I do not believe he could serve Canadians better, if the inflation rate would be what it was at the time.

The member asks about a change to a royal commission. I think my friend will understand that the three other questions depend upon the answer we give to the first. You will understand what I mean. The mandate of the royal commission has been determined in a way that we could answer the basic question of integration of transportation modes for the year 2000. If there is any proposal in the interim report in one and a half years at that time it will be possible to determine whether we can immediately answer a few questions.

The mandate of the commission has not been tailored with regard to VIA Rail. It has been determined with regard to all transportation modes and it does not intend to answer, specifically, the problem of VIA Rail.

On the question of VIA Rail, I have been told by the Mayor of Quebec that it was euthanasia because we were killing the system.

I am not that pessimistic. We need, though, to have major surgery. We are keeping the system alive. The Premier of Ontario said this morning that his government is working with the province of Quebec to determine new technology, high speed trains, and we are fully supportive of that initiative. But first we have to look at the commission in the broad perspective of all transportation. For that reason we could not reduce the mandate to just VIA Rail and look at a practical problem which perhaps will be answered after the commission makes its report. I am one of those who believe that VIA Rail deserves to have its own legislation to be able to manage differently than it does so far. We have asked a commission to determine the future of transportation. In a year and a half we will see exactly what direction it believes we should take with all transportation, including VIA Rail. At the time, I suppose, if the commission considers the viability of VIA Rail and it makes a proposal on the legislation we will be able to determine the legislation, which corresponds to the new reality. With the very heavy agenda that we have, the legislation will not be ready before a year an a half anyhow. In the meantime, I believe we could perhaps miss out on the competence of the commission.

• (1320)

The two last questions refer to the question of new cars. Even if we want to go to the Consolidated Fund or the Department of Finance and so on, management of the deficit is in the way. If you take $100 million, it will be the same money that I would need for a moratorium. I mean that we would need to pay for that.

You ask why not give the private sector the capacity to lease. Once again I refer to the commission. If it makes a recommendation of this kind, we will consider the proposal as I believe it should be done. It is the same for the protected routes. First, for those remote routes, my friend knows that I want to review them. We give the same example of Jasper–Prince Rupert which costs $483 for one ticket. I wonder if there isn't a cheaper mode of transportation. Sometimes we wonder if it wouldn't be cheaper to use a helicopter, because at $483 a ticket I

believe it couldn't be more expensive. That is why we want to review. We have already started to review to see if we couldn't truncate a few of these routes. It is something that we are looking at.

In conclusion, I know there are problems that my friend honestly considers. I do not question the honesty and the fairness of members on the other side. We must keep in mind that we are very tied in terms of the operation with the deficit that we have and our resources in Transport Canada. It is a very tied operation in terms of what we can put into the system. If we put in $650 million or implant any of the proposals here with more money, it will be dramatic not only for Transport but for the deficit. I am looking forward to the day when we can give a message to Canadians in terms of deficits and cuts and for six months maintain the same message.

Mr. Pagtakhan: Mr. Speaker, in answer to a question from the member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte this morning, the Minister of Transport indicated in the preamble that there was no time limit to the moratorium being requested. He seemed to imply that were there a definite time period he would be prepared to accept the motion.

Could there at least be a moratorium until such time as the commission has made its report and the Minister has had time to study its recommendations, in fairness to the process?

The minister spoke of major surgery. He will agree, as an analogy, that one would not first amputate the leg of a patient and then call a doctor and ask if the operation was indicated to begin with. That would be the wrong process.

I ask the minister whether he would be prepared to consider a moratorium at least until such time that the royal commission appointed by the government has had an opportunity to do its study, make its report and he has had the time to go over its recommendations?

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, what I meant during Question Period is, of course, that I do not intend to accept any moratorium. It is a basic question. It is a question of resources. After January 15, the cost will be there and I cannot afford it.

If I gave the perception that I would accept a moratorium or if I said there is no time limit to it, it was essentially and exclusively to determine the range of the costs. The hon. member mentioned waiting until the commission makes its report. That means about one and a half years, a minimum of 18 months, before the interim report. What would that represent, $200, $300 or $400 million dollars? It is in the range of that possibility. We do not have the money.

Once again when we talk about moratorium, we talk about money. We could say as the report states that we could give a different interpretation to the figures and so on. We can sustain what we have said. The figures we have are good and safe, but at the end of the day when you talk about a moratorium, it is always a question of money.

Every time I ask the question from which resources will we take the money the answer has to be we will cut elsewhere, say, the interest rate. I believe that we have to put in our minds that there is no possibility today with the resources that we have to avoid the decision that was made.

I ask my colleague, as I ask all Canadians, to understand that what we have to do is not easy. It is something which basically is a sacrifice that we have to make. But at the same time, I believe we are working on the future of transportation to be sure that we will be able to develop it.

We already have a national, affordable and a sustainable network but it could be more national, more sustainable, depending upon the decision made by the commission. We need the money and if we do not have the money two years from now, perhaps we would have to cut all services, which is obviously not what I want.

Mr. Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I know that the minister did not take up all his time. I wonder, with the consent of the House, if I might be permitted to ask him one brief question?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Very well.

Mr. Blaikie: I would like to ask the minister about a matter that I know he is aware of because it was raised in a meeting between himself and the Minister of Transport of Manitoba. That has to do with service to remote cottage communities between Winnipeg and Farlane, Ontario. In the minister's announcement he included a

commitment to preserve service to remote areas. Presumably, remote areas mean places which are not serviced by any other mode of transportation.

As I think the minister is aware, there are communities between Winnipeg and Farlane, Ontario, which can only be reached by rail and they are served, according to the minister's plans now, only by the Transcontinental service which will run over the Winnipeg–Capreol line. Not only does this train leave at times which are completely out of whack with times when people may want to go to their cottages, but there is also some question as to whether or not you would want a Transcontinental train to be stopping at all of those places anyway. I understand from a media article that the minister was going to give this problem his attention to see if some special arrangement could be made, at least in the summertime, to get these people to their camps and back to where they have had investments over many generations.

I would like to know from the minister where that process is at. Has he had a chance to look at it? What is the state of his thinking on that matter?

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): Yes, Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact, as I said to Mr. Driedger from Manitoba, that matter is still under review. It is a very particular case. People use that train to go to their cottages for the weekend. It is really particular because it is not in the spirit of what we call remote services. I agreed at the request of the minister to take a look at it. It was still under review at the department, either last week or the week before. I have not yet received the report.

• (1330)

Once again, it is very particular. It is basically a leisure service because people are going to their cottages. On that basis, it has to be seen in the perspective of all Canada. If three, four, five or six other services might have to be cut, it has to be seen in that perspective. The answer will come up later, because it has not as yet been treated by the department.

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina—Lumsden): Mr. Speaker, I have been a member of the House for 21 years and for 21 consecutive years a member of the transport committee. The minister is the twelfth or thirteenth minister during those years. Throughout the whole time I have been surrounded by amateurs and ignorance when it comes to transportation. With my years on the railway, together with those of my father and grandfather, and the 21 years with the transport committee, I think I know a bit about it. I do not pose as an expert, by any means.

The minister referred early in his remarks to Amtrak and how it cut so many routes in 1971. Amtrak cut all the duplicate routes, two or three lines running to New York, to Chicago, from Chicago to Detroit, from Chicago to Los Angeles or Seattle, down to one line. That is exactly what was done by VIA in 1977–78. There was no use having two parallel railway lines, duplicating a service. It made transportation sense economically and it ended duplication. It also saved a lot of money. The specious comparison put forward by the minister does not stand up. It never has.

The cuts in VIA Rail according to the minister and the Minister of Finance will save money. Those who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat. The cuts in VIA Rail in 1981–82 cost the government more and cost VIA Rail more than what the savings were, and that was only a 21 per cent cut. It is not that they just do not understand; they do not care.

There is the travesty of the Department of Finance doing the studies for reference levels of subsidy for VIA Rail. I put it to you, Mr. Speaker: Where in hell was the minister of Transport? We have asked. In fact questions went on the order paper about those studies, but they were not done by transport; they were done by the Department of Finance.

When it came to environment there were two farces. Who did the study for the Department of the Environment? The Department of Transport. My question is: Where was the Minister of the Environment? Let us look at that so–called environmental study. It dignifies it to use the word "study". It is not a study; it is another farce. It does not hold any water at all for anyone, expert or non–expert on environmental impact.

The government and its adherents for all these years have advocated sound business practices. One sound practice in business is that if you go into business or you are continue in business you have to operate not only efficiently and with high productivity. You also have to operate with the latest and most modern equipment.

If a private corporation had gone to a banker anywhere in the world and asked for a loan to operate a passenger railroad with equipment from 30 to 50 years old needing repair and refurbishing, with no prospect of making a nickel or even breaking even, he would have been laughed out of the bank or even out of town.

It has been pointed out not only by myself but by independent experts that had new equipment been put on stream starting in 1977–78, equipment with a life span of 30 to 50 years, the savings in the operation and maintenance costs would have paid for the cost of the new equipment in about seven years. That is a sound business practice.

What did the previous government and this government do? They refused to order the equipment. They did finally smarten up and realized they had to get some new locomotives or the thing would have ground to a halt. If you want to reduce the subsidy to VIA Rail annually by tens of millions of dollars, then the placement of the new rolling stock is fundamental. You cannot do it without the new rolling stock.

The Trans-Orient, a consortium of builders of railway rolling stocks, has the best expertise in the world, or as good as any in the world; let's put it that way. Would you believe, Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada has put up the guaranteed financing for new rolling stock built by Bombardier for Amtrak? The Minister of Transport and his department and the Minister of Finance and his department have yet to answer that question. How come we can provide the financing for new rolling stock as the Government of Canada on behalf of the taxpayers for a passenger railway in the United States, but we cannot do it for our own passenger railway in Canada? It boggles the mind.

I repeat for the umpteenth time that you must have in a rail passenger corporation people who know something about transportation economics and transportation marketing. I feel extremely sorry for most, not all, of the management at VIA Rail since 1977. They have not been allowed to function. They have not been allowed to do what they knew had to be done to make VIA Rail succeed.

• (1340)

VIA Rail management in the past 12 years has been required to function within the framework of government policy. Government policy has annually restricted VIA Rail. I coined the phrase in 1978 "VIA Rail, designed to fail". This government and the previous one had no intention as a matter of policy to make it possible for VIA Rail to succeed.

I find most distressing all the talk and whatnot that has gone on in this place and outside this place about parliamentary reform, the independence of committees, and the government paying attention to what the House of Commons and the members thereof have to say.

It is obvious in this instance and in other ones—and it will be in future ones—that the government makes a decision and then after the fact a parliamentary committee using its independence decides to hold hearings on the matter. The government after the fact appoints a royal commission. If you have ever played poker or any other kind of gambling games, the one thing you are bound to lose at, a lead pipe cinch, is to play against a stacked deck. This deck has been stacked since 1977.

The minister asks: "Where are you going to get the money?" My colleague said that if you lower the interest rate 1 per cent the government would save $1.5 billion. All the financial experts I have listened to and read and heard over the last year or two said that the most sensible spread between Canadian and U.S. interest rates was a maximum of 3 per cent. We are now up to a 4.5 per cent or 5 per cent spread between the interest rates here and in the U.S.

I understand and appreciate the historical reasoning that having our interest rates higher than theirs will attract investment and all that. The spread has now reached the point of increasing our deficit and preventing the government of the day and Parliament from acting the way they should on things such as a national rail passenger system.

The committee was, to put it nicely, very diplomatic, very positive. We could have tried to say things that were a lot tougher and meaner. We heard from over 30 groups and individuals, and something over 100 people were part of those groups. Of all the individuals, groups and whatnot we heard from three agreed with the government proposal. One was the Minister of Transport. Well that is understandable, to put it nicely. The other was Mr. Lawless, that coyote in the chicken coop who is running both CN and VIA Rail. The third was the

representative of the bus companies. I guess you could say that that figures.

I noticed with great interest that the witnesses were from right across the sociological and political spectrum of Canada. Trade unionists, free enterprisers, chambers of commerce, mayors of cities and towns of different political stripes were unanimous in opposing what the government is proposing.

Most interesting, since tourism is such a valuable industry in this country, was a witness we heard yesterday who is a tour group operator. He is only a small operator. There are dozens of others who do much more business, who book space on VIA Rail. He cannot do it any more. Just that one little firm did something like $4 million to $5 million worth of business last year and considers VIA Rail a business partner.

When the vice-president of Amtrak was in front of the committee he did not try to tell us what we should do. He just told us some facts and gave us some information. This is to give you a good illustration of what has been done to VIA Rail and the taxpayers since 1977. He told us the Amtrak trains that run from the U.S. border to Montreal, from the U.S. border to Toronto, have to pay Canadian railroads three times as much as they pay American railroads to run their passenger trains over their tracks. If that does not tell my hon. friends opposite something, I do not know what else could.

There is another item. VIA Rail had to part with $14.5 million last year in provincial and federal diesel fuel taxes. Name me another country where a transportation company that has to build, maintain and operate its own right-of-way has to pay fuel taxes which are nothing more than a subsidy to road users. There was $14.5 million in wasted taxpayers' money. It is unfair treatment of VIA Rail, CN and CP. Why in God's name are they paying diesel fuel taxes for their diesel locomotives? If they could run them down the Trans-Canada Highway they would be quite happy to pay those diesel fuel taxes. It is another example of one of the cards in the stacked deck on VIA Rail.

The committee worked very hard and very sincerely and, as my hon. friend over there will agree, we worked many hours. We heard all the witnesses and whether we agreed or disagreed with a witness, we were impressed. We worked hard at coming up with a report that hopefully all of us but certainly most of us from all sides of the House could support.

That brings me to my closing remarks. If parliamentary reform means anything at all, then the government can do no less than act upon our recommendations. We had a unanimous report. This is only the second time, by the way, this has happened in my 21 years here, a unanimous report of the transport committee.

After our trip to Europe we made a unanimous report which the government has ignored every since. Why did we bother? Why did we waste taxpayers' money and the expense to all those witnesses out of their own pockets if the government was going to ignore the committee's report?

• (1350)

Similarly, the royal commission is an academic exercise. It is already a *fait accompli*, what this government intends to do about transportation. Members of the government have jet engines for brains. Everything the government has done at airports, ports, the seaway and Via Rail has been backward, the opposite to what it should have been doing.

Is it not interesting that VIA Rail's subsidies are cut three times a week? Well, gee whiz, 12 so-called self-sustaining airports lost $60 million last year and have debts of over $800 million. Why do we not make those 10 airports operate only three days a week?

Surely what we recommended to Parliament and to this House makes sense and provides a chance for VIA Rail to succeed, instead of the deliberate activity of this government to have it fail.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Langlois: Madam Speaker, I listened very closely to the remarks of my colleague from the riding of Regina—Lumsden (Mr. Benjamin), and I agree that he has a lot of experience and long years of service, particularly with the transport committee.

Still I should like to point out to him that, when he referred to the tour group operator or to the firm which booked space on VIA Rail, the figures he used may have sounded impressive because he was talking in terms of millions of dollars.

Perhaps I might remind him that the tour operator told the committee he had booked 4,000 seats on VIA Rail

over the past five years. This works out to 400 seats a year, a far cry from the figures quoted by my colleague.

[*English*]

I would like to ask my colleague about his experience after many years spent working on the rails and sitting on committees and commissions regarding passenger rail transport in Canada, namely, VIA Rail.

Since 1977, $5 billion of taxpayers' money has been put into VIA Rail, out of which $1 billion was for capital expenditures. In spite of that support provided by the taxpayers of Canada, the number of passengers using VIA Rail has decreased between the years 1980 and 1988. Last year, VIA rail transported fewer people than it did in 1980, in spite of the fact that $5 billion of Canadian taxpayers' money has been put into VIA rail. I would like my hon. colleague to comment on that situation and to give me his views.

Mr. Benjamin: Madam Speaker, to my good friend I want to say that I used the tour operator example. My friend was there to hear that witness. He said that he was about the smallest operator. He also spoke about the dozens of others who do several times more business than he does, with blocks of seats, berths, compartments, bedrooms and so forth on VIA Rail. This is just one small example, the smallest one. You add them all together and you have tens of millions of dollars of tourism business, both direct and indirect, which involves VIA Rail.

On the matter of the $5 billion that has been put into VIA Rail, I do not like people who say "I told you so". I said to the Minister of Transport in 1978, the late unlamented Otto Lang, and every one since then that they should start off with the required investment of $1 billion in capital expenditure for 50 new locomotives and the station property.

You should have seen how the CPR rooked VIA Rail. It tried to get $15 million for the station property in Regina. We finally got it down to $3 million, although it is only worth $1.5 million.

That is the sort of thing that went on. VIA Rail had no choice. Some of that $1 billion was overexpenditure on real estate and station properties. On capital expenditures, most of the $1 billion went into refurbishing old equipment, and that is throwing good money after bad. Some of those cars should have been put on the scrap heap the day VIA Rail began.

To illustrate further to my hon. friend about the victimization of VIA Rail, it had to pay over $77 million to CP and CN for that old equipment that was not fit to operate. The taxpayers got stuck. Both CP and CN had amortized that equipment off their books years before that. It was gravy. Before VIA Rail sold its first ticket, before its first train left the station, VIA Rail started with $100 million in the hole.

What a way to run a railroad. You guys do not know how to run one, never have, and at the rate you are going, you never will.

Mr. Maurice A. Dionne (Miramichi): Madam Speaker, this may be the last chance for this government to demonstrate that it has any respect left for representative democracy and the people of Canada.

You will recall that when the previous government cut a number of VIA routes in 1981 many of the people who now occupy the Treasury benches had fits of apoplexy. I admit that it was not the most glorious act of the previous administration. In fact it was a disaster and a significant contribution to the defeat of that government. I include my own defeat in that as well, but at least I learned something from it. It seems that there must be some kind of elixir in the exercise of power that dulls both perception and memory.

Let us go back a little bit. I was the chairman of the transport committee at the time, and the Deputy Prime Minister was the critic. He was supremely unhappy with the committee hearings. He was particularly incensed that the government would not give the committee a reference to travel and hold public hearings throughout the country. He had his colleagues organize their own travelling road show, and I think he was right. When the Conservatives came to power he restored many of the routes. They tooted their own horn about it, and that is okay too.

However, during the last election campaign Conservative members bragged about the restoration of VIA Rail, even while they had to be secretly planning the decimation of VIA. The Prime Minister took his band of merry men and women to the quiet of the Gatineau Hills and there he ordered the decimation of rail passenger service in Canada. However, there was at least one man who recognized the government's folly in decimating VIA, and he said: "no". That was VIA's president, Mr. Denis

de Belleval, and his tenure consequently was very short indeed.

Now we have the spectacle of the president of Canadian National, the company which could not make rail passenger service viable but which now makes a profit from VIA's operations, becoming the chief executive officer and the chief executioner of VIA. How cynical can a government be?

• (1400)

What about the minister, what has the minister done? Well, he and boredom, but with no conviction. He did not even make the decision. As far as I know it was made while he was ill, behind closed doors in the Prime Minister's office. The minister should have screwed up his courage and resigned rather then being used as a simple puppet by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance.

His actions remind me of a line from *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* "About, about in reel and rout, the death fires danced at night". The death fires are dancing about this government right now.

When is the Deputy Prime Minister going to stand up and be counted? Has he totally changed his mind in a few short years? Is he not afraid to lose what is left of his credibility that once was relatively high? I can understand his embarrassment, but where is his commitment and his conviction? If he had had any conviction he would have done something, he would have at least spoken out. He is just as cynical as the Prime Minister and Canadians will remember what kind of leadership he displayed.

This government's action is the worst blow ever to befall rail passenger service in the entire history of this country. Not only is the railroad being bludgeoned, but lives and livelihoods are callously being destroyed, and for what reason? There has to be something more than profitability to make a country work.

Tory ministers went about the country during the last election campaign talking two main themes; free trade and good financial management. Almost before the writs were returned the debt was out of control and VIA had to be scrapped. Are they making way for Amtrak to come in, pick up the slack and provide rail service in Canada? Wouldn't that be dandy. Is that why we have a new president of VIA who is obviously in a conflict of interest? Talk about putting the fox in charge of the chicken coop, Madam Speaker. I cannot think of a better example.

The government systematically refused to listen to the people even though it knew there was a public outcry. The government never showed any indications that it wanted to listen to the people of Canada. The people of Canada, Madam Speaker, have spoken about their views on the cancellation of VIA Rail. All the Prime Minister and the Minister of Transport were saying was that Canadians could not afford a rail passenger system. What a turnaround, what hypocrisy.

That is what this government was saying, while just about everybody in Canada was saying they needed and wanted an improved transportation system. And it is the people who pay the bills, it is not the government. The government has no money of its own, it has money only from the taxpayers of this country. That is what this government was saying while just about everybody else in western countries, even underdeveloped countries, were modernizing and improving their rail passenger service.

It should surprise no one that the government did not want to have public hearings. The government did not want public hearings because it did not want it known that it is completely out of touch with Canadian reality. But thanks to the determination of most of the members of the Standing Committee on Transport, the committee was able, against the wish to the government, to hold public hearings. Those hearings once again indicated that there is widespread opposition to the government's plan to decimate VIA Rail. And if it has any respect for the democratic process, if it has any respect for its constituency, if it has any respect for the people that it represents, the government must go along with the recommendations of this committee.

The government must declare immediately a moratorium on the announced service cuts to VIA. It must amend, by order in council, the terms of reference of the Royal Commission on a National Transportation System and charge it to examine rail passenger service and make an interim report as soon as possible. How cynical that a government scraps a service then appoints a commission to report three years hence what should have been done.

The government must direct the royal commission to undertake its interim report on rail passenger service to give particular attention to the following items; a legislative mandate, future equipment requirements, improved

productivity, overall environmental impacts, high speed rail in the corridor, and alternatives for the remote services. It must also know that what it is doing is wrong. The government must know that now it is the time to do the right thing. If this government cannot do that, all I can say, Madam Speaker, is "In God's name, go!"

[*Translation*]

Mr. Langlois: Madam Speaker, I listened with great interest to the speech of my colleague from Miramichi. Admittedly, Madam Speaker, he worked long years and has much experience, particularly in the transport sector.

What gets me down when I hear his remarks is the fact that my colleague has been a Member of this House for a good many years, and he was here in 1981 when the Minister of Transport urged the government to reduce federal grants to VIA Rail.

Since the administration at the time governed as if they were a weather cock, changing their mind depending on which way the wind was blowing, the Minister of Transport lost his nerve and continued to hand out annual grants to cover VIA Rail's operating costs.

My question to our colleague is this: when he was sitting on the government benches, what did his government do to give VIA Rail a fighting chance to get out of the red and provide good service?

[*English*]

Mr. Dionne: Madam Speaker, first it gave VIA Rail its own management, which it does not have any more. It did not ask the president of CN or CP to run VIA Rail. It gave it a mandate. While it was not a legislative mandate, it did give it a mandate and it gave it funding to carry out the duties it was supposed to have carried out.

Now, I am not about to pretend that the government of that time handled the situation as I would have liked to have seen it, but it was a lot better than what we have today. It at least put a system in place that could in the future develop and prosper.

We now have a government and a minister that do not want even to talk publicly about VIA Rail any more. We heard the same thing from the minister today that we have heard over and over and over in Question Period. He has obviously been programmed. When he comes into the House he slips a little disk in and it whirls round and round and round and we hear the same gobbledegook every time the minister is asked a question. It does not make any difference what the question is, the answer is always the same and it is simply that we do not have any money. He talked today about the increase in the deficit and I remind the hon. member that it was his government that doubled the total debt in one term over all the debt accumulated since Confederation. That is the kind of mismanagement we are talking about now. While I was not entirely happy with what the previous government did vis-à-vis the setting up of VIA Rail, at least it gave it a mandate and gave it equipment.

• (1410)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Gibeau): Resuming debate. The Hon. Member for Papineau—Saint-Michel (Mr. Ouellet) has the floor.

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise this afternoon and take part in this debate following my colleague the Hon. Member for Miramichi (Mr. Dionne). I am grateful to him for sharing with me the 20 minutes allocated to our Opposition Party.

I feel it is my duty to do so because this Tory Government's decision is extremely unfair, especially to the Province of Quebec. I just cannot understand how a Minister of Transport, representing a Quebec riding at that, can be so determined in eliminating completely the rail transport service, because as a matter of fact, the decisions made by this Tory Government are such that they undermine the very survival of the rail passenger service. It is matter of choice.

Since the Department of Transport is responsible for air, sea, rail and to some extent truck and bus transport, it is clear that the minister must strive to defend, through his agreement with the provinces— Well, we would have hoped that the Minister of Transport would heed the representations originating from the Province of Quebec. It is not only the House of Commons Standing Committee on Transport which is seeking a one-year moratorium. So do the Quebec Premier him-

self, Mayor Jean Doré of Montreal, Mayor M. Pelletier of Quebec City, and recently elected Mayor Mr—

An Hon. Member: Mr. L'Allier.

Mr. Ouellet: —thank you, Jean-Paul L'Allier who came this week to Ottawa with Mayor Pelletier to make representations calling for a moratorium. So does the Trois-Rivières Mayor. So do the municipal councils of some 300 cities and towns in the Province of Quebec. So do about 20 Chambers of Commerce in the Province of Quebec and of course the representatives of the QFL-Rail Union Common Front, as well as all the railway employees who feel threatened by this Government's decision.

Finally, the Quebec Federation of Labour who was responsible for setting up the Rail Union Common Front recently issued a statement which read in part, and I quote: "The Tory Government's recent decision will result in over 10,000 jobs being lost in the Province of Quebec. The destruction of the rail industry in the Province of Quebec will be an economic and social disaster".

Just the same, the Minister claims that only some 600 jobs in Montreal are being jeopardized. What he forgot to mention is the fact that everywhere VIA Rail operates, not only direct jobs are involved but also indirect employment provided by small businesses whose livelihood partly depends on the presence of a passenger rail service throughout the area. The Conservative Government's willingness to give up one of the safest and most economical and environmentally sound means of transportation makes us wonder what its priorities are.

At every opportunity, the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) and the new Minister of the Environment (Mr. Bouchard) are trying to convince us that the environment has become a major priority for the Conservative Government, while the Minister of Transport is dismantling the safest and most environmentally sound means of transportation. It makes me wonder whether the right hand knows what the left hand is doing.

I am asking again the Government and especially the Minister of Transport who comes from Quebec to go back on their decision and agree to a one-year moratorium to allow the Quebec Government round table, the Royal Commission and, above all, the Standing Committee on Transport to hold hearings, carry out their work and make comprehensive recommendations on passenger transportation in Canada. It is obvious to me that rail service and air transport complement each other.

When the Minister said he would not go on subsidizing rail transportation, he should understand that in fact every single transportation mode in Canada is subsidized. Who pays for airport construction? Who pays for road construction? Who pays for seaport construction? Clearly, governments pay for those infrastructures. Therefore Governments, both federal and provincial, to a significant extent subsidize transportation modes in Canada. I say to the Minister of Transport: Railways are your responsibility, it is for you to pick-up the bill of maintaining rail passenger services, because in every country around the world passenger trains are subsidized by the state. Even in the case of the most modern and spacious ones as in France and Japan—the French Government and the Japanese Government subsidize passenger rail services in those countries. Quite naturally therefore the Canadian public expect subsidized passenger rail services. It is impossible to allow those companies to make a profit, not with a country as large and a population as scattered as we have in Canada.

Clearly, the Canadian Government must assume its responsibility and pay part of the bill for maintaining those passenger rail services. So much so that the people who will be penalized are the less privileged, often handicapped people who have no other means of travel than the train, because it is very difficult for a handicapped person to take the plane or even the bus. Also young people, who have the smallest income and want to see our country, discover it, especially and at a time when the First Ministers right now are discussing Canadian unity. Is there a better way to promote Canadian unity than to allow Canadians to travel from one point to another in Canada, and clearly the train is the least costly way of travelling, the easiest one for students. But the Government now intends to scuttle that plan that allowed during holiday periods young Canadians to travel from one area to another across Canada. And people in remote areas will be the most affected, they will be hurt most by this Government's cuts. Because in many remote areas of Canada, the most appropriate transportation service for those people is the train and nothing else.

I therefore conclude by saying this does not make sense. Finally, I hope the Canadian Government will listen to reason and accept this moratorium.

• (1420)

Mrs. Maheu: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Papineau—Saint-Michel (Mr. Ouellet) for his remarks. You did make passing reference to remote regions. I know the government has a Member who is facing problems in Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine. I followed the committee proceedings on the future of VIA here in the House. I would like to hear your comments on the problems facing communities in the riding of Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, for example.

Mr. Ouellet: Obviously, Mr. Speaker, a number of our Conservative colleagues on the other side feel bad and are embarrassed over the decisions made by their government.

I have here a list of Chambers of Commerce, towns and communities that have signed a petition and passed a municipal council resolution urging the Conservative government to agree to this one-year moratorium. It has become obvious—Earlier I saw the Hon. Member for Manicouagan (Mr. Langlois) seek the floor to ask questions. The Chamber of Commerce of Chibougamau passed a resolution to that effect. The Chamber of Commerce of Sept-Îles passed a resolution to that effect. I see that my colleague from Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup (Mr. Plourde) is in the House. I remind him that the town of Rivière-du-Loup passed a resolution to that effect, as did the town of La Pocatière.

In answer to your question, it has become obvious that the Hon. Member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine (Mr. Gray) would rather hide in the sand pit, because nearly all municipalities in his riding signed that petition and passed resolutions asking him to put pressure on the Minister of Transport about the moratorium. Unfortunately I have to admit that neither the Hon. Member for Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine nor the Hon. Member for Gaspé (Mr. Marin) or the Hon. Member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup seem to hold any sway over the Minister of Transport who struck a heavy blow against the province's economy when he made that decision which most Quebecers find totally unacceptable.

Mr. Plourde: Mr. Speaker, I just cannot let my colleague say all sorts of things without responding. I can tell you one thing, Mr. Speaker, I use the train which runs through Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup and I can also tell the other colleague opposite that there are no trains on the Magdalen Islands.

However, as for the moratorium that was requested, I say publicly that I am not for it. My colleague opposite who just spoke probably never worked in private enterprise. I was in private business for 28 years and I can tell you that when a private company has monetary problems, it has to make cuts. The Government of Canada, which is a very big business, must ensure that these cuts also apply to VIA Rail.

I would also like to tell this House, Mr. Speaker, that as far as eastern Quebec and the Gaspé peninsula are concerned, there are still three trains a week between Gaspé and Montreal and another three trains a week between Halifax and Montreal. That is six days out of seven. And I must tell you this: there was a train called the "Saint-Laurent" from Mont-Joli to Charny. I took that train six months a year. I would like to see Hon. Members get on that train in Rivière-du-Loup at 9.30 in the morning and arrive in Charny to transfer to the Montreal train and be told that the train from Quebec City to Montreal had already passed and could not wait for them because they were late. From there, you had to take a bus, paid by VIA Rail, for the rest of the trip from Charny to Montreal. Sometimes in my experience, the bus driver did not even know where the station was in some places. So I think it is stretching the point to say that VIA Rail has now cut its services, when we know very well that eastern Quebec and the area I represent in this House will continue to be served six days a week. I hope that people will have got the message and will take the train. Although the *Saint-Laurent* from Mont-Joli to Charny has been abolished, 38,000 passengers took it in 1988.

And I would like to tell my colleague opposite that of those 38,000 passengers, 18,000 had railway passes and traveled for free. This train covered 19 per cent of its costs in 1988, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, again I tell you that eastern Quebec will be very well served with the VIA Rail schedule that will take effect in January and I ask train users to continue to

take the train, and I do mean to keep on taking the train if they do not want more cuts in the future.

Mr. Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, I note the threat implied in the Hon. Member's remarks when he said that users had better continue taking the train, or else they might be faced with further cuts.

I suggest the Hon. Member has just let the cat out of the bag. Ever since this Tory Government came to power, we have witnessed its unrelenting effort to completely destroy, our rail passenger service.

What this Government has never recognized is that the Cabinet had made up its mind to completely eliminate rail passenger service in this country. The Government of Canada wants to get out of it.

Although the Hon. Member made a fine speech, he could not help but express the Tory philosophy when towards at the end of his speech, he warned that other cuts were in the offing! We know that other cuts are forthcoming. So does the Quebec Premier. So do the mayors of the most important Quebec municipalities which will be affected by them, and especially the railway workers who are urging us to act now in order to put a stop to this frightening eliminatation of rail passenger service in Canada.

In this endeavour, the government was guilty of much foot dragging. I need not remind you that as soon as the Tories came to power, the first thing they did was to impose a freeze on all the orders which VIA Rail had placed for the purchase of new engines and passenger cars. Then, they ordered a freeze on all planned repair shops which were to be build throughout Canada to make it possible for VIA Rail to carry out repairs on its own cars and engines without having to rely on the CNR and the CPR which were charging very high repair and maintenance costs.

Finally, this government appointed the Horner Commission at a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars to submit a report which expressly recommended to the government to give VIA Rail a definite mandate and additional subsidies. This Tory government chose to ignore the Horner Report because it went against its own views and policies. Not only they do not want to give VIA Rail more money, but they simply want VIA Rail to suffocate and give up the ghost. If they try, they will have to fight us head on, Mr. Speaker!

[*English*]

Mr. Ross Belsher (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, in listening to the debate this afternoon I have noted the suggestion that the standing committee held hearings against the wishes of the government. I can tell you that I have never heard anyone from the government say that the standing committee should not be holding hearings. The minister with whom I work has never once said that the standing committee should not hold hearings. It did this of its own free will because committees are masters of their own destiny.

• (1430)

It is unfortunate though that the standing committee in compiling its report and putting forth its suggestions was not a little more constructive in what it put forward. All it has said is that there should be a moratorium. Big deal, a moratorium. We are spending money like it is going out of style. We do not have the money to spend and that is what this program is all about.

Reducing subsidies to VIA Rail was a difficult decision to make and it was not done in haste. It strikes a balance between the transportation needs of our country and the fiscal realities which cannot be undermined. Fiscal responsibility is something that nobody on the opposition benches seems to want to address. They just keep saying: "Spend more money. Keep spending at the rate your are going and everything is going to be fine." It is not going to be fine.

The Canadian people have elected us to govern, and that is precisely what we are doing. I know it is going to be difficult for some people to adjust. Nevertheless, difficult decisions have to be made.

The new network will continue to link Canadians from Vancouver to Halifax. From listening to the members opposite you would think there is no more national transportation system. That is bunk. There will still be a train that you can get on in Halifax and you can get to Vancouver. It will maintain good connections between eastern and central Canada, and it will continue to serve the Quebec–Windsor corridor effectively, thereby providing Canadians from coast to coast with not only a national network but one that is affordable and sustainable. We will at last have something that we can build upon.

Much has been said about the state of rail transportation in other countries. I believe this bears some discussion. During the last few years all the western European nations have adopted plans to overhaul their existing rail passenger services. High-speed services operate in France, Britain and West Germany. In addition, France, Britain, The Netherlands, Sweden, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Italy and Switzerland are either building all new rail lines or upgrading existing lines to accommodate high-speed rail transportation service. It is anticipated that by 1995 a high-speed rail network should connect all major European cities. The investment in this high speed system will total $39 billion in 1995 and $92 billion in 2005—that is based on 1989 Canadian dollars—most of which will be funded by governments.

The Japanese inaugurated the world's first high speed train in the 1960s between Tokyo and Osaka. The route has been commercially successful and carries more than 130 million passengers a year. The Japanese have been working to extend the system the length of the country. The financial results of these extensions have been mixed as the costs of construction have been very high. Also, as population densities in the outlying areas are low and the distance between major centres quite long, the trains on these routes do not have the same high level of ridership as on earlier lines. For these two reasons, these lines require operating subsidies. While no specific information is available on the financing of high speed rail projects in Japan, the Japanese national railway is funded publicly.

In 1971 Amtrak took over 25 per cent of the rail passenger services in the U.S. All other passenger services were discontinued. By the early 1980s Amtrak had modernized its rail passenger services. The fleet is comprised of new locomotives or new modernized cars. A network of maintenance facilities has been completed and rail lines between New York and Washington have been upgraded for 200 kilometre an hour operation and between New York and Albany for 176 kilometre an hour operation. These improvements required a government investment of some $4 billion.

Opposition members seem to forget that Amtrak is a little different creature than what we have in VIA. Amtrak has the ability to abandon services, something which the opposition has been quite vocal in denying to VIA Rail. Amtrak can freely set its own price on tickets. VIA Rail had to defend its pricing in front of the NTA when challenged by the bus systems. Amtrak receives direct subsidies from individual states that require uneconomic routes to be run. Yet provinces have been asked to do this in committee. I sat there and observed what was going on. Questions were put to the mayors of the corridor:, "Would you participate in the cost of putting on a moratorium for a year?" The answer came back an emphatic no.

I read in this morning's paper that one of our premiers was gracious enough to say that he was sure that all Canadians would be willing to subsidize VIA Rail to the tune of an extra $4 per person. Isn't that great? One of the premiers is volunteering that Canadians are willing to put out another $4. The Canadian people are telling us to try to get the deficit under control. All we hear is carping from the opposition benches "spend more money".

It also was said today that the standing committee was unanimous in this decision. The standing committee I have heard was not unanimous in its decision. It was a majority of the committee that voted, but it was not a unanimous decision.

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): The chairman voted for it. He sits on your side.

Mr. Belsher: I was told this afternoon in a speech by the hon. member for Regina—Lumsden that it was unanimous. Now I hear otherwise. I do not know because it was an *in camera* meeting.

In national terms more than half of these countries that I have just cited have populations larger than Canada, and all have much higher population densities. Only the Quebec City—Windsor corridor matches the population densities of these other countries.

This government's decision is based on the economic, geographic and demographic realities of the country.

Let us look and see just what is happening between, say, Montreal and Toronto, or from Quebec City right through to Windsor. From Montreal to Quebec there is a cut-back of service. It is going from 48 round trips per week while maintaining 21. From Montreal to Ottawa it goes from 29 to 22. From Montreal to Toronto it goes from 43 down to 36. From Toronto to Ottawa it goes from 26 down to 19. From Toronto to Windsor there will be 30 trips per week. It will still have 30 trips a week.

From Toronto to Niagara Falls it goes from 21 down to 14.

Let us look at the ridership on some of these trains that we are cutting back. It is 39 per cent, 50 per cent, and 56 per cent is the highest occupancy rate of the routes that have been in service. In other words, 44 per cent of the seats are going empty on all of those routes I have just mentioned.

The combined public and private spending on transportation in Canada over the next 10 years can only be measured in hundreds of billions of dollars, and we are talking about total transportation. Therefore, an effective consideration of such an integrated system required the government to establish a forum that would permit all Canadians to be heard in a thoughtful, comprehensive and forward looking manner. That is why the Prime Minister has struck a royal commission. It was announced at the same time that the cuts were being made to VIA Rail. It is to inquire into and report on a national integrated inter-city passenger transportation system to meet the needs of Canada and Canadians well into the future.

The size and importance of our transportation system cannot be overstated. Its future development must lead to a system which will meet the challenges of the 21st century, not just the 20th century. This royal commission will be asked to inquire into and recommend solutions on the role of a national, integrated inter-city passenger transportation system and its relationship to the entire transportation system; the structure of a suitable, multi-modal transportation system demonstrating the linkages and the potential for and constraints on achieving a national transportation system and, where appropriate, financial arrangements to achieve such a system, taking into account the jurisdiction of all levels of government and the role of the private sector. The commission will look ahead into the 21st century to advise governments on the needs of Canadians and on the relationship between the modes of transport of the future.

• (1440)

This royal commission through its wide consultation and broad mandate is expected to provide a clear action plan that will ensure that the transportation links among Canada's regions are maintained and improved.

In making this announcement the Prime Minister stressed the importance of taking into account the wide range of interests of Canadians and the respective roles of all levels of government and the private sector in the provisions of inter-city services. He also emphasized the necessity to balance Canada's transportation needs with the government's policy of environmentally sustainable economic development.

This royal commission will examine Canada's unique social and democratic trends and look ahead to the ways the transportation system must respond to meet the competing needs and demands of users, operators, employees and other interested parties. The commission is expected to provide Canadians with a blueprint for a comprehensive, co-ordinated passenger system to take us well into the 21st century.

Mr. Nault: Mr. Speaker, I have a few questions to put to the hon. member. They relate to the fact that if you take a look at Revenue Canada's own figures you see that there has been a large drop in the amount of dollars in the last five years in transfer of payments to the provinces and other governments. By the statement he just made it is evident why. It is because he feels that the deficit is out of control. Furthermore, because the deficit is out of control the tax burden should be shifted to other governments to let them worry about it.

I have one question. Is he saying to we members opposite that the federal government will no longer give a high priority to the regions of Canada or where you will live. Is he saying that in essence if the municipalities and the provinces cannot look after places such as those in northwestern Ontario, where it was decided to remove The Canadian which ran to the major centres, and if they cannot afford to do that then it is too bad, they just happen to live there and that's it, that's the way it works.

The government seems to be transferring its problems. We on this side are not saying that there are no difficulties. We realize there are many difficulties. When I became interested in running for federal politics one of the reasons was because I believed in all of Canada, as well as the federal importance and the importance of the government to keep the regions and all of Canada as

one. That is the reason why I am a little disturbed to hear the Prime Minister saying: "Well, if the other governments do not want to take part in a national railway system, then too bad, we will not have one".

Second, the member gave us some interesting statistics. The main reason that he gave those statistics was to show that some lines are not being used as much as they should be used. There is one in particular I want to ask him about, that is The Canadian. It was told to me not too long ago that by 1993 VIA with its present statistics would be running The Canadian at full capacity. What I heard from the constituents of Kenora—Rainy River this summer was that The Canadian was full, you could not get a ticket on it. Again, in essence they were right. You could not get on there. In the summer months it was running at a capacity of 96 per cent. It was full, you could not get a ticket. You could not go to Sudbury. You could not go to Winnipeg on that particular train. Lo and behold The Canadian is now gone.

I ask the member if he can explain to me based on those figures the fact that VIA told us that the reason why they were not putting more cars on that train to make it more viable—and it was only running 11-car trains—was that there were no more cars available to put on that train. I wonder why the member would not be interested in making a line that is considered to be one of the best in the country more viable by putting more cars on it.

Mr. Belsher: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his questions. I can assure the hon. member that this government in terms of regional disparities and looking after the regions has spent more money during this past four or five years than the previous government ever did. We believe there is a role to be played by the federal government in trying to ensure that the regions are not handicapped. He mentions the one line, The Canadian, which runs from Toronto to Winnipeg, to Calgary, and on to Vancouver, as being cut out. Yes, there have been some very difficult decisions made in what had to be cut.

The minister gave instructions to VIA management to reduce spending to $250 million per year by way of government subsidy in four years' time. That is down from the level of $641 million. There have been some very difficult decisions made. We must remember that in terms of the places that were cut out along the way there are alternate means of getting around. The occupancy rate over the whole line was considered, I think, at the 70 per cent rate. There could be times of the year—I think he made reference to 90 per cent—when it could be higher, but the fact is that VIA Rail has had to be shrunk in total size. That is what this exercise has been about.

We had to make sure that the largest number of people could be accommodated, that the largest population base would still be serviced. Also, we had to ensure that the corridor from Quebec City through to Windsor would also have the bulk of its services retained, which has happened. Faced with the financial restraints that have been given to VIA management, these are the recommendations that have come back to us. The government, with whatever alternatives were given to it, has decided to carry them out.

I would hope to see a successful conclusion to some of the ideas that have been coming out of the travel agencies which would like to invest, to put in something similar to the Orient Express that would run from Toronto through to Vancouver, through our scenic Rocky Mountains. That would still be a way of travelling for the people who want to take an excursion, or a holiday, something that is entirely different, something which allows them to see something of the grandeur of our great country.

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): I am pleased to be able to ask a few questions of the parliamentary secretary concerning these cuts.

Coming from Atlantic Canada, I can tell you—and I am sure some of your colleagues on your side of the House have already done this—that the people of Atlantic Canada feel very much betrayed by the government's inability to keep up with its own rhetoric about holding on to the dream of a national rail transportation system.

A few years back, we had the then Deputy Prime Minister telling us that the government—the Tory party—was committed to building a viable national network, revitalizing the train service. We had recently, I think in the spring, the National Transportation Agency going around the country, holding public hearings chaired by an individual who spent many days in this house, the former Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Nielsen, the chairman of the NTA.

One of the disturbing things for people in Atlantic Canada is that once the cuts were announced, there did not seem to be a great deal of rationalization as to why so many cuts took place in Atlantic Canada. Those who are cynical would believe that it is perhaps because Atlantic Canada sent more Liberals to this place than they sent members on your side of the House. Surely to goodness the people of Atlantic Canada deserve a little bit better than lip service from this government.

What the government has done in essence is to tell people in Atlantic Canada repeatedly that we either use the train service or we lose it. The people living in Atlantic Canada did use the train system. The train that goes from Truro to Halifax—and I hope you have the statistics there—was sold out most days. There were many senior citizens, many students, and many individuals who took the train from the industrial Cape Breton area up through the northeast of Nova Scotia to get medical services in Halifax. Many of them were seniors, and many of them are on fixed incomes. These people could not afford to take the plane or could not take the bus because it was too uncomfortable or inconvenient.

Those people rode the rails. They sat in uncomfortable, outdated rail cars. Many times it took eight hours instead of four hours if they were travelling by car to get there. At the same point in time the government came in after telling them to use it or lose it and cancelled the routes. I would like to know the rationale for that.

• (1450)

In Atlantic Canada we have had some of the highest ridership rates anywhere in the country. People in Atlantic Canada use the train system. It is a very necessary part of our transportation infrastructure down there in a multimodal transportation system. That is the first question.

The other question that I want to ask deals specifically with the Halifax maintenance centre. The leaks and purported leaks and reports in the media prior to the cuts being announced in this place indicated that the Halifax maintenance centre was going to be one of the places that was going to be chopped in these cuts. Indeed, at the press conference on the day that the cuts were announced, Mr. Lawless responded to the first question from a member of the press from Halifax. This was the first question he was asked, so he was not befuddled with other questions and facts at that point.

The first question was: "What is the future of the Halifax maintenance centre?" Immediately Mr. Lawless came back and indicated that the Halifax maintenance centre would be redundant, it would be closed, there would be no work. In the House later that day, the minister responsible and I believe the Prime Minister as well said that was not the case. I have sought assurances since that point in time, and have not been able to get them, that the Halifax maintenance centre will be open for the life of the business plan which is five years, and that there will not be substantial lay-offs six, eight or ten months down the road. I believe that there was a staff member of the minister's office who indicated that that would be the case.

I would like an assurance from the parliamentary secretary that the Halifax maintenance centre is not going to be a political football in the VIA cuts, that the Halifax maintenance centre will remain open, as I have been told by a member of the minister's staff, after the life span of this particular five year plan and that we are not going to face death by slow torture in that particular sector of the rail industry in Atlantic Canada, in Halifax-Dartmouth. We do not want to end up six or eight months down the road with instead of 130 workers maybe 100 workers, and then six months after that with 50 workers and eventually shut down. I hope he can give me the answer.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I hope he can do it in a very short time, too.

Mr. Belsher: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. friend opposite for his questions. With respect to the services that he has mentioned that have been discontinued, I have the figures before me. I think they touch on some of the routes that he is talking about.

From Halifax to Sydney, there was 37 per cent occupancy; from Halifax to Port Hawkesbury, 34 per cent; Halifax to Yarmouth, 26 per cent; Halifax to Moncton—Saint John, 31 per cent. Those are the occupancy rates. In other words, well over half the seats were empty.

We must not forget that VIA Rail was created with, I think it was, $1 back in 1977. It was never given a legislative mandate to work under. It is still struggling under that situation. We have not corrected that deficiency that was created back in 1977, but we are bound

and determined that we are going to have a national transportation system.

The member also asked me about the Halifax maintenance yard. I can only reiterate what the minister said in reply to either his question or one of the members opposite who asked about that. The Halifax maintenance centre will stay.

If he were to come out to Vancouver or out to British Columbia where they were used to having the two trains, the Supercontinental and The Canadian, go through he would see they are now down to three trains per week. When you look at the Halifax to Montreal route, you see it still has six trains per week. It still has them on both lines, the north and the south line.

I think the Atlantic has been well served in that respect with the connections to central Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Comments are now terminated. I have three more speakers before four o'clock. I would recognize the hon. member for Hillsborough. Then I will recognize the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan. I will wind up with the hon. member for St. Boniface.

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Dartmouth has certainly put forward the concerns of Atlantic Canada. With the exception that I would like to speak on this motion, there would not be much need of me going any further.

I rise today, Mr. Speaker, in support of the motion put forward by my colleague, the hon. member for Humber—St. Barbes—Baie Verte. The motion calls for this House to approve the recommendations contained in the second report of the Standing Committee on Transport. Specifically the standing committee calls for a moratorium on the government's proposed cuts to VIA Rail.

It is a well-known fact that the drastic cuts to our national rail system will impact on every individual across Canada. The government states that it can no longer afford to maintain a rail service that only 3 per cent of Canadians use. What Canadians are not told is that this figure includes the regions where VIA does not operate. If we use these measures then only 6 per cent of Canadians ride buses and only 6 per cent use airplanes.

We listened to statements by the Minister of Transport like: "We have to consider that Canadians seem to stick to roads and air". What he does not say is that trains are being rediscovered in North America. Ridership increased on VIA by 10 per cent system-wide last year and in the first five months of this year showed a further increase.

According to Andrew Roman, the renowned author of a study in air deregulation, "Air fares will increase 30 per cent in the next year or two. There are going to be more people returning to passenger rail, only to find that none exists".

The minister has also stated: "Canada has to deal first of all with those modes of transportation which have to be considered as the future of transportation in Canada".

Mr. Kenneth Hare, chairman of the Climate Planning Board, cautions: "Transport policy has a profound effect on environmental issues—Getting cars and trucks off the road is a major environmental objective". He goes on to state that he personally regarded the government's plan of reducing train service as a serious mistake from an environmental point of view. I believe it is time that this government provided some far-sighted leadership by encouraging the use of an environmentally sound transportation alternative.

Thus, the standing committee's recommendation that calls upon the government to direct the royal commission to give particular attention to among other other issues over-all environmental impacts.

The VIA cuts will impact on every passenger in this country, especially the handicapped, those of lower income and those living in rural areas with poor highway systems. The Atlantic region will once again bear more than its share of the burden. Atlantic Canada will lose 68 of its 80 runs. That amounts to 85 per cent of all Atlantic train service.

My province of Prince Edward Island has been without train service for years. Our only link to the mainland passenger train service was a bus system which this government has to no one's surprise eliminated. Islanders do not have access to what the minister and the Prime Minister call a national rail system.

Last month when I asked the minister if he would restore our bus service he said: "No". He also stated that we have a ferry service that will serve as our link to the

national rail system. Atlantic Canadians were told to use it or lose it. Well, we did, and what did we get? A reduction of 85 per cent. Imagine what would have happened if we had not used it to the extent which we did.

The national railway was the first institution to unite Canadians from coast to coast. It joined the east and the west and gave us an opportunity to travel across this country. Eliminating VIA all across Canada is a direct assault on the fundamental transportation network that has allowed Canadians to to live and work throughout the country for a century.

We have received mixed signals from this government over the past years as far as its policy regarding VIA is concerned. After the election in 1984 the government reinstated service reductions that had been in effect since 1981. In 1985 the Minister of Transport said: "It is now time to turn VIA into a strong system that is cost effective, national in scope, and one which Canadians will be proud to use".

By 1986, however, the Minister of Transport was telling Canadians to use or lose their trains. The government has stuck with this policy for almost three years now and has obviously abandoned any notion of rebuilding passenger rail service in Canada. It seems like a blatant waste and misuse of taxpayers' money for the government to have invested so much in the system only to pull the funding when things are just beginning to improve. In the first three months of 1989 revenue had increased by over $5.5 million in comparison with the same period in 1988.

• (1500)

In addition, within the first quarter of 1989 the number of passengers increased by 10 per cent and the occupancy rate of the service increased to 54 per cent, up 15 per cent from the first quarter of 1988. Over half of all Canadians use this service due to a variety of factors. Increased reliability is one. Many use it as an alternative mode of transportation because of congested airports and highways in poor shape. Others use it because it is one of the least expensive modes of transportation in Canada. I am sure that students can attest to this point.

By promoting the system and services to Canadians—and they are only becoming aware of what it has to offer—it is obvious that there have been marked improvements in the system. Now that things are just starting to roll and VIA is getting back on track, the government has pulled the funding for the company out from under its feet. More time is needed for VIA to prove its viability, as I have just said. Canadians are only becoming aware of its service. They should not lose it.

I am quite familiar with the way in which a community is affected when it loses its passenger train service. My home province has not had rail passenger service for a long time. We did have a bus. Now the bus is not going to be there after January 15 and we will have to take the car ferry to go to the train in Moncton. This certainly does not provide any incentive to take a train.

I am deeply troubled with the consequences of the government's policy for the economy of Prince Edward Island and indeed for the Atlantic region. It is not difficult to conclude from all we have seen that the present government is becoming increasingly indifferent and insensitive to the needs of Atlantic Canadians. The elimination of passenger train service was just the tip of the iceberg.

We in Atlantic Canada are aware of the growing national deficit that threatens to undermine the future of our country. We know that we must contribute our share to its reduction, but as we see it we are being asked to pay too high a price and the government's deficit reduction efforts are being carried out on the backs of Atlantic Canadians.

Of even more fundamental concern is that the government's actions threaten to undermine the economic base of our region with serious, severe and long-lasting consequences for all of us. I have very real concerns about the future of the Atlantic region and its people unless we are able to restore some of the fundamental principles of equity, equality and fairness that have guided the development of this nation.

This nation of Canada is a diverse country and that diversity needs to be recognized and responded to. My fear is that we in the Atlantic region are going to become the losers under the present agenda.

This government should be finding ways to improve and strengthen our rail system. One solution would be to invest in modern equipment. The improved service generated by this equipment would increase passenger

service and the need for subsidies from the federal government would decrease in time.

In conclusion, I support the motion. VIA Rail is essential to the development of communities in all areas across this country.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I did err a little when I said that the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan was to have the floor. The NDP is going to split the 20 minutes into 10 minutes. The hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan will have 10 minutes, and the hon. member for Kootenay West will have 10 minutes in order to make up the 20 minutes.

Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, I am going to talk particularly about the E and N Railway on Vancouver Island. I submit that it is a special case, although I expect special circumstances could be used in referring to many of the rail lines that are being discontinued or cut back seriously.

Everyone knows that the province of B.C. has filed a suit in the B.C. Supreme Court to the effect that the action by the federal government in announcing its closure of the E and N Railway is a direct contradiction of legal obligations made in perpetuity under the terms of the Constitution.

It is not that we want the taxpayers of Canada to pay any more to maintain passenger rail service on the E and N. We do say that the Government of Canada made a contract and the Government of Canada in this action is acting in collusion with the CPR to continue stealing from the people of British Columbia something that has been going on for almost 100 years.

There was a contract and there was consideration: two million acres on Vancouver Island, 20 miles on either side of a 150-mile long track, and the railroad was never built that long. Two million acres of timber, currently valued at $2 billion, was described by a royal commissioner as the finest stand of mature timber remaining in the province. Everything on and under the surface of the land and offshore, off the land—coal rights, mineral rights, 3.5 million acres in the Peace River—was turned over to the federal government by the Government of British Columbia and cash was given to the builders of the railroad, $750,000. Along with everything else, they got almost enough cash to build a railroad which cost somewhere in the neighbourhood of $850,000. Tremendous consideration, and for that we got a railroad that was to give us service in perpetuity.

What did the Dunsmuir interests get out of it, besides the cash of $750,000? By the time they sold the railroad, all of the transportation assets in 1905, they had sold land to the value of $4.5 million. They had only $100,000 in the railroad, but in 10 years they were able to turn over the assets for $4.5 million. They sold the remaining assets to the CPR for a total of $2.33 million. They sold coal up to that period in time of approximately 5 million tonnes for a total of $1 million. They did not sell the coal rights. The total value of the coal rights sold by the Dunsmuirs for the 50 million tonnes that were produced, for which they collected 10 cents a tonne, would be $5 million. The Dunsmuirs, with a net investment of $100,000, obtained from the people of Canada or the people of British Columbia, however you want to look at it, a net amount of $12 million quite apart from the operating of the railroad.

The CPR has not done too badly either. In 1906 it paid $2.33 million, but the federal government helped out by giving it $1.5 million in cash. It invested a net amount of $830,000 in taking over all the assets of the Dunsmuir interests with the exception of the coal and clay rights. Up to 1944 it had sold additional land to the extent of $10.3 million. It more than quadrupled its total investment and its total investment, as I say, was reduced by a government subsidy. It had 13 times the original investment returned in the sale of land alone.

It made another sale in 1964 of timber land, 229,000 acres for $56 million. That is $66 million so far in sales. It had left approximately one million acres. As I said, the royal commissioner described this as the best acreage of mature timber land in British Columbia, which was appraised at that time as being worth $2,000 an acre. That means $2 billion was left in that land at that time, plus the $56 million from that one land sale, plus the other land sales of $10 million; $2.66 billion it had received up to that point on a net investment of $.5 million.

Although the CPR has taken all that money out in excess of $2 billion in sales alone, it still has tremendous assets there. It is still logging that land. It is a federal Crown grant so the Government of British Columbia can exert no restrictions with the export of round logs. It does not have to get any permission. It is indeed exporting round logs, because it gets a better price for

round logs from overseas markets than locally. It is doing it regularly. We have no control, no influence over that in the Province of British Columbia.

It still owns all the mineral rights, with the exception of the coal and fire clay rights. What are they worth? Who knows. Some drilling was done for gas in the area some three or four years ago by British Petroleum which does not usually go in just for the fun of it. It does not usually invest a couple of million dollars just to practise. It has not told us what was found, if anything. Whatever it did find the wells have been capped and left. We do not know what is going on there. Certainly there must have been some substantial evidence that there is gas at least in the area, or British Petroleum would not have been in there drilling.

It owns the transportation system. It is not the taxpayers that owe something to the people of British Columbia. It is not the taxpayers that owe something to the residents of Vancouver Island or the people generally who want to maintain E and N Railway as a passenger service.

• (1510)

It is the responsibility of this government to make sure that the present owners of all those assets live up to the original contract they assumed when they took over the Dunsmuir interests and make sure that we keep the passenger rail service or, as an alternative, turn over to the taxpayers of British Columbia all the remaining assets that were given to them at the time.

I think we can afford to write off everything we have given them up to this point. Let us get back everything that is left. We will be more than able to afford to maintain a passenger service on Vancouver Island and do much more besides.

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to rise to support the motion of the Official Opposition which reads:

> That this House approves the recommendation contained in the second report of the Standing Committee on Transport, calling for a moratorium in the government's proposed cuts to VIA Rail.

As the member of Parliament for Kootenay West—Revelstoke and also on behalf of my colleague, the member for Kootenay East, we have been spending a considerable period of time since the minister's announcement of these cuts attempting to salvage what we can of The Canadian line that runs along the Kamloops–Calgary corridor and with very good reason.

That particular corridor is one of the most heavily utilized in the transcontinental system with the best cost recoveries of almost any rail section in the country, apart from areas within the Golden Horseshoe. It has a valid claim not only on economic grounds, but the minister is making a major pitch for economic restraint and the need to reduce the deficit. We are perhaps one of the more profitable sections of the VIA Rail system in the country and one of the more heavily utilized.

It is interesting to note that The Canadian line carried some 539,000 passengers, up from 465,000 in 1987. The Canadian line has been closed. The Super Continental carried 174,000 passengers, up from 159,000 in 1987. The Super Continental has been kept operating albeit on a reduced basis.

No one, especially myself being a member who comes from an area that is in many ways rather remote and isolated with particular transportation problems, wants to suggest that we rob Peter to pay Paul. If the minister is making one of major grounds for his arguments economics, then he should look at his own figures.

On October 6, 1989, as reported in *Hansard*, I asked the Minister of Transport in pointing out some of those discrepancies how he could justify that discrimination and whether he would agree to postpone and review his total abandonment of the communities along the Kamloops–Calgary corridor.

The minister, in responding, left the door open a crack. We are certainly doing all we can to take him up on that. He said:

> On the southern route there are other modes of transportation available. Otherwise, it would be considered a remote area and we would provide the service.

He goes on to set out a couple of other conditions which we can easily meet to show that he would be willing to discuss in particular the arguments presented by the communities along that line.

The minister received, as did I, a fax late yesterday or this morning from the manager of the chamber of commerce in the city of Revelstoke. There is a meeting to be held in the village of Golden on the 16th of this month. They have asked the minister—and that is a little

difficult to do but he has agreed; I met with him this morning—to send a representative there. There will be representatives from almost every community and every chamber of commerce along the Kamloops–Calgary corridor including Banff, Golden, Field, Invermere, Revelstoke, and other points in between.

We hope that we can establish a case, but with what is happening within the VIA Rail structure right now, as it is already beginning to come apart at the seams, we need time. I am sure there are other communities across Canada with as valid reasons as we have that also need time to marshal the facts of their own cases and time to persuade the minister or the department of the validity of their claims, even given what we may believe are the incorrect assumptions of the government as to the reasons for shutting down major parts of the whole system.

The traffic volumes and cost recovery are comparatively speaking much worse in those areas than, for instance, from Jasper to Prince Rupert, which is being given three days a week of service under the remote configurations which the minister has laid out.

We have particular problems in the communities of Field and Revelstoke. Revelstokians have to drive at least 200 kilometres to get to the nearest commercial airport. They and the people of Golden and Field also live in an area which is now to be deprived of all commercial rail passenger service. This area has its highways totally cut off more often due to heavy snow fall and avalanche closures than any other part of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, coming from the part of the country that you come from, I am sure you are aware of that. I do not think there is anyone from western Canada who cares for travel at all who has not on a number of occasions travelled that corridor between Kamloops and Calgary and perhaps to Vancouver.

The government is suggesting that it is going to keep the Rocky Mountaineer because it is good for tourism. That is good. We have hundreds of millions of dollars in offshore investment right now riding on the necessity of improved transportation between Banff and Revelstoke and Kamloops and Calgary. If this is closed before we get proper airport facilities, before we get double laning and better snow shedding along the Trans-Canada Highway, we are going to lose the potential of building up a major tourist industry in the Revelstoke area that coupled with Banff can provide a major economic boost to an area which otherwise has been very depressed by the resource depression of a few years ago and the timber supply problems we are having in British Columbia.

The minister appears to have an open ear on this particular case, but it is not enough. There are not only our communities but hundreds of communities, I am sure, all across Canada that rightly or wrongly feel that they even within the departments's own guidelines can establish a proper case.

They do need time to prepare their cases, to make their cases, to attempt to convince the government. I would hope that there is yielding to emotions such as we have had or to the spirit at least of the motion that the Official Opposition has put before us today and that a moratorium is put on. It does not specify a time period, so even the passage of this motion would not bind the government to a particular number of hundreds of millions of dollars in subsidies over a particular period to provide some time at the minister's or government's discretion so that we can make our cases and attempt to make the best of what we think is the bad deal imposed right across Canada by these arbitrary cuts to the VIA Rail system.

I am thankful for the very timely opportunity to be able make some of these arguments today. I hope the officials who will be attending for the Minister of Transport in Golden on November 16 will get an earful and will decide that they have heard the facts. In addition to having some of the best freight rail service in Canada justified by the expenditures of almost $500 million during the last few years to give us the longest tunnel in the Commonwealth to carry freight, we can also utilize those new facilities to carry passengers both ways on what is, without a doubt, one of the most beautiful areas of this country.

If we are willing to expend money either through a public rail system or through privatized local branches for tourism, is it not also proper and can we not also make a case that we ought to spend some money on behalf of serving Canadians, especially in those areas where they do not have effective choices as to their modes of transportation, at least until such time as we

expend the dollars to provide them with the other modes of transportation which most other Canadians enjoy?

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to support this motion for a moratorium on the government's decision with respect to VIA Rail. There are a number of reasons which I want to share with members. The first one, which I consider of critical importance, is the reality that we are facing today with respect to a constitutional crisis of major proportion. We recognize that VIA Rail is a institution which binds the nation. It gets us to know each other. It gets us to understand what each other's aspirations, dreams, hopes and desires are for this great, wonderful country of ours. It is another institution which is being destroyed gradually, which is being dismantled. It fits, unfortunately, into a number of other decisions that have been made by government.

• (1520)

Members will recall that Air Canada was not for sale and it has now been sold. That is another institution that permitted us to travel throughout this great land, one of the largest countries of the world.

We all know that the unemployment insurance program was not to be changed. That was promised during the election and, of course, we all know as well that that did not happen. There have been massive changes that will affect people.

We know about the Canada–U.S. trade deal and I am not here to discuss the pros and cons but surely there is no one in this House who will not accept that it has had a major impact upon Canadians throughout Canada and certainly not all of them positive.

We know that today in the House there have been comments with respect to the reduction of transfer payments, actually the cutting of significant dollars, billions of dollars to health and education. In fact, between 1986 and 1994 it will amount to $24 billion less for health and education.

We know that 31 tax increases have been undertaken by the government. We have talked extensively during the last few weeks about the goods and services tax and how it will touch and affect every single Canadian in this nation.

We know, in fact we have it in writing from a member of government that universality is in the process of being destroyed. These new programs that have been proposed by government will affect seniors and will in fact affect families.

The point I want to make is that there has been so much happening in this country that affects Canadians throughout that it has had a destabilizing effect, and this is one more decision that covers an institution that had as an objective getting us to know each other and reach out to one another. Even from this particular perspective, if we look at it in the context of the constitutional crises that we are going through today, it is worth-while considering and supporting this moratorium to somehow tone the tempers down a bit, to reflect and sit back to see what we might be able to do to bring us closer together.

The other point I want to make and another reason why we should consider this moratorium seriously is because we are talking about over 2,700 workers throughout Canada. We are talking about those workers being affected directly. We are not talking about the many, the thousands in fact of men and women who depend upon those workers for a number of service industries.

We are entering the holiday season. I want us to think about those men and women, their children, brothers, sisters and parents. What kind of holiday season do they have to look forward to? Let us just think of being faced with the same decision. How would we feel individually? How would our spouses, children, our friends and relatives feel? I cannot think of a worse time of year to implement this particular decision, to leave people with such little hope for the future.

[*Translation*]

There is another reason I would like to share with Hon. Members. You will surely know that Mr. Bourassa and Mr. Peterson today asked for a freeze on the cuts. Why? Because they want to look at what the options are. Is there something else they could do to maintain and improve services?

What I am saying is, if that request can possibly be granted—and I hope it will be—it is just as important that it also applies to Atlantic and western Canada.

It seems reasonable that, when in the process of making a decision that has such an impact on Canadians, we take the trouble to pause a while and review the

figures to be absolutely sure that the decision to be made is in Canada's best interest. If we did, I am sure other alternatives could be found, other ways to meet the needs of Canadians.

There is a last point I would like to make. Like a number of other Members, I have a concern for our small, remote communities mostly in the north. It seems to me that there is a principle here that is absolutely basic to this country's very existence. As we know, a significant number of Canadians live outside urban centers. What they want, what I would like to give them as much as possible is a quality of life that compares favorably with what we have in our urban areas. I don't think there is any argument about that! It seems to me that a key ingredient is a transportation system, whether roads, airports, railroads, that can give them not only a sense of belonging, the feeling they have their fare share, but also the feeling that in a not too distant future they will enjoy the same quality of life as is enjoyed by citizens of Canada's largest centers.

I think it is essential to reconsider, if only for fundamental reasons such as ensuring that residents of small or remote communities have access to the same quality of service than city dwellers.

To sum up, there are four reasons. Firstly, we are now going through a constitutional crisis. This seems to be another decision that was used to break off long established ties. I think it would be worthwhile to preserve them and to reexamine our options. Secondly, let us think about these 2,700 people, men and women, children, parents and relatives. Soon we will be celebrating the holiday season. What a present we are giving them! If we made that decision, we could give them a great present and offer them some hope and—who knows—we could perhaps, with enlightened minds, find less drastic, threatening and difficult alternatives.

Thirdly, I told you earlier that some premiers are supporting us and asking for a moratorium. This request is not without support, mine included, except for the two big provinces. Of course, it is all very well for the Atlantic provinces and the West.

My last comment is this: Let us not forget our small, remote and sparsely populated communities that still want the same thing we, city dwellers, want: a quality of life that compares favorably with that enjoyed in the major centres.

[*English*]

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I rise to address this motion on behalf of the constituents of Winnipeg North. The motion introduced by the hon. member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte states:

> That this House approve the recommendation contained in the Second Report of the Standing Committee on Transport, calling for a moratorium in the Government's proposed cuts to VIA Rail.

In arguing this motion, my colleague has spoken of our VIA Rail system in beautiful language, referring to it as "the ribbon of steel that binds our country".

I support this motion because I would like to see all Canadians from coast to coast served by an excellent passenger rail system.

In speaking to this motion, I would like to quote freely from the report of the Standing Committee on Transport so that Canadians across the country may hear some of the highlights of this report in order that they may judge for themselves as to whether we are right in arguing that a moratorium be established as a consequence of this study by the Standing Committee on Transport.

• (1530)

In introducing its report, the standing committee said:

> —the committee believed that it could not ignore the public concern and reaction and therefore decided to hold public hearings in Ottawa on the future of rail passenger service.

The members of this committee, the majority of whom belong to the government party, decided that they should hear the concerns of Canadians first hand. As a consequence they went further:

> As a result of the establishment of a Royal Commission (on national transportation) which will examine in depth the place of rail passenger service with a national transportation strategy, the Committee felt that its hearings should be compressed in order to report its findings to the Government before the cuts come into effect.

That, Mr. Speaker, is the essence of this motion. The committee tried to do overtime work, but careful and diligent work. It has presented a report so that the government could address the issue of a moratorium

before it proceeds with its plan to cut VIA Rail's system, come the middle of next year.

Does not this government have a heart? Will it not listen to a committee of this House of Commons, the majority of its members belonging to the government party? Do we not see in here the non-partisan issue that VIA Rail passenger service has generated in the country. I ask the government to do a little soul searching, and for once listen to Parliament. As I said in the past, our Parliament is not a Parliament for government, but a Parliament for Canadians across our country.

I would like to highlight some of the report. The Standing Committee on Transport indicated, and I quote:

> Throughout the hearings the Committee was confronted with a plethora of divergent statistics put forward by various witnesses with great persuasion and conviction.

Then it continues:

> The observation the Committee would like to make is that the statistics can be used to make anyone's case or position sound persuasive. We do not intend, in this report, to become tangled in the "numbers game". In our view, this would be unproductive and somewhat redundant because obviously, the royal commission will be examining this problem in detail.

What the committee felt is that we should should find the real truth, and there is nothing wrong with that. Canadians would like to hear and know the real truth.

Obviously there are conflicting statistics being presented, but let the royal commission which has been given a mandate by this government to first make an interim report so that the government may be well advised to then consider what action to take next. Let us first diagnose the problem, not settle on the treatment before the diagnosis, otherwise it could be the wrong treatment and therefore harmful to the people of our country.

On the issue of cost-effectiveness, I quote:

> —the committee is not persuaded that the Government plan is the most cost-effective option. This leads us to conclude that is likely that VIA will have great difficulty operating the new network successfully within the reference levels set by the government.

Here, again, the committee is not convinced of the government plan. The committee has challenged the government plan. This is the committee of Parliament, the supreme court in our country, the supreme body that should be formulating policy. I would like the government, which is only a part of Parliament, to accede to the request of a standing committee of this House.

On the issue of the environment I quote:

> There was considerable comment during the hearings regarding the adverse impact of the new VIA Rail Plan on the environment. What is clear to the Committee is that the "environmental factor" has become a critical issue in the development and implementation of a national transportation policy.
>
> In that light, we are not satisfied that the minister's potential environmental impact assessment is adequate or persuasive.

Again, the committee feels that the government has not done a careful study about the adverse impact on the environment of cutting the VIA Rail passenger service.

On the remote services:

> The question the Committee grappled with regarding the mandatory or remote services was whether they were truly remote and whether there were more cost effective transportation alternatives.
>
> The committee believes that, as was pointed out in the evidence, serving these communities should be a social obligation and therefore separated from VIA's funding and treated as an imposed public duty.

I would like to repeat and underscore that when we serve the remote communities of our country, we have to consider it as a public social obligation. We truly have to subsidize those routes because when we do that, we demonstrate that we care for Canadians whether or not they are in the remote parts of our country.

On equipment:

> In the Committee's view old and unreliable equipment has adversely affected ridership and subsidy levels over the past decade.

They would like the equipment to be modernized. On the labour assistance programs, the committee states:

> —the Committee calls upon the Government and VIA to ensure that all employees are treated fairly and with compassion.

On deficit reduction:

> There was some persuasive evidence to the effect that the Government's plan will not produce the predicted reduction in the deficit.

So even this committee of which, I repeat, the majority of the members belong to the government, doubt the figures of the government.

In its conclusion, the committee can only come to one conclusion:

> —VIA never had a chance in the beginning.

It used a beautiful term, an emphatic term but the meaning conveyed is very sad for the country. It was "stillborn". It goes on:

> The current evidence has not convinced the Committee that the salvation of VIA is at hand as a result of the new Government plan.

On this basis, when Canadians hear these very specific recommendations coming from this committee, they will immediately be convinced, as we have already felt from their submissions to us through petitions, that they are truly against the government plan.

This government is challenged. We will see whether it can prove sensitive and responsive to the sentiments of the vast majority of Canadians, whether it can prove sensitive and responsive to the sentiments of the representatives of Canadians, the members of Parliament reflected in this standing committee of this House, the majority members of which come from the government side. The very first recommendation of the standing committee is:

> That the Government declare a moratorium on its announced service cuts to VIA Rail that are to become effective January 15, 1990.

The committee would like an interim report from the royal commission.

• (1540)

In conclusion, I think the standing committee has provided us with very compelling and persuasive arguments that we should have at the very least a moratorium on the government plan. The committee has not asked for a permanent change of the government plan. The committee has only asked that there be a temporary cessation so that the royal commission could proceed with its study. When it recommends in the future that not be too late, but this government plan could make such future recommendations impossible. The standing committee is trying to tell us to give VIA Rail a chance. If there is a vision in this country for all Canadians we should exercise the political will. If there is a political will we can discover the political way.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Charles A. Langlois (Manicouagan): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the fact that you recognized me. I might add that the few observations I want to make will probably not take the ten minutes allocated to me.

I simply want to take a few minutes of the time of the House to shed some light on the economic situation of VIA Rail resulting from the budget allocated to the corporation by the government of Canada. I also want to say a few words concerning the number of Canadians who travel with VIA Rail.

Mr. Speaker, I attended most of the transport committee hearings. Sure enough, many people, many organizations and many municipal spokesmen appeared before the committee to say that the funds earmarked for VIA Rail should not be reduced, yet not one of them was able to suggest a mechanism which the federal government might use to continue paying grants to cover the operating costs of VIA Rail.

Mr. Speaker, for some time now people have been saying that the government's decision to slash VIA Rail funding comes at a time when ever more people travel by train and the corporation is beginning to see better days ahead. Reality does not lend credence to such statements, Mr. Speaker. As my colleague the Hon. Member for Roberval (Mr. Bouchard) has been saying so many times in recent months, Canadian taxpayers can no longer afford to give VIA Rail ever larger grants at a time when the corporation's productivity is declining. I would emphasize, Mr. Speaker, that the government has been subsidizing VIA Rail's operating costs.

Need I recall that last year these grants rose to $641 million, an unprecedented amount which, I repeat, was spent to cover the operating deficit of VIA Rail. Mr. Speaker, this kind of money amounts on average to $100 for each passenger boarding a train, that is $100 paid by the Canadian taxpayers every time a passenger climbs aboard a train. Another factor which cannot be ignored is that since 1977 VIA Rail has gobbled up more than $5 billion of the taxpayer's money, including over $1 billion in capital expenditures to give VIA Rail a chance to make a go of it. Mr. Speaker, we ought to realize that the billion dollars which was paid to VIA Rail to improve its

equipment and facilities did not bring about the anticipated results.

If I may, Mr. Speaker, I should like to emphasize the fact that I represent a riding which is almost completely deprived of all means of transportation. In its Eastern part, it is even without roads. During the summer, for the most part, we depend on sea and air services. I can tell you that if, every year, it had only one of every 20 dollars of the amount I have just mentioned, it could work miracles by improving its means of communications as well as it health and education services. We must realize also that in spite of the huge amounts of money it was paid over the past few years, VIA Rail has failed to improve its performance. Although its subsidies skyrocketed, its ridership went down.

We must face the fact that VIA Rail saw the number of its passengers, which amounted to 5.9 million in 1987, increase to 6.4 million in 1988. But, in fact, this increase in VIA'S ridership in 1988 is compared with 1987, the year during which VIA Rail transported the smallest number of passengers since its creation. As a matter of fact, the ridership is down 20 per cent as compared to 1981, when that year it transported approximately 8 million passengers.

A general view of the passenger service offered in this country indicate that VIA Rail has not improved its performance. In spite of the fact the Government played its part, and VIA Rail tried to improve its services, we must recognize that Canadians have turned their back on the train. They have demonstrated their preference for other means of transportation. Today, rail passenger service in Canada accounts for only 3 per cent of all long distance travels, compared to 7 per cent by plane and 84 per cent by car. Six per cent of long distance travellers prefer bus transportation. Twice as many Canadians have used buses over VIA Rail trains.

All these data confirm that Canadians clearly prefer travelling by means other than trains.

As the Minister of Transport stated, and I quote:

> Canadian taxpayers can no longer afford to provide increasingly high subsidies to a means of transportation which travellers are abandonning in increasing numbers.

The government had promised Canadians to provide them with an affordable and modern national system of rail passenger services. However, Canadians must use it. The federal government wants Canadians to understand that they must use railway services or lose them, and that financing for passenger rail services will depend on the choices they make.

Since railway services attract so few travellers and the government is committed to reducing expenditures, we cannot keep giving VIA Rail the same financial support we have in the past.

Mr. Speaker, let me explain. We must realize that the situation at VIA Rail has deteriorated on all fronts. In 1988, VIA Rail had 6.4 million passengers, a 20 per cent drop since 1981. Allowing for the increase indicated in the preliminary figures for 1989, ridership is still 19.5 per cent less than it was in 1981, this at a time when subsidies to VIA Rail increased considerably. They went from $524 million in 1981 to $641 million in 1988, an increase of 22 per cent. The average per passenger subsidy received by VIA Rail from the Government of Canada has gone up 52 per cent, from $66 in 1981 to $100 in 1988.

Cost recovery has only gone from 28 per cent in 1981 to 30 per cent in 1988. I think these figures are very revealing.

VIA ridership has gone down slightly, from 53 per cent in 1981 to 52 per cent in 1988. VIA Rail operating costs were over $753 million in 1988, while revenues were $223 million. Is there any carrier in Canada, whether we are talking about air, marine or highway transportation, that can afford to spend $750 million with revenues of about $225 million? No company can afford to do that. Only VIA Rail could, because every year, VIA Rail could count on the generosity of Canadian citizens who were financing passenger rail transportation with their taxes.

I would like to mention certain routes, including the Toronto–Windsor route which had the best record for cost recovery in 1988, although it was still only 43.6 per cent.

The Toronto–Calgary–Vancouver route had the highest ridership rate in 1988, that is 70 per cent, but cost recovery was only 30 per cent.

In 1988, per passenger subsidy ranged from $21 on the Toronto–Niagara Falls route to $484 on the Edmonton–Prince Rupert line. It was $378 on the remote line from Winnipeg to Churchill, $199 on Cochrane—Kapuskasing, $116 on Montreal—Saint-John–Halifax and $74 on Montreal–Quebec City.

The figures I just quoted are indeed revealing and reflect the high cost of operating VIA Rail in Canada, considering that it is used by so few travellers.

In concluding, Mr. Speaker, I may say I am convinced that the schedule VIA Rail has been offered, the amounts the federal government is prepared to spend on VIA Rail in the next five years, ensures that VIA Rail will be able to provide Canadians with an acceptable and good quality service. However, Mr. Speaker, VIA Rail must be well managed, and it will have be managed like a company that operates in a competitive sector. VIA Rail will have to prove its mettle, and if it does, the Government of Canada will continue to support it.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I would like to take this opportunity to thank all hon. members for finetuning their debate to 10 minutes. We noticed we were able to get a few extra speakers in today. If we do this quite regularly more members can take part in our debates and this is what Parliament is all about.

It being 3.50 p.m., it is my duty to inform the House that pursuant to Standing Order 81(17), proceedings on the motion have expired.

Pursuant to the Order made Tuesday, November 7, 1989, this House stands adjourned until Monday, November 20, 1989, at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

Have a pleasant vacation.

The House adjourned at 3.51 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, November 20, 1989

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

[*English*]

PRIVILEGE

DISCLOSURE OF EVIDENCE OF COMMITTEE

Mr. Speaker: I should advise the House that there are two applications for questions of privilege which I shall hear first. There is subsequent to that some other measures, and I will deal with them. However, first I will hear on a question of privilege the hon. member for Edmonton Northwest.

Mr. Murray W. Dorin (Edmonton Northwest): Mr. Speaker, I will be brief because I do not think I have to give a lengthy explanation. My question of privilege arises from matters over the last 10 days flowing from discussions involving the finance committee of the House of Commons, and the consideration of its report which examines the government's technical paper on the goods and services tax.

The nineteenth edition of Erskine May at page 146, chapter X, Breaches of Privileges and Contempts, in part states:

> —"That the evidence taken by any select committee of this House, and the documents presented to such committee, and which have not been reported to the House, ought not to be published by any member of such committee or by any other person".

It goes on to state:

> Where the public are admitted this rule is usually not enforced. The publication or disclosure of proceedings of committees conducted within closed doors or draft reports of committees before they have been reported to the House will, however, constitute a breach of privilege or a contempt.

Following deliberations of the committee between November 6 and November 9, there appeared an article in *The Financial Post* which stated, and I will quote just two paragraphs. The first one states, "Meanwhile, New Democrat Lorne Nystrom said his party will break off its participation in the drafting of the committee report 'They'll (the Conservative members of the committee) recommend 7 per cent on a broader base, Nystrom said yesterday'". "Liberal committee member Doug Young also said it is likely the Liberals will decide before the weekend to file a minority report. Young said the majority of Conservatives on the committee will recommend the 7 per cent rate rather than the 9 per cent proposed by the government and a broader base for the tax. The committee has to report to the House of Commons November 28."

That article prompted a number of others, Mr. Speaker. I will not quote from all of them. In essence, many of them reported a variety of matters that presumably would have been discussed at that meeting.

I received, following this date, a call from another reporter who asked me to comment on the report. I suggested that I was not prepared to do that. He then gave me a list of things and asked me whether I had seen these other articles.

Over the course of the following several days, there were a variety of articles, as well as news conferences, held by both opposition parties, as well as television interviews with members of the two opposition parties.

The problem is that it creates a particularly difficult dilemma for a person such as myself who receives these questions, sees these statements and is asked to comment about them. Without putting myself in a breach of privilege I find it very difficult. First of all, I am not in a position to either confirm or deny. I am not in a position to defend certain suggestions that are made as to whether they are true or not. In fact, if they are true, I am not in a position to discuss them, advance them and elaborate on them because often they are presented, or may have been presented, with less than a full discussion.

• (1110)

In fact, to go further, there are one or two instances—and in one case there is a direct quote—where my name is included directly, which is a false statement. Again, I am not even in a position to elaborate, defend or deny

the false statement without going beyond what I believe would be the bounds.

Furthermore, there is no suggestion that these matters, even though they have been alleged to have flowed from the committee and its deliberations, will in fact be the case because the committee has not completed its discussions, the discussions will be continued this afternoon, tomorrow and perhaps even longer.

I think that we should examine the Chair's ruling of May 5, 1987 involving the case raised by the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake involving the member from Kenora—Rainy River on April 28, 1987. I believe that you, Sir, put the case quite well in your ruling. I will not, therefore, repeat everything that was said there.

However, I do think that this causes a great dilemma for persons like myself who have been involved in these discussions and who have subsequently received numerous inquiries and telephone calls from reporters and the general public. Really, I am in no position at this point to respond positively or negatively, or to explain, defend or deny certain charges.

Therefore, I believe that there has been a substantive breach of privilege. I bring this to your attention, Mr. Speaker, and I would ask that you examine it. If you find that there is a prima facie case, I would be prepared to move the appropriate motion.

Mr. Douglas Young (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to enter into debate on this matter, but I can certainly sympathize with the member's very awkward position. In his alleged problem he has referred to both opposition parties, when in fact it could have been mentioned that reports allegedly were coming from members of his own party with respect to some purported recommendations of the finance committee.

I would simply indicate to you, Sir, that the review that took place by the finance committee of evidence brought before it was in fact the subject of a great deal of discussion. I might point out that the chairman of the finance committee dealing with the goods and services proposal of the government has speculated a great deal on a number of issues, including the matters raised by the hon. member in his presentation. I would agree on one point. There is no report to which one could refer, because no report was drafted at Mont Ste. Marie, nor were any recommendations made by the committee.

Although I acknowledge the perhaps awkward position the hon. member was put in as a result of these reports in the press, I would suggest that since no report has in fact been drafted nor evidently finalized, and since no recommendations have been made, any indications as to what may be emanating would be the result of some suggestions made by members of the committee from all parties. Until such time as a final report is made, there could not be any breach of privilege because there would be nothing of a substantial nature to leak.

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, I wish to point out the same thing. To my knowledge there has been no report prepared, because it has not been finished yet. In fact, we are meeting later today to consider the said report. To my knowledge there has been no evidence leaked, no documents leaked and, therefore, no point of privilege.

The one reference made by the member opposite to myself was from an article in *The Financial Post* where I am quoted as saying that "They'll", meaning the Conservative majority, "recommend 7 per cent on a broader base". I have been saying that for about two months publicly. I know that my friend from the Liberal party has been saying a similar thing as well publicly for a couple of months. That is no reference in any detail to what a committee report may or may not say.

I also want to say that I do feel in an awkward position as well. At the outset I said that I could not understand why certain members were referring to what might be in the committee report because it put us all, like the member from Edmonton, in a very awkward position as to whether we should comment or not. The committee chairman himself is a person who publicly raised the possibility of a tax on resale housing. This came, as the member from Edmonton knows, from the chairman himself before we went to Mont Ste. Marie.

Then, on about November 11 or 12 three Conservative members of the committee who wished to remain anonymous had allegedly given a lot of details of the so-called report to certain journalists. I read about it when I was in Saskatchewan that weekend. I was called to comment on

that. I said to journalists I could not comment on what was in the report.

Mr. Lewis: What were you doing in Saskatchewan?

Mr. Nystrom: I was in Yorkton for Remembrance Day services that weekend.

I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that there is no point of privilege. There have been no documents leaked. I think you could talk to any journalist you want and you would find that they have received no documents from the finance committee, certainly not from members of my Party and probably not from most members of that particular committee.

There has also been speculation of heavy-handed phone calls going to members. One was received by the member from Cambridge, from the vice-chairman of the finance committee. I suggest there has been a lot of rumour, innuendo and insinuation. I think the member across the way just protests a bit too much. He is doing a little bit of public crying. I think there is no point of privilege whatsoever.

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, the problem the hon. member is talking about seems to have been created by his own colleagues in the Conservative caucus. I am talking about the chairman of the finance committee himself and a number of other members of the finance committee from the Conservative party who appear to have been quoted at some length in various articles in the press as to what the Conservative majority on the committee might end up recommending.

If that is the case, then I find it hard to see how there could be a prima facie case of privilege if other members of Parliament, using their undoubted rights of free speech, comment at the request of the press on the speculative stories in the press, the source of which appears to have been the Conservative chairman of the finance committee and several other members of that committee.

I have not had an opportunity, because I had no knowledge that this question of privilege was going to come up, to read your ruling of May 5, 1987. I would be prepared to offer further argument at some later point. I doubt very much if that ruling, and I say this without having had a chance to review it, dealt with the situation we are talking about today. I would be happy to offer, as I have said, some detailed argument on that point.

I think we have to make a distinction between the alleged premature disclosure of a report of a committee that has actually been discussed, voted upon and finalized, and comments by members of Parliament in response to questions put to them by journalists on stories that have appeared in the press, especially if these stories were inspired by members of the Conservative majority on the committee.

I say to the hon. member the issue is not really one for a prima facie case of privilege, rather it is something that fits under the old maxim "doctor, heal thyself". I suggest that maxim be applied to the Conservative members of the finance committee.

Having said that, I hope I can reserve the right to give further argument, if you so desire, based on what was the actual content of your ruling which I have not had a chance to review. Even not having done that, I respectfully submit that what has been said by the hon. member does not suggest a prima facie case of privilege.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, perhaps as just a useful piece of information, not being aware that the hon. member from Edmonton was going to raise this question of privilege, I believe that in his presentation he pointed out that on November 9 the hon. member from Yorkton—Melville was making some comments about speculation regarding the Conservative members on the committee.

• (1120)

I would like to draw to the member's attention a Canadian Press article of October 28, some days previous, wherein the chairman of the finance committee, Mr. Don Blenkarn, is speculating that he would be recommending a tax on the sale of every house in Canada as a way of enabling the committee to lower its proposed 9 per cent goods and services tax. It is quite a lengthy article that goes on pointing out what the committee will be recommending and certainly what he will be recommending for the committee's consideration.

If my hon. friend is concerned about members of the committee commenting prematurely, he ought to raise with the chairman of the committee concerns regarding his comments. It is only fair to say that this is one of many. I think even the Prime Minister has acknowledged the fact that the chairman of the finance committee not only speculates prematurely but has views that the

Conservative majority on the committee will inevitably support. Consequently, we ought to be concerned about some of the so-called leaks that he has been providing in terms of committee business.

It is a point of concern for the hon. member, and I do not want to understate its importance. On the other hand, we do not need to overstate the fact that these points might be frustrating for people having to speculate or justify why the Conservatives would want to even maintain the goods and services tax at 7 per cent or 9 per cent, something which requires the hon. member to explain why it would be appropriate to tax the sale of every single house being sold in the country. I can understand the frustration that the hon. member would have in responding to that. I think he would be well advised to speak to the chairman of the committee and admonish him for commenting prematurely.

Mr. Dorin: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to add two further points that have arisen from the discussion that has gone on so far. In matters like this we must make a distinction between what occurs and what someone might say himself, that is, if he is prepared to advocate or suggest something, especially when those suggestions take place in advance of any discussions that may have commenced.

For example, I have made several speeches on this subject going back to well before the public hearings were held, as well as over the course of the public hearings. I have advanced certain objectives with regard to this matter and have made certain points and said that I felt that this proposal would be improved by certain measures.

The chairman of the finance committee has done the same thing, and probably many others have done that as well. There is a difference between what a person says he believes would be an improvement and a suggestion he thinks he will put forward for consideration, versus something that flows later from deliberations once they have occurred.

I wish to go back to the original article from which most of the others flowed, the one of November 10 which I quoted earlier. When asked if the Conservatives had decided to go with the 7 per cent rate and a broader base, committee chairman Don Blenkarn said, "I am not going to confirm or deny that."

He went on to say:

> I wouldn't want to kid you but I guess we have made some decisions about rate and base and how you do it and how you put it together. It's going to be quite a report.

That was the extent of it. There were no direct suggestions of what might or might not be in the report. He said that it is going to be quite a report. There were no suggestions of what other members had said or might not have said.

There were no suggestions until November 14, after which there were many stories quoting members of the opposition and in fact certain unnamed members of the government, and three were mentioned. I may be one of them because the gentleman in question phoned me. However, I told him I was completely prepared to say anything I had to say on the record, that I felt it was inappropriate and that all matters were up for consideration. I said that all these items raised by the witnesses during the course of six weeks of public hearings were being discussed and considered, as they should appropriately be.

The point I draw here is that it is one thing to talk about something you want to advocate as an individual member and put forward to the committee, but it is another thing to talk about what other people have said or what the committee as a whole may have said.

As a final reference I would say that I was contacted by many reporters and many television stations, including *Canada AM*, to appear on its morning broadcast last week. I know that the chairman of the finance committee was also contacted and asked to appear. I know the member for Ontario was contacted. All declined. Two members of the opposition party chose not to decline.

I think we can draw a distinction between those two types of discussion of specific issues or issues that may have been raised in the general debate as opposed to discussions and comments that are supposedly suggesting what took place during committee.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Edmonton Northwest and other members have commented upon the hon. member's complaint that certain matters were discussed within committee under circumstances in which, apparently, members of the committee felt that they were speaking in confidence and that reports have turned up

in the news media with respect to at least some of the discussions that may have taken place within the committee.

It has been very properly pointed out that the committee has not completed its deliberations. I think that the proper position for the Speaker to take is that at least for now it is a matter with the committee, and the committee will have to deal with it as it sees fit. I am going to leave the matter at that for now.

I thank hon. members for their intervention.

I do want to say this, as I have said before, if a committee is working under understandings that discussions are confidential, it goes without saying that if those discussions are repeated outside the committee it creates difficulties within the committee and invites the kind of discussions we have had. I would ask all hon. members to be careful.

However, I do find—and this is my ruling—that the matter complained about is a matter that at least for now should be taken up in the committee.

CONTENT OF BROCHURES—PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, on September 25 in this House the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition raised a question of privilege concerning certain advertisements that the government placed dealing with the goods and services tax.

On page 3809 of *Hansard* the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition stated:

> I submit to Your Honour that the advertisement not only misrepresents the substance of the text but the procedure to which it is subject under parliamentary rules. It prejudices the proceedings that are now before a committee of the House, the Standing Committee on Finance, as well as prejudicing future proceedings and decisions of the House itself.

Subsequently, on October 10, Your Honour gave a ruling on that question of privilege. In the course of the ruling, as recorded at page 4461 of *Hansard*, Your Honour said:

> I expect the Department of Finance and other departments to study this ruling carefully and remind everyone within the Public Service that we are a parliamentary democracy, not a so-called executive democracy, nor a so-called administrative democracy.

Your Honour, you can imagine my horror when I arrived back in my constituency a week ago Friday and had received in that office a letter from one of my constituents, one George Flower. He had recently been in a neighbourhood Loblaw's store and picked up a package of brochures on the goods and services tax that were being handed out to the public by way of display in that store. I thought perhaps the brochures which I will refer to in a moment had simply been withdrawn or something. In accordance with Your Honour's ruling I understand the advertisements have been.

I telephoned this same Loblaw's store in Kingston this morning—I assume it was the same one—at 10.25. I asked the gentleman who answered, who worked in the bakery of that Loblaw's store, whether in fact these goods and services brochures were still available. He said: "Just a moment and I will check". He went out, checked, then came back and reported to me that they were in fact available and could be picked up in the store.

Let me quote from the first one. It is called *Goods and Services Tax: Questions and Answers*. The first question that it asks is: "What is the Goods and Services Tax?". The answer given in the brochure is: "The goods and services tax, GST, is a 9 per cent consumption tax that will replace the existing federal sales tax on January 1, 1991".

I could go on. There are other questions, but let me read a couple more of the quotations to make my point: "The GST will apply to virtually all goods and services sold in Canada. However, Canadians will not be charged tax when they buy any of the following goods and services." There is a long list of the exemptions.

• (1130)

Then it says: "For consumers the GST will be similar to a retail sales tax. It will be charged at 9 per cent of the retail price of goods and services. The GST will replace the existing federal sales tax which is buried at the manufacturer's level."

It goes on to detail the tax credits that will be allowed. It says that income tax will be reduced from 26 to 25 per cent. Then it lists a list of benefits that I will not describe. I think that they are, perhaps, not accurate.

Point of Order

But there are other brochures. They are called *Consumers and the GST*, *The GST Credit*, *Housing*, *Small Business*, *Farmers and Fishermen*, *Arts and Culture*. In every one, the first question that is asked is what is the goods and services tax and in every one of the brochures it says that it will replace the existing federal sales tax on January 1, 1991.

The one on arts and culture, for example, goes on to say: "The current federal sales tax is badly flawed and harmful to Canada's economy. It is hurting our ability to grow and create jobs."

There is nowhere in any of these brochures any mention of the fact that this is a proposed tax, that this tax is embodied in some bill or proposition that has been put before Parliament and, in fact, as Your Honour knows, we still do not have a bill introduced in this House proposing this tax. These brochures fall in the same category as the advertisements that appeared in papers. If anything I suggest they are more offensive because they state very definitely that the tax will be in force starting on January 1, 1991. There is no suggestion that these changes are proposed and the words, as Your Honour recalls, "proposed changes" were included in the advertisements that you, Sir, found so offensive in your ruling on October 10.

I suggest that our privileges as parliamentarians are being breached. These brochures constitute a contempt of this House. These brochures should have been withdrawn when the advertisements were withdrawn. We thought they were going to be withdrawn, we were told the advertisements would be withdrawn, and yet these are published, it appears, by the Department of Finance. The term "Department of Finance" is attached on the brochures and I would have thought that the Minister of Finance, having learned a lesson in this House on several occasions in connection with his financial plans, might have taken steps to withdraw these brochures.

I believe there has been a breach of our privileges. I am prepared to move the necessary motion for reference to the Standing Committee on Elections, Privileges, Procedures and Private Members' Business of the matter if you, Sir, see fit to rule that a prima facie breach of privilege has occurred. I submit that these brochures are in flagrant contempt of the ruling that Your Honour delivered on October 10. While Your Honour expressed your regret that this matter might have to be raised again, I have the same regret, but I discovered these things a week ago Friday and have raised it at the earliest opportunity in this House.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Kingston and the Islands has raised a matter of some importance. I am sure that he would do the courtesy of allowing the Chair to see copies of the publications and the brochures. I will look into the matter further and report back to the House.

The Hon Member for York Centre on a point of order.

* * *

POINT OF ORDER

SUB JUDICE CONVENTION

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, last week I wrote to you and I am rising now on a point of order to deal with the ruling that you made in Question Period about questions that I proposed asking to which it was argued that the *sub judice* convention applied. I want to seek guidance from you about whether it would be appropriate, as I submit it might be, for me to raise the subject matter of my letter following the intervention of my leader on a request for an emergency debate.

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, my friend has raised an interesting point. I have no quarrel at all with him raising it. I think the time to raise it is now if he wants to raise it and, in effect, challenge your ruling or call it into question in order that it be aired. If he wants to air it he airs it now.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the Hon. Minister of Justice would assist the Chair. As I understood it, the minister is taking the position on behalf of the government that this ought to be heard now, not later and not be conditional upon something that might or might not happen later in the proceedings. Does that sum up, in effect, the point the hon. minister was making?

Mr. Lewis: Yes, Sir. The House has opened. We have had points of privilege raised by individuals, I think quite rightly so, and if it is a privilege that should put aside the business of the House to be heard, then as Government House Leader, I am in perfect agreement with that being done but I think it should be done now. If privilege is breached, it is breached now. If my hon. friend wishes to raise it, I think he should raise it now not reserve an opportunity to be privileged twice in a day. Either one's

privilege is breached now or it is not breached at all today.

Mr. Kaplan: The House Leader would be quite right perhaps if I were rising on a point of privilege. I am not. I am rising on a simple point of order and I want in that point of order, which can be raised at any time as I think the House leader will recognize, to indicate that the subject matter with which I wish to deal is covered as well by the request of my leader for an emergency debate. I think it might be more logical, and I am only submitting that, to hear the matter later, but I rose for your guidance and I am certainly prepared to accept it.

Mr. Speaker: I have the point of the Hon. Minister of Justice. In the view of the Chair it is a point of order, not a question of privilege. I think the proper thing to do would be for the hon. member to just stand down his point of order at the moment and we will see what else transpires today in the next hour or so. He may or may not want to raise the point of order again.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, government responses to 216 petitions.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings*]

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ORDER IN COUNCIL

TABLING OF APPOINTMENTS

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased to table, in both official languages, a number of Order in Council appointments which were made by the government pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 110(1). These are deemed referred to the appropriate standing committees, a list of which is attached.

* * *

PETITIONS

SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today to present a petition signed by 10,300 Canadians, most of whom live in Edmonton, but as well from 112 other Alberta communities. These petitioners all humbly pray and call upon Parliament to withdraw the budget proposal to claw back payments under the social programs; old age security and family allowance, a most timely petition given the business of the House today. These were collected in the main by the One Voice Committee of the Society for the Retired and Semi-retired in Edmonton. That is 10,000 Albertans, Mr. Speaker. I do hope the government pays attention.

• (1140)

IMMIGRATION ACT

Ms. Barbara Greene (Don Valley North): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling another 1,295 signatures from across Canada; from the Yukon, Quebec, British Columbia, and metropolitan Toronto. All of these people are opposed to the existing provisions of the Immigration Act and want it revised to comply with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the enhancement of human rights and dignity of persons with disabilities.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Gus Mitges (Bruce—Grey): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present to the House today more petitions from concerned citizens in communities across northern Ontario. One thousand eight hundred and sixty-seven petitioners from North Bay, Thunder Bay, Sudbury, Elliot Lake, Sault Ste Marie, Kenora, Dryden, Sturgeon Falls, Espanola, New Liskeard, Coniston, Lively, Thornloe and Crystal Falls, strongly urge Parliament to protect the rights of the unborn from conception with a law that will seek to save the life of both mother and child. I am in full support of their efforts.

CHILD POVERTY

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to present a petition on behalf of residents of Kamloops, Vancouver, Burnaby, Richmond, Ladner,

Coquitlam, and Langley, who point out that one-sixth of all Canadian children live in poverty and that the number of children living in poverty has increased by 13 per cent in the last seven years, and that the number of children living in poverty in some provinces now is as high as 26 per cent.

The petitioners are asking all of us in the House of Commons to support Motion M-254 calling upon the government to negotiate with the provinces to provide a comprehensive bill of rights for children.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, a number of western Canadians are very concerned with the government's decision to curtail VIA Rail service and to cut back its operation significantly and are asking Parliament to urge the government not to cut back but in fact to invest in an up-dated VIA Rail service for the country like every other western industrialized nation is doing.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, this petition is again mainly from western Canadians who are distressed at this government's commitment to proceed with the goods and services tax, after all of the opposition. These petitioners point out whole sets of reasons why they are opposed to it, and basically I guess they are asking the government to just come to its senses, back off and go back to the drawing board.

Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Prince Edward—Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I table again today some 36 petitions humbly praying and calling upon Parliament to reject the proposed goods and services tax. It is my privilege to present these containing several thousand names of constituents in my riding.

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of presenting a petition today on behalf of the residents of Carleton—Gloucester. I have well over 1,000 signatures and the petitioners are requesting the government to withdraw its proposed bill on a goods and services tax.

Like them, I feel that the goods and services tax is going to be a negative factor in the development of the Canadian economy, is going to be a negative factor in creating employment, and is going to be a negative factor for people with medium and low-incomes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Douglas Young (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present petitions signed by some of my constituents in Gloucester in northeastern New Brunswick who categorically oppose the goods and services tax.

I must tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I am very proud of the effort these people have made to inform the people of the region about the harmful effects of this goods and services tax and I hope that the Government of Canada will take account of their concerns.

[*English*]

VIA RAIL

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure and duty on behalf of a number of petitioners from Winnipeg and area, to present a petition which calls upon the Parliament of Canada to maintain VIA Rail Canada's present national network, and asks that Parliament upgrade VIA Rail with new equipment and change the passenger act to give a firm legislative mandate for the continuing of VIA Rail across Canada.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Mr. Speaker, I also have a number of petitions dealing with the goods and services tax. The petitioners are constituents of mine and constituents from the next riding of The Battlefords. They call upon Parliament to reject the current proposals for the goods and services tax and to ensure that the tax which it does bring in is fair to all Canadians.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): I have the pleasure to present a petition signed by 32 of my constituents from Kingston and The Islands. These petitioners object to the proposed goods and services tax and call upon Parliament to reject any measure that will impose that tax.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise the House that Question No. 126 will be answered today.

[*Text*]

REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES

Question No. 126—**Miss Grey:**

For the fiscal years 1989-90 and 1990-91, for each province and territory, has the government made projections of (a) its total revenues and total expenditures on a public accounts basis and, if so, what are they (b) the total revenue impacts and total expenditure impacts of the Budget presented April 27, 1989, and, if so, what are they?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): a) and b) No.

[*English*]

Mr. Lewis: I ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

Mr. Speaker: The question enumerated by the minister has been answered. Shall the remaining questions be allowed to stand?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: I wish to advise the House that I have received two applications for an emergency debate, and I will hear them in the order they were received. I recognize the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

* * *

MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S. O. 52

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

Mr. Speaker: I think before the right hon. gentleman commences, and in order to help others on a similar motion today, I will hear carefully the application, of course. I do remind hon. members that an application for an emergency debate must be fairly brief and concise because under the rules there is no opportunity for reply or argument by any other member of the House. I know the right hon. gentleman will keep that in mind.

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): I rise to request an emergency debate relating to the administration of justice. There will be two aspects to this very brief submission. The first is that it is a matter of urgent public importance. The second is that it goes beyond the concept of *sub judice*. Needing to address both these questions briefly, I crave your indulgence and the indulgence of the House.

My submission is that the issue would not prejudice the rights of the accused in the matter of charges relating to the budget leaks of last April. My submission is that we have obligations as members of Parliament to raise the very serious issue of political interference in the administration of justice. We want to raise the question of individual rights, the abuse of individual rights, in the way these charges were brought. We want to raise, if you allow us, the issue of solicitor-client privilege which may or may not exist between the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Department of Justice, and the Crown prosecutor. We want to raise the issue of abuse of freedom of the press, of failure of ministers to answer truthfully on this issue in the House, the independence of our national police force, and the discretion of individual police officers to lay charges.

I submit that the *sub judice* convention, and it is only a convention, does not apply in this case because what we have to raise here in Parliament has little or nothing to do with the guilt or innocence of the accused before a court. The debate we seek is whether or not the government interfered with the impartial administration of justice in bringing these charges in the first place.

Those of us in Parliament cannot allow the government to use a trial to shield themselves. The convention—

Mr. Speaker: I would like to indicate to hon. members, and especially to the public watching, that this is a very, very serious issue, and I have relaxed the rules somewhat to hear the right hon. gentleman. I sense though that the right hon. gentleman is getting into the very debate that he asks for, and I must ask him to be very careful because I will be faced with a point of order I am sure.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, I am dealing with the submission of why you are not bound by any *sub judice* rule. The convention is meant to protect defendants in a trial. It is not meant to protect government ministers.

The Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice said the Minister of Finance was the victim of a crime. We are suggesting very strongly to Your Honour that the police were therefore told that there had to be a crime and that charges had to be laid. No matter what the—

• (1150)

Mr. Speaker: I must ask the right hon. gentleman to help the Chair here. We are now getting into the very debate the right hon. gentleman is asking for, and I may very well hear exactly the same request shortly. There

was a second point the right hon. gentleman wanted to raise, and I would like to hear him on that.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): The convention of *sub judice* is not meant to hamstring this House from debating the real issues now before you, Mr. Speaker. In 1977 a special committee, to which you referred in your earlier judgment in this House on *sub judice*, had the following to say as regards your role in the application of the *sub judice* convention. I want to quote from that committee:

> In exercising this discretion, your Committee recommends that when there is a doubt in the mind of the Chair, a presumption shall exist in favour of allowing debate and against the application of the convention.

Those were the words of the committee which you, Mr. Speaker, recited with some approval in your recent judgment.

The current trial may go on for a considerable length of time. The people of Canada cannot wait. Canadians have a right to know whether or not our system of justice has been tampered with and thereby undermined. The information on the public record so far in the trial indicates political interference. Canadians therefore have a right to know. Canadians want an assurance that the administration of justice is fair and impartial. I would think that the government would want this issue cleared up quickly as well.

[*Translation*]

So the issue we want to raise with you, Mr. Speaker, is the possibility that some people may have interfered politically in this affair, continually and over many years.

This matter is very important and requires our consideration as soon as possible here in the House.

So I respectfully suggest, within the limits you set for me, Mr. Speaker, that you suspend the business of the House to allow us to discuss this matter in depth.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Oshawa.

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a similar motion which I brought to your attention on the same subject. I would like to say at the outset, notwithstanding the importance of the issue, that it did seem to me that the rules require us to stay within one or two sentences. If we were going to raise a question of privilege it would enable us to deal with this very serious matter at greater length.

I want to come right to the point. As I said in my letter to you, my intention is to move for the adjournment of the House under Standing Order 52 for the purpose of discussing a matter of urgent and pressing concern, namely, in this case, the fact that during the criminal proceedings involving Messrs. Belisle, Appleby and Small, a serious allegation has been made, namely, that political considerations played a role in the laying of charges against individuals. It is of fundamental importance that this be clarified and clarified soon.

Your Honour, on November 7 you did rule on this subject at that time and said that the *sub judice* convention, and I cite your words, "should apply in this case", and then significantly you added the words, "for the time being".

My reason for raising it today is that since November 7 at which time I think it is reasonable to conclude that most if not all observers thought that the situation would be resolved within a matter of days then and that there would be a judgment by the judge on the issue enabling us to deal with it in the House. Since then, as Your Honour knows, the proceedings have been delayed and they will not get back to the court level of discussion until December 18. This I stress, Your Honour, has happened since you gave us your original ruling and I submit to you that the question as to whether or not there are political considerations taking place in the laying of criminal charges is too important a matter for us to allow another delay to take place, this time for another month. Therefore, I ask Your Honour to reach the conclusion that the public interest at this time should come down on the side of having a public hearing in this Chamber on that profoundly important question.

Mr. Speaker: I have listened to the observations of the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition and the Hon. Member for Oshawa. In view of the issue I have probably been very lenient indeed in allowing both the hon. members to make their point. I want to assure them both that I have their point and I will consider their observations and report back to the House as soon as it is appropriate.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

INCOME TAX ACT

MOTION THAT DEBATE BE NOT FURTHER ADJOURNED

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That debate on the motion for second reading and reference to a legislative committee of Bill C-28, and on any amendments proposed thereto, shall not be further adjourned.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The House divided on the motion which was agreed to on the following division:

(*Division No. 129*)

YEAS

Members

Anderson
Andre
Atkinson
Belsher
Bernier
Bertrand
Bird
Bjornson
Blais
Bouchard (Roberval)
Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Bourgault
Brightwell
Browes
Cadieux
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Cardiff
Casey
Chadwick
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Clifford
Cole
Collins
Corbeil
Côté
Couture
Crosby (Halifax West)
Darling
DeBlois
de Cotret
Desjardins
Dobbie
Dorin
Edwards
Epp
Fee
Feltham
Ferland
Fontaine
Fretz
Gérin
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Greene
Guilbault
Hawkes
Hicks
Hockin
Hogue
Horner
Horning
Hudon
Hughes
Jacques
Jelinek
Jourdenais
Kempling
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kindy
Koury
Landry
Larrivée
Layton
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lewis
Lopez
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Malone
Marin
Martin (Lincoln)
Masse
Mazankowski
McDermid
McKnight
Mitges
Monteith
Oberle
O'Kurley
Paproski
Plamondon
Porter
Redway
Reid
Ricard
St-Julien
Shields
Sobeski
Soetens
Sparrow
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Tremblay (Quebec-Est)
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Van de Walle
Vankoughnet
Vien
Vincent
White
Wilbee
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)
Winegard
Worthy—108

NAYS

Members

Allmand
Anawak
Angus
Arseneault
Assad
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bélair
Bellemare
Blackburn (Brant)
Boudria
Butland
Caccia
Callbeck
Catterall
Crawford
Dionne
Finestone
Fontana
Foster
Fulton
Gagliano
Gray (Windsor West)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Hunter
Kaplan
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Kristiansen
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
Maheu
Manley
Mifflin
Milliken
Mills
Mitchell
Nault
Nystrom
Parker
Prud'homme
Riis
Robichaud
Robinson
Rompkey
Samson
Stewart
Stupich
Taylor
Vanclief
Young (Gloucester)—51

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I declare the motion carried.

* * *

[*English*]

POINT OF ORDER

SUB JUDICE CONVENTION

Mr. Kaplan: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. At the beginning of proceedings today I raised with the Speaker the question of how long his ruling on November 7 dealing with the *sub judice* would apply. He

indicated in the ruling itself that it would apply for the time being.

I rise now to indicate my own hope that at the beginning of Question Period today the Speaker might indicate his disposition as to whether, for the reasons raised on this side of the House at the beginning of proceedings today, that we might know before the beginning of Question Period his disposition as to the continuation of that ruling on *sub judice*.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The Chair has noted the hon. member's comments and they will be relayed to the Speaker. Orders of the day.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

INCOME TAX ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed from Wednesday, October 18, consideration of the motion of Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre) that Bill C–28, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act, the Federal–Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Federal Post–Secondary Education and Health Contributions Act, the Old Age Security Act, the Public Utilities Income Tax Transfer Act, the War Veterans Allowance Act and a related act, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Madam Speaker, in 1951 it took a constitutional amendment to clear the path for the federal government to introduce the national old age pension program. The only requirement to receive a pension was that one be elderly and Canadian.

[*Translation*]

The OAS program was the result of an all–party committee report—

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The Chair would appreciate a little more silence so that I can hear the hon. member. Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Catterall: Madam Speaker, the OAS program was the result of an all–party committee report supported unanimously across the country.

[*English*]

The most succinct and clear statement on what seniors could henceforth enjoy came from a member of the opposition, the Hon. Donald Fleming. Mr. Fleming said, "We are departing as far as we can from the idea of any handout, any payment as of grace, and are seeking to supplant that type of payment with a payment which will be received by the pensioner as of right". It is too bad Conservatives today do not understand, as this hon. Tory member did, what a pension is and what an entitlement is.

• (1240)

Parliamentarians then were very clear about what they intended to accomplish: basic income security for every elderly citizen based not on any needs test but on their having contributed to the building of Canada throughout their lifetime. And to make their meaning absolutely clear, that this was not welfare, not charity, not income dependent, they set it up as a contributory plan so that everybody would know that they were paying for a pension. Initially every taxpayer contributed 2 per cent extra tax to a plan that was to pay no more than it took in. That contribution doubled over the years to 4 per cent until in 1971 it was simply rolled in to the over–all tax rate and every taxpayer continued to contribute.

When that was done in 1971, the words of Mr. Stanley Knowles were prophetic and they are being realized today. Mr. Knowles expressed his concern about abandoning the special taxes that funded a separate old age security fund. He said, "This will put the government in the position of being able to play fast and loose with the whole question of old age security and even abolish its universality".

The finance minister of the day, Mr. Edgar Benson, gave Mr. Knowles what he thought was an iron–clad guarantee that this would not happen when he said that: " The right is given to the pensioner by Parliament. The only way of changing this would be for the government to amend the Old Age Security Act".

[*Translation*]

Well, Madam Speaker, when those words were spoken, the idea that anyone would return to a handout system for the seniors who have earned the right to a secure old age was unthinkable. With this government, it is clear that nothing is unthinkable.

[*English*]

The Prime Minister has excused this smashing of a sacred trust, his betrayal, his word to Canadians, by saying, "We want to do more for lower income seniors". I will tell this House what is happening to low-income seniors. At doors throughout Ottawa West during the election campaign just a year ago, I spoke to low income seniors who have never paid income tax before and who are now being gouged by this government. They and other low income Canadians are now paying 60 per cent more in income tax than when this government took office.

This government is taking from middle income Canadians and it is also taking from the poor. It is ensuring with this bill that more and more seniors every year will lose their pensions. The seniors of Canada have paid for these pensions every year since 1951, nearly 40 years. They have planned their retirement, trusting their government to return to them what they paid for.

Because these seniors lived through the depression, because they were wise enough to invest, because they were frugal enough to establish pensions for themselves, because they chose to do without many of the comforts of life to enjoy a comfortable and secure retirement, they are now being punished by this government for living by all the good conservative, frugal principles that this government espouses but refuses to govern by.

[*Translation*]

How can the Members on the other side of the House stand up and in all good conscience justify this betrayal? The government claims it is necessary to extort money from seniors to solve the deficit problem. Well, who has created this problem? Let me do a sample overview of this government's record since 1984. It has enjoyed better economic conditions, lower inflation, lower interest rates and higher employment than had been seen in the five years previous to its taking office when the economy of the entire world was in turmoil.

[*English*]

Despite those favourable conditions, despite increased taxes, despite more working taxpayers among whom it could spread the costs of running the country, it has doubled the national debt and doubled the amount of money that goes to pay interest on the debt. No wonder it hasn't been able to reduce the annual deficit.

The government has increased taxes most severely on low and middle-income Canadians, while continuing to talk about fairness in tax. It has increased what it extracts from individual Canadians from $29 billion to $50 billion in less than five years. It has cut programs for environmental solutions, cut programs to reduce demands on non-renewable energy and to research alternative energy sources, cut services to Canadians by cutting 12,000 jobs across Canada in the Public Service, cut help to unemployed Canadians, cut help to the most disadvantaged regions of Canada, destroyed our national rail system, sold our national airline, and reneged on its commitment to the provinces to share the cost of social programs and education.

[*Translation*]

What I want to know from the members opposite, Madam Speaker, is just what this government has been doing? Just what has this government been spending taxpayers' money on?

[*English*]

The government pretends it is moving toward a fairer tax system. What is fair about taxing only seniors at 100 per cent, only children's allowances at 100 per cent? How does the government justify 100 per cent taxes for seniors and for children, when overnight windfall profits are not taxed at anywhere near that rate, when millionaires can make a profit on their investment and pay no more than 29 per cent, when the most profitable corporations in Canada have had their tax rate reduced from 36 per cent to 28 per cent?

Seniors invested too, but they invested with their government. Beginning in 1951, they paid extra taxes specifically to provide for their old age. They continue to contribute. They have a right to keep that for which they paid.

[*Translation*]

Finally, I ask that we remember that this 100 per cent clawback will, in the end, add to the poverty of elderly women. Most of the households from which the old age security will be extracted are comfortable based on the income of the husband, not the family. Many of those incomes are based on pensions that die with the pensioner.

[*English*]

On the death of a spouse, many thousands, and perhaps hundreds of thousands of widows will be left with no pension beyond the old age security. The extra comfort they could have been left with by savings accumulated from the old age security their spouses now receive is being removed from them. In fact, the government is knowingly ensuring that it is senior couples with only one income that will sacrifice most. It is doing this by basing the clawback on the individual's income, not the family income. As a result, two seniors with $49,000 income each and a family income of nearly $100,000 do not return any old age security to the government, while a couple with one income over $50,000 does. Senior households with two incomes can earn twice as much before losing any old age security. Yet this government continues to talk about fairness in taxation. The same principle applies to the family allowance. Higher income, double-earner households will not pay the same clawback as more modest, single income households. This government seems to forget that in many families where only one partner earns an income, the family allowance is the only income a woman can call her own.

• (1250)

This move on both seniors' pensions and family allowances has nothing to do with good social policy, it has only to do with grabbing money from Canadians wherever the government can get it. The government is hitting the elderly again by its changes in the rules for RRSP contributions. Now pensions will no longer be eligible to be transferred to RRSPs, another source of tax from those who can least afford it.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, fully one-third of the adults in my riding of Ottawa West are over 65 years of age. Not all of them, in fact, a small minority will be affected by this measure, unlike when the government threatened to deindex all their pensions. But I know many of them are watching this afternoon and I urge them to understand that this is only the first step in a much larger assault on all their pensions.

[*English*]

The government is trying, through this initial step, to accomplish, through the back door, what it was stopped from doing through the front door, when Canadians all across Canada, old and young, objected to the deindexing of seniors' pensions. I urge seniors to understand and I urge all Canadians to understand that they have a Prime Minister who stated his intentions with respect to indexed pensions very clearly before he was even the leader of his party. He said outright that indexed pensions should be phased out and then outlawed. The Prime Minister still believes that and I urge all seniors and all Canadians to let the Prime Minister and the government know that they do not agree with it. A deindexed pension is no pension at all.

This bill, more than any other, embodies the Tory right-wing agenda. It abandons all pretence at fairness and justice. It abandons the great Canadian dream of a compassionate society that cares for the elderly, cares for those less well off and nurtures that bastion of a strong and durable economy, the small business. It lays bare the moral bankruptcy of a government that just a year ago talked about sacred trusts and knew very well its intention to smash every one of them. Once again the government is too arrogant or too afraid to face the exposure of its hypocrisy through free and open debate in this House. Once again, for the twelfth time in this new session of Parliament, it has invoked closure to stop Canadians from hearing what is wrong with this bill it proposes to pass.

This bill is a betrayal of seniors, a betrayal of families, a betrayal of many of the values that this country holds dear, and yet once again the government will use its power of numbers in this House to pass it. I urge members opposite to rethink their position and I urge the public to let the government know what it thinks of this bill.

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Madam Speaker, Bill C-28 covers many matters and in the short time available I can only concentrate on a couple of them. I would like to concentrate on the clawback of family allowances and old age pensions, matters of considerable concern to all Canadians and

matters to which all Canadians have voiced concern and opposition.

I want to urge the government to show some appropriate concern for families and seniors in Canada. We should be supporting families, we should be supporting Canada's future. Families have a contribution to make to Canada's future and we should be supporting them in that role. We should also be supporting Canada's seniors who have made their contribution to Canadian society and need to be able to live with respect and dignity for the rest of their lives.

We should look not to end the universality of social programs, ensure that those who are better able to pay their taxes do in fact pay their fair share.

So we should be supporting families, we should be supporting seniors, and we should be supporting the regions of Canada. We should resist changes which make our social programs more like those in the United States.

The route that the government is following in Bill C–28 with regard to the clawback of family allowances is, of course, not the only route to follow. It is not the only way it could resolve some of the questions that it raised about the deficit and about the cost of social programs.

As has been so often pointed out by those in my party and by thousands of Canadians across the country, there is a great deal of opposition to the measures that the government is proposing, and yet the government is going ahead anyway. No consultation with groups who are to be affected prior to these measures being announced took place. Of course, this has been a touchstone of this government. Why would it want to consult, I suppose, with those who are affected if they are going to be opposed to the government's measures.

But it is critical to our approach to government in Canada that we do hear from both sides of the issue, that we do not just hear, as this government does, from the large corporations and the right wing think–tanks. Even this form of government consultation is breaking down with the Fraser Institute speaking out now against the goods and services tax. Even the government's allies, and supporters, are prepared to oppose the general thrust of this government's policy.

Let us begin with what the government committed itself to in terms of social programs. All of us will remember statements by the government about its commitment to social programs. Of course, after the election the government is prepared to go back on its word. We all remember what the Prime Minister said in Summerside, Prince Edward Island in October of 1988. "As long as I am Prime Minister of Canada, social benefits, especially those for the elderly will be improved, not diminished by our government which is committed to social justice and fairness for Canadians".

In response to reminders of this and in response to criticisms of the approach, the Minister of Finance has argued that the clawback on social programs, on family allowances and old age security will have only a minimal effect on Canadians, that it will not affect Canadian individuals and families very much. He claims that only 4.3 per cent of seniors will be paying back all or part of their old age security, with 54,000 paying back all of it, and 74,000 paying back some of it.

On family allowances, the Minister of Finance claims only 14 per cent of families will be affected. But these numbers will go up rapidly year by year, primarily because the government has not indexed these numbers. More and more retirees will end up repaying their pensions and more and more families will end up repaying all or part of their family allowances.

For example, a 28 year old person earning about $28,000, roughly an average industrial wage, will be hit by the clawback by the time he or she retires. That means most Canadians are going to be hit by this as time goes on.

So we are faced with cuts to social programs, contrary to commitments made by this government. Some in the government and some on the government side are more honest and, of course, it comes as no surprise that I would raise the comments of the chairman of the Standing Committee on Finance who has been quite explicit about the attack on the universality which these programs generate.

I think we have seen in this debate a clear recognition that these steps that the government is taking move our programs more toward the Americanization of our social programs and toward the end of universality. What the chairman of the finance committee said is that we have

decided to eliminate universality—although the claw-back may be unfair and sneaky it is there.

* * *

MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S. O. 52

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE—SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: I hesitate to the interrupt the hon. member. If there is still time, I am sure the hon. member will rise later on in the day. I thank him for his courtesy in allowing me to interrupt.

Earlier today there were two applications, one by the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition and the other by the Leader of the New Democratic Party, the hon. member for Oshawa, asking for an emergency debate later on today with respect to a court case which is presently adjourned to December 18.

• (1300)

There have been suggestions by a witness in the case, and I have read the transcript very carefully, to the effect that political considerations may have played a part in whether charges were or were not laid. I point out that the examination of that particular witness is not complete and will continue again in December, presumably. That is the way the court left the matter.

The application before me is for an emergency debate. It is a very important one and I think all members on both sides of the House would want to accept that. At least for today I do not think that the application meets the requirements for an emergency debate and I so order.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could get a clarification from Your Honour. As you may have heard, my colleague for York Centre rose on a point of order some time ago and was trying to get an indication from the Speaker as to whether questions this afternoon would be permitted on the same topic for the same rule.

Am I to assume that refusal of the Speaker for the emergency debate also applies to the *sub judice* issue in relation to Question Period, or is that a separate ruling from Mr. Speaker that will come later?

Mr. Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell. I, of course, was notified that the hon. member for York Centre did raise this question.

I want hon. members to know that there are two issues here. The one I have just ruled on is that at least today we are not proceeding to set aside the business of the House for an emergency debate. The considerations that go into whether or not an emergency debate should be allowed are well known to hon. members. It should be a matter that the debate can effect one way or the other, and it should be something that cannot be dealt with in any other way. I have now ruled that at least for today there is to be no emergency debate.

There was a second question. The second question concerns my ruling of some days ago about the convention, which is just that, that reference not be made in this Chamber to proceedings in a criminal case while that case is continuing. The ruling I made was that it would not be appropriate to withdraw the convention and that the *sub judice* rule ought to apply. I think I indicated to the hon. member for York Centre that he may indeed want to argue that matter further at some other time. That is always a privilege of any member. But at the moment the ruling does stand.

It being one o'clock p.m. I do now leave the chair until two o'clock p.m.

At 1.07 the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*Translation*]

MINORITY LANGUAGE RIGHTS

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, yesterday Bill 8 of the Ontario Legislature came into effect. This law is a historic step in the evolution of our society.

From now on, Francophones in Ontario will be entitled to service in their mother tongue from Ontario government departments and agencies.

Although French has not yet been declared an official language in Ontario, this timely initiative of the Peterson Government is worthy of praise in this House.

I therefore have the honour, on behalf of my colleagues in the Liberal caucus, to congratulate Ontario's Minister of Francophone Affairs, the Hon. Charles Beer, his predecessor, the Hon. Bernard Grandmaître, and the Premier, the Hon. David Peterson, for their leadership on this issue.

The wisdom and broad-mindedness of this government will certainly be an example in years to come.

* * *

[*English*]

UN DECLARATION OF RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, today on the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of Children, the United Nations General Assembly approved a comprehensive convention on the rights of the child.

Canadians can be proud that we are recognized as one of the strongest supporters of the convention and have played an important role in its drafting.

The document contains 54 articles establishing international standards for our children's social, economic, political, religious, cultural and civic rights.

As Canadians, we are concerned that millions of children at home and abroad live in conditions of extreme poverty.

More than 40,000 children around the world die each day from preventable childhood diseases. As many as 100 million children around the world are homeless.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, however, is only a first step. Countries ratifying the convention must put in place measures which will guarantee children their rights. In Canada, this could be done by establishing a national bill of rights for children, as my colleague from Mission–Coquitlam has suggested in her private members' motion. The Government of Canada should take immediate action to end the immoral situation of 151,000 Canadian children each month depending on food banks for their meals.

[*Translation*]

SPORTS

Mr. Maurice Tremblay (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out the wonderful victory of the Victoriaville Vulkins in the Quebec college football AA finals, better known as the "Gold Bowl", Mr. Speaker, for the second year in a row.

Not only is it important to mention the talent and discipline of these students, who from the beginning of their school year had to show a sense of responsibility worthy of young people who can reach the highest goals, but also their coaches, including Yvon Paré and Jacques Dumont, who were more than trainers and became guides and friends thus helping these student athletes bring out their full potential. Reaching the top is already an achievement, but staying there is an even greater one. Bravo, Victoriaville Vulkins!

* * *

[*English*]

COLCHESTER REGIONAL HOSPITAL

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a significant achievement in my riding.

The campaign chairman of the Colchester Regional Hospital Foundation fund raising committee, Mr. Tom Stanfield and his 15 directors are to be congratulated on organizing a fund raising campaign for an expansion of the Colchester Regional Hospital. The generosity of the people of both Truro and Colchester counties and the value they put on their communities is clearly shown by their terrific gesture of goodwill in the most tangible medium, that of cash donations. These funds, amounting to almost $1.4 million, will be complemented by funding for the province of Nova Scotia and the municipality toward phase two expansion of the Colchester Hospital to improve the extensive care unit, eye care unit, additional surgical facilities, a rehabilitation centre, nuclear medicine, 50 additional beds and additional space.

Congratulations are in order for the committee and also the 250 businesses which donated as well as the 6,200 individuals. The result will be that more medical and health services will now be available for Truro and surrounding area.

S. O. 31

EL SALVADOR

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, on Friday, March 17 of this year, Father Ignacio Ellacuria, the Jesuit rector of the University of Central America, told me and other members of the Mission for Peace in El Salvador that "despite appearances we in El Salvador have never been closer to peace although we have a long way to go". Father Ellacuria was internationally respected for his courageous support of the use of dialogue and negotiations to resolve the El Salvadoran conflict. We deplore the brutal and senseless murder of this man, his five colleagues and two staff by the El Salvadoran military as witnessed last week.

As a new member of the OAS, Canada must exert independent and distinctive initiatives to achieve an immediate cease-fire and a negotiated settlement to the conflict in El Salvador. "Monitoring" of the situation is insufficient and unacceptable as a Canadian response. Canada must officially take up the baton from the slain priests of El Salvador and courageously use every diplomatic facility to demonstrate its commitment to peace and the people of El Salvador. Delivery of increased humanitarian assistance through Canadian NGOs and multilateral channels must be assured.

The human rights of all, but especially of civilians, must be protected. Canadian volunteers such as Karen Ridd of Peace Brigades International must be assured safety. The U.S. must be pressured to stop its unsuccessful eight year long aid program to the El Salvador military.

* * *

CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

Mr. Brian O'Kurley (Elk Island): Mr. Speaker, one of the greatest challenges facing Canada today is constitutional reform. We all know that we need a strong constitutional vision of Canada and we also know that our attempt to meet this important need has been challenged. However, we cannot retreat from what we have achieved. Instead we must advance and resolve the difficult problems. We must not deny the differences among us but rather further define what is special about ourselves and our way of life.

Our challenge as nation builders is to restructure our attitudes so that we can see ourselves in terms of what we have contributed to this great nation and what we have received in return. Having accomplished this, we must work together to identify those things that as Canadians make us the same. Let us work together to find the common ground and build a strong Constitution. Let us work together for a better Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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CANADIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, if you would permit me, I would like to raise a non-partisan topic in the House. I am sure that you are as thrilled as I am that the Saskatchewan Rough Riders thrashed the Edmonton Eskimos in the western final yesterday by a score of 32 to 31. I am sure you are as thrilled as I am too that our sometimes boastful and cocky friends have been put in their place. Perhaps your deputy could have done some good for the Edmonton Eskimos but unfortunately he was not there. Maybe even the Premier should have called in a play or two to the bench.

Now it is on to the Grey Cup and the Hamilton Tiger Cats. I cannot help but notice that the member for Hamilton East has been mumbling, moaning and muttering something about her banker. I would suggest instead of wasting the money of her banker on a race of nobodies for some dubious prize of another Albertan city in about seven months, perhaps she should put that money up front and arrange a little wager with me on the outcome of the football game and contribute the earnings of that wager to some worth-while charity. That might be more worth while.

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• (1410)

COPYRIGHT ACT

Ms. Barbara Greene (Don Valley North): Mr. Speaker, I urge the hon. Minister of Communications to table phase two of the Copyright Act in the House of Commons without further delay. The laws that now stand provide no exemptions for Canada's educational research and library community. Indeed, they are forced to break the law every day just as members of Parliament,

the parliamentary library, caucus services and millions of Canadians across Canada do.

Canadians want access to copyrighted material and do not want creators to use the rights they have been granted in the copyright legislation to control criticism, research, education and discussion in classrooms and public forums.

Canadians also want to know who will have to pay the $30 million to $40 million that CANCOPY copy estimates will be raised. Is it libraries, provincial ministries of education, universities, Parliament, businesses and other organizations throughout the country? And who is to receive the revenues: Torstar, Key Publishers and other members of CANCOPY, International creators or American creators who are not entitled to similar compensation in their own country?

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[*Translation*]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, on November 13, 1989, 200 farmers from my riding held a demonstration in Amos, attended by the president of the Abitibi-Témiscamingue UPA, Mr. Denis Jutras, and Mr. Gilles Bérubé, president of the Amos UPA. The main concerns of our farmers are: A stronger GATT Article 11; quotas on yogurt and ice cream; protecting the option of maintaining import quotas on primary and processed products and ensuring that so-called "over-processed" products are included. Mr. Speaker, in Abitibi, people stand united, and I want to make it clear that I support the claims of the farmers of Abitibi-Témiscamingue.

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[*English*]

MEECH LAKE ACCORD

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister considers his next step with the premiers on the Constitution, he will remember that constitutional change must unify our country, not divide it. I saw these flaws, therefore I voted no to Meech Lake Accord.

Canadians are restless about their future. Can First Ministers find unity when the Prime Minister appears to refuse openness and where the need for consensus seems to have disappeared?

It is not a question of Quebec's place in Canada, that is understood. But let us remember that Quebec had agreed in principle in 1965 and in 1971 and then said no. Women had equality concerns in 1981, the charter was re-opened and amended; no fragile web was destroyed. Now if other provinces have concerns, will the Prime Minister listen and seek consensus? Can the chance for resolution be missed by excess language, personal attack, or boxing in people? It is the Prime Minister's duty to reset the tone and agenda, not for horse trading, but for consensus building for Canada.

Across the country, Canadians are saddened because this is a time for federal-provincial confrontation, not national reconciliation. It is time to move toward harmony and dialogue that allows all Canadians equal rights and the opportunity to live together and grow together in mutual respect.

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FISHERIES

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): Mr. Speaker, Canada is continuing its leadership role in international environmental protection by co-sponsoring a United Nations resolution on the ban of high seas drift-net fishing. This ban would take effect on June 30, 1992, and also proposes an immediate freeze on expansion of the North Pacific drift-net activity. This follows Canada's 1987 ban on drift-netting in our 200 mile zone, a step later followed by other nations.

Canada also proposed a working group on alternative technologies to drift-netting at the International North Pacific Fisheries Commission meeting, a proposal that was adopted. It is vital not only to focus attention on this issue, but also to take concrete action to solve a problem which threatens the world ecosystem and the livelihood of Canadian fishermen. Canada is both calling attention to this crisis and taking steps to solve it. I congratulate the Minister of Fisheries and the Secretary of State for External Affairs for their leadership on this matter.

Oral Questions

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, the Great Lakes is being threatened by the rampant spread of zebra mussels. This biological contaminant was brought into the Great Lakes system in the ballast waters of ships coming in from outside Canada. Paul Hebert, the head of the Great Lakes Institute at the University of Windsor, said that "from a density that was probably a single animal per square metre two years ago, we are now experiencing over 10,000 animals per square metre. These mollusks pose a great challenge to the Great Lakes. Scientists and engineers expect that it will cost hundreds of millions of dollars to correct this problem.

I am glad that the Minister of the Environment is with us today because it is obviously a problem that must be addressed jointly with our friends in the United States. I implore this government, through its Minister of the Environment, to get on this problem of sea mollusks to preserve the environment of the Great Lakes.

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BEEF IMPORTS

Mr. Bob Porter (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, over the past few years the government of Nicaragua has been shipping increased amounts of beef into Canada. As a result of the U.S. embargo in 1985 on products from Nicaragua, exports of beef from that country into Canada have climbed from 3 million pounds in 1986 to 22 million pounds last year. Shipments so far this year have reached 32 million pounds and are expected to go as high as 40 million pounds by the end of the year. Nicaragua is now shipping 92 per cent of its total beef exports to Canada. It has chosen Canada as its only market for beef. The lower price but lower quality imports will cost the Canadian beef industry between $40 million and $50 million in lost income. It is apparent that Nicaraguan officials do not wish to co-operate in voluntary restraint of shipments of beef into Canada.

Other signatories to the GATT are not permitting access to this product and Canada is becoming the dumping ground for a lot of the world's excess beef. We have become a victim of our own meat import act. The Canadian industry wishes to be fair traders but imports of this magnitude are not only unfair but are harmful to a viable Canadian industry, as well as placing our trading relationships with other countries in jeopardy. I think the time is long overdue to carefully consider the measures to be taken before more harm is down to one of the most viable sectors of Canadian agriculture.

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EL SALVADOR

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, the barbaric murder of Rev. Ellacuria, the rector at the University of Central America, and five other Jesuits last Thursday is a horrible symbol of the Salvadoran government's approach to ending that country's decade-old civil war. I met Rev. Ellacuria last March when I was in El Salvador. He was a man of God, a man of peace, a man who was playing a key role as a mediator between the government and the FMLN. I, along with all who had hoped for an early political solution to the war, grieve his death.

We should be aware that these murders were not just murders. They were statements. The bodies were mutilated in such a way as to make clear the contempt the military, those who are really running things, have for attempts at thoughtful solutions to the war. The attack at the university is a severe blow to prospects for peace in El Salvador. The deaths of such prominent leaders of the community will make moderation and compromise difficult. There will be no peace in El Salvador while the United States is providing support for the government's atrocities, as well as over $1 million a day in military assistance.

I call on the Canadian government to condemn the actions of the death squads at the UN Security Council.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Deputy Prime Minister. On April 27 in this House the Prime Minister said this about the possibility of profit-taking from the leak of the budget:

> The Solicitor General has said that if any information comes to him, he will report to the House immediately.

On May 19 the Solicitor General told the House, and I use his words:

> The investigation couldn't find any evidence to the effect that some people could have profited from the budget leak.

It was revealed last week, when the House was not sitting, that Canadian National Railways signed a memorandum of understanding for a $50 million deal to lease locomotives financed in part by Mutual Life of Canada, all this on April 26, and that CN subsequently backed out of the deal when it learned that advance knowledge of the federal budget might be involved.

Why, in the seven months since the Prime Minister gave his undertaking to the House of Commons that any new information would be brought to the attention of the House, was that information about the Canadian National leasing deal never made public by the Solicitor General or by any other member of the Government?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Solicitor General of Canada and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, we must remember that it is extremely important that any information that comes to the attention of any person, including opposition members, must be handed over immediately to the RCMP and investigated by that police force. I believe that in the circumstances, the important thing is that the RCMP has all the facts so that it can conduct a proper investigation, and that is what is happening now, Mr. Speaker.

• (1420)

[*English*]

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, that is no answer at all. Indeed, the RCMP had the information, at least on September 27, because according to a letter of that date from P. M. Cummins, the Director of National Security Investigations from the RCMP, reporting through his superiors to the Solicitor General: "Rumours relating to the intention of the government to increase taxes on leased equipment were emanating from Mutual's tax department in Waterloo, Ontario. This information was passed on to a consultant advising a Crown corporation which the following day, in anticipation of the tax increase, signed a letter of understanding on April 26 for a multi-million dollar lease, financed in part by Mutual Life of Canada, which would have allowed a 13 per cent to 17 per cent pre-budget saving". Those are the words from the letter.

In other words, CN signed a deal the day before the Prime Minister made his undertaking to the House of Commons that any information would be brought immediately to the attention of the House. Does the government still claim that no one could have profited from the budget leak, and who were the financial consultants who arranged that deal for Canadian National Railways?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat perplexed by the line of questioning that the right hon. gentleman is following because he was alleging earlier today that there are allegations of political interference in the activities of the RCMP. Really what he is suggesting here is that we should be interfering with the process of the RCMP investigation.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mazankowski: Well, if hon. members opposite do not want to take it seriously, Mr. Speaker, I do and I think you do, Sir, and other members of this House want it. The hon. member talks about rumours; he talks about the potential of profit taking. If he has any evidence to suggest that there was profit taking, which would be contrary to and violating the spirit of the budget, he should come forth with that information, turn it over to the House of Commons, give it to me, give it to the RCMP. That is his responsibility. Why does he not start living up to it rather than being engaged in the kind of irresponsible rhetoric in which we have been engaged?

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): That is the most turgid smoke-screen this Deputy Prime Minister has ever tried to emit. The information was in the hands of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and, therefore, should have been in the hands of the Solicitor General and, therefore, should have been given to the House of Commons.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Come on. That is right. There is no information that I had to bring to the attention of this government; it had possession of this kind of document.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, since the Solicitor General gave us a very ambiguous answer, Canadian National, which is a Crown corporation, made a deal connected with the budget leak. Later, CN apparently withdrew. When did CN withdraw from this deal? When did the Minister of Transport find out that CN had made a deal? When did the Solicitor General find out about this deal? When did the Minister of Finance find out about this deal which was an attempt to get around his Budget? Again, my question is: Why did the Solicitor General fail to inform the House of Commons for seven months, of the deal made by the CN?

Hon. Pierre Blais (Solicitor General of Canada and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, I find it hard to understand what the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition is driving at. When I report here in the House of Commons on information that I have been given by the Commissioner of the RCMP, the Government is accused of interfering with the RCMP's investigations. When the Goverment does not intervene and lets the police do its work and conduct its investigation, they say we are not doing our job. I think you should make up your mind and tell us exactly what you think we should be doing.

Mr. Speaker, I feel that what we have done is hand over all the facts to the RCMP which is an honourable police force. All the facts known to us are handed over to the RCMP. It has to conduct its investigation, and it is up to the RCMP to decide when to lay charges. That is how things are done in a democratic country like Canada, and I do not intend to change the way we do things.

[*English*]

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Deputy Prime Minister. I think I am in a position to challenge the statements just made by the Solicitor General about the degree to which this government believes that the RCMP should be allowed to do its own work.

Last week a hearing was held by the Quebec Order of Engineers in Montreal into one of the bribes that was paid to Michel Gravel, the former Tory MP. An engineer, Jean-Niel Plotte, who was asked for the bribe said that Bernard Roy, the Prime Minister's then principal secretary told him that the RCMP investigation would only be a little in-house investigation and that there were not supposed to be any charges laid. That is a direct quote. On what basis would the Prime Minister's office be able to give such an assurance about the RCMP whose independence is supposed to be protected by the government and not compromised by it. Does this Prime Minister's office think that they run the RCMP?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member, I am sure, is aware that this matter was in fact turned over to the RCMP as soon as it was brought to the attention of the Prime Minister's Office and the Privy Council Office. Charges have been laid. What more does the hon. member want? Does he want to go back and renege on the charges?

I find the line of questioning rather bizarre. First, the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition suggests that the RCMP should turn over all its information with regard to an investigation to the Solicitor General. I do not know much about law, but I know enough about the process of justice that that would be totally unfair. Maybe that is why the hon. Leader of the Opposition finds himself in so much difficulty, if that is the kind of approach he takes to running the affairs of his Party and leading a once proud national party.

Mr. Kaplan: The laying of charges and the conviction that followed is an important side, but only one side of the responsibility. Here is evidence from the Prime Minister's Office that it believes that it is running the RCMP.

[*Translation*]

After the investigation, Michel Gravelle said that the $75,000 he received was not much, and that others were getting $300,000 or $400,000.

Mr. Boudria: Who?

Mr. Kaplan: That's what he said.

Will the government act responsibly and investigate these claims? Has the government done anything about identifying these people and cleaning up its act?

[*English*]

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is talking about a news story that arose out of an exchange with respect to an engineer's disciplinary body. I am not going to engage in commenting on speculation and comments of that nature. The RCMP were called in and conducted an investigation. If the hon. member has any questions to raise about the method and the thoroughness of the RCMP investigation, there are ways and means in which he can follow that through with an appropriate line of questioning before the committee. Other mechanisms are available with regard to provisions that have been provided for with respect to the

RCMP, including internal investigations and other appropriate mechanisms put in place by this government.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for External Relations.

A young Canadian woman was arrested by the army this morning in a church in San Salvador, and with her, three American nuns.

What has the Government done to obtain the release of this young Canadian woman?

Hon. Monique Landry (Minister for External Relations): Mr. Speaker, we are aware of the arrest to which the Leader of the Opposition referred.

Last week, we made representations when the Lutheran minister was arrested. Today, we have people down there who will meet the authorities to ensure that the young woman is released as soon as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I may add that a number of Canadians are over there at the present time. Last week, they were all asked by the honorary consul to stay inside, not take any risks and, if possible, return to Canada.

We are monitoring the situation very closely, and we are, of course, very concerned about what is happening in San Salvador.

• (1430)

[*English*]

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, as the minister and as all other observers will have noted, the situation in San Salvador is getting worse, not better. The death squads continue to act with impugnity. The Government of Spain, as I understand it, has now withdrawn its ambassador. The Attorney General of San Salvador in effect signed death notices for a couple of bishops last night when he went on television. He warned them to get out of the country.

Considering that the situation is getting worse, not better and that the death squads are, I repeat, acting with impugnity, will the Canadian Government now use its newly established membership in the OAS to directly urge the United States Government to cease military assistance to the government in El Salvador?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Landry: Mr. Speaker, we are of course very concerned about what is happening at this time in El Salvador. As the Secretary of State for External Affairs pointed out last week, we are applying all possible pressure to stop this carnage so that peace talks may be resumed.

We were relieved to hear that the Secretary General of the OAS arrived in El Salvador yesterday. Canada's official representative had a meeting with the Secretary General, and we are of course looking at every possible means of getting the parties to at least accept a cease-fire, so that we can help the people who have been affected by the present fighting.

We will continue to apply pressure, and as the Hon. Member mentioned, we will use our new position within the OAS, to try and make the carnage stop and have peace talks resume as soon as possible.

[*English*]

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, as the minister will know, Senator Kerry from Massachusetts in the United States has already said that American weapons are being used to kill innocent people. He, as an American, has called for the cessation of using such weapons for such horrific purposes. I repeat again and ask the minister: Since one of the criticisms made of our government in the past about membership in the OAS was that it would not use its independence but would always follow whatever was decided in Washington, and given the facts that most observers believe to be facts, that the government is sanctioning right-wing death-squad activity against innocent people, will the government now ask the American government to cease providing weapons to the government in El Salvador?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Landry: Mr. Speaker, this government has its own policy and has always reacted very quickly to try to

help the cause of peace in countries throughout the world. Here again, we will continue to apply pressure so that peace talks can be resumed and this carnage, which we all deplore as Canadians and as free citizens, will be stopped as soon as possible.

[*English*]

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the two ministers responsible for immigration, I direct my question to the Deputy Prime Minister. It concerns the deteriorating situation in El Salvador.

The Deputy Prime Minister is fully aware that fighting has certainly reached new heights in that country and that the recent brutal killings of innocent people, including civilians and religious leaders, has gripped that country, put it into a state of panic, fear and uncertainty.

I therefore ask the Deputy Prime Minister: In light of these new circumstances in El Salvador, will the government put into force an immediate moratorium like it has for Lebanon and China on the deportation of refugee claimants back to El Salvador until and at least a state of normalcy returns to that country? Will the Deputy Prime Minister give the House that undertaking?

Mr. Bill Kempling (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the government has in place a generous and effective refugee determination system and at the present time 99 per cent of all El Salvadorans seeking refugee status in Canada are accepted as refugees.

Before the other 1 per cent would be removed from the country, their cases would be reviewed by senior immigration officials at national headquarters. If they cannot come to a clear decision, the minister herself will look at the case.

Mr. Marchi: Mr. Speaker, I regret that answer because the member seems to be saying: "Well, if there is only 1 per cent that are returned, so what, because we have already accepted another percentage".

Some Hon. Members: Sit down.

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): That's not what he said.

Mr. Marchi: Perhaps I could direct my question to the Minister for External Relations who just responded to a question by the leader of the New Democratic Party pertaining to that part of the world.

Could the minister explain to us therefore why she believes and why she deems, according to this government, that El Salvador is safe for claimants to be returned?

Mr. Shields: Who said that?

Mr. Marchi: I believe that they are not proper and judicious statements in terms of China and in Lebanon, and I believe that the same standards of a moratorium on deportations should be applied equally to El Salvador.

Could she give us reassurance on why she feels it is "safe" to do a case by case review rather than impose an immediate foolproof moratorium?

Mr. Kempling: Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether the hon. gentleman cannot hear properly, but 99 per cent is 99 per cent. They stay here; they stay here. As I said, 99 per cent is 99 per cent. They stay here.

Mr. Marchi: But one is too many.

Mr. Kempling: The other 1 per cent is reviewed, and under no circumstances will they be sent back to El Salvador—

Mr. Marchi: Eight have been returned already.

Mr. Kempling: —while existing conditions continue.

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AGRICULTURE

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture.

Farmers across the country are rallying against the policies of this government. Tomorrow thousands and thousands of farmers from Quebec and Ontario will be rallying to protest here on the Hill.

Last week the president of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, Garf Stevenson, called on the government to live up to the promises of the Prime Minister in December 1987 that as long as the trade war between the EEC and the United States continued the Government of Canada would continue to provide support to those farmers, and he called on the Government of Canada to provide some $500 million worth of support during this winter to assist western farmers.

Is the Deputy Prime Minister willing to make a commitment today that the Prime Minister's commitment back in December 1987 will be honoured and that

this additional funding to hard-pressed farmers will be provided?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I am encouraged by the fact that many farmers are wanting to become involved in the policy review and policy development process which I believe are overdue in terms of establishing a truly national agri-food policy to meet all the specific needs and requirements of each of the regions and each of the sectors.

In that regard we will be holding a national policy seminar in Ottawa on December 11 and December 12. As the hon. member knows, I am sure, my colleagues and I have met with all agricultural groups to talk about the basic pillars and principles that go into the foundation of that review. That dialogue has been ongoing and will continue.

I hope we will be able to make some progress at the meeting of December 11 and December 12. At that particular time we will also be addressing the very important issues of safety nets, stabilization programs and crop insurance programs, which are very vital to stability and confidence within the agricultural system.

I would hope that the hon. member would be involved in that process as well, and I welcome his input.

Mr. Foster: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the same minister.

In the same presentation to the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool annual meeting, the president of the Saskatchewan pool called on the government not to unilaterally cut government programs.

The budget of the Minister of Finance last spring cut $500 million worth of support to farmers at a time when the United States was not cutting any of its programs. In fact the Export Enhancement Program has been juiced up by another $90 million to directly affect sales of Canadian wheat to countries like Algeria.

Why is the Government of Canada unilaterally cutting these programs before any negotiations start on a subsidy code? Why is the government selling out Canadian farmers at a time when they need their help?

• (1440)

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, in the days of the Liberal government the average support for the grains and oilseeds sector between 1981 and 1984 was something like $326 million on an annualized basis. Between the period 1985 and 1989 the annualized support for the grains and oilseeds sector rose to $2.4 billion. That certainly does not strike me as a government that is walking away from supporting the agriculture industry, particularly the grains and oilseeds sector. He should be applauding us instead of condemning us.

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JUSTICE

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General. It concerns the new and very serious allegations that were made by the former Member of Parliament, the former Conservative member of parliament for Gamelin, Mr. Gravel, who as the minister recalls pleaded guilty last February to criminal charges including the taking of bribes.

In sworn evidence before a disciplinary hearing of the Quebec Order of Engineers 10 days ago Mr. Gravel said: "I have been harassed a hell of a lot for only $40,000. A lot of other people are taking in $300,000 and $400,000".

Bearing in mind the earlier allegations by the former member for Rosemount or the current member for Duvernay who said he could put a dozen people into jail with what he knew, I ask the Solicitor General: Has the Solicitor General asked the RCMP, and in particular the National Security Investigations Directorate established to look into corruption, to examine with great care these very serious new allegations of corruption by a former Conservative colleague of his?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Solicitor General of Canada and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, there is always a danger in making such allegations from the floor of the House of Commons. I must tell the hon. member that if he has any information concerning whom ever he has a responsibility, as I and every other member in this House have to make that information available to

the RCMP so that it may investigate adequately. But as long we have allegations only—

An Hon. Member: They have already been made!

Mr. Blais: These are allegations. What you should do is go directly to the RCMP, and out of respect for—

An Hon. Member: Answer the question!

Mr. Blais: May I have an opportunity to answer, Mr. Speaker?

An Hon. Member: You are not answering!

Mr. Blais: Out of respect for basic freedoms in Canada, this is the proper way to act. The information must be made available to the RCMP so that it may investigate. If you have any information, go to the RCMP.

[*English*]

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, it is not up to me to run the RCMP. This minister is responsible to Canadian citizens for that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Robinson: That is his job.

Mr. Andre: Instead of throwing mud, throw some facts.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robinson: This is the former Conservative member who is making those charges. Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. In view of the fact that Mr. Gravel pleaded guilty after a lengthy court battle, neither did the court nor the public have an opportunity to hear the evidence that would have been adduced had there been a trial. Mr. Speaker, we heard very serious allegations of telephone conversations between the Prime Minister's office and the engineer involved. I am now asking the Deputy Prime Minister: Does he now believe that the time has come finally to launch an urgent investigation into political interference in the administration of justice in Canada? When are they going to act?

Mr. Blais: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member once more asks for a public inquiry, he blames me for not stepping in and directing the RCMP to take this or that course of action. I am wondering what the Hon. Member wants, Mr. Speaker? One should indeed let the RCMP have the facts. One should make them available to the RCMP and ask it to review them. But it is not for the Solicitor General nor any government member to tell the RCMP what it should do. This government's view is that the RCMP should be independent, it should be free to investigate as it seems fit, and we will respect its independence.

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AGRICULTURE

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi): My question is directed to the Minister of State for Agriculture (Mr. Blais), Mr. Speaker. Faced with the changes now going on in the economy of Canada and the world, farmers from Abitibi—Témiscamingue and Quebec will come to Ottawa tomorrow afternoon to make the Canadian government aware of their concerns.

Mr. Speaker, my question is this: Can the Minister tell me today whether he could receive the principal leaders of the UPA (Quebec farmers' union) tomorrow before the demonstration to discuss some issues of concern to them, especially on the Quebec provincial scene?

Hon. Pierre Blais (Solicitor General of Canada and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. Yes, we have already taken action. With the Prime Minister at the head, a group of us, including the Minister for International Trade, the Minister of Agriculture and myself, met the leaders of Quebec's farmers just a few weeks ago and we discussed the problems these farmers are going through. We will meet them whenever the need arises. I believe that we have always been available, unlike the previous Government, whose Prime Minister did not see fit to meet them once during his 16 years in power. In our case, the Prime Minister has met the leaders of Quebec's farmers at least eight or nine times, Mr. Speaker. This shows our Government's interest in farmers. We will continue to defend their interests, Mr. Speaker, have no fear!

* * *

[*English*]

MEMBERS OF THE SENATE

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for the Federal Business Development Bank. It concerns

the other thorn on the side of the government, the Cogger affair.

Ministers of this House have contradicted each other no less than three times, finally concluding that Senator Cogger had not worked for the Federal Business Development Bank since his appointment to the Senate and that the senator himself in the other place actually insinuated such as well.

Given that Mr. Mark Rosenstein, a senior partner in the law firm of Lapointe Rosenstein, has now confirmed through a reporter for *The Globe and Mail* on November 13 that Senator Cogger had worked for the Federal Business Development Bank before and during his tenure as a member of the Senate, how can the minister reconcile the statement of Mr. Mark Rosenstein with the ones made by himself and by his colleague, the Minister of State for Small Businesses?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, the RCMP is currently undertaking an investigation into this matter.

Mr. Robichaud: How about some facts?

Mr. Andre: The other place is undertaking an investigation of this matter.

I have no ability nor any desire to look into the internal operations of the law firm of Lapointe Rosenstein. I am sure the hon. member would agree, if he thinks about it and if it is truth in getting to the bottom of this issue that he is after, that we would be well advised rather than abusing bits and pieces of evidence here and there as the occasion arises to let the RCMP investigation take its course, let the Senate investigation take its course, and in the end we will all know the true situation in a more factual, fair and open fashion.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, whether or not there is an RCMP investigation does not mean that this minister is no longer responsible for the administration of his own department. I want to ask him a supplementary question.

[*Translation*]

Is the Minister now prepared to tell us and repeat to us what he said on November 1 in the House of Commons:

> I am convinced, on the information it (the Bank) has provided, that its behaviour is unassailable.

Is the Minister still of the opinion that the behaviour of the Federal Business Development Bank is unassailable in the way it awards contracts or makes loans? Is he still ready to say that today?

[*English*]

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, of course I am ready to stand by the information given to me by the FBDB.

The hon. member seems more interested in talking to his neighbour than hearing this. He scored his political points. I guess that takes care of it.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE OF CANADA

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board and it concerns his department's policy of wage discrimination which has forced nearly 1,300 men and women employed as ship's crews on the east coast out on the picket line.

The government talks a good game of pay equity, but in the case of east coast ships' crews Treasury Board has steadfastly refused to conclude a contract that would pay these workers the same wage as their west coast counterparts for doing exactly the same job.

My question is this: Will the minister affirm his support for the principle of pay equity and, if so, is he now prepared to order his negotiators to close that wage gap not in the fourth year of a new contract but immediately upon signing of a new contract?

• (1450)

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, to answer my hon. colleague, I can tell him that officials of the Treasury Board have been instructed to resume negotiations as soon as we have an indication from the union that meaningful discussions can get under way.

That has been my policy all along. It is an open door policy where we are willing to sit at the table and iron out these difficulties as they come up. We would certainly welcome the union coming back to the table as soon as possible.

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, paying a person less based on their gender or colour is unacceptable to Canadians. It should be unacceptable to this government because what the government has been doing is paying people according to where they live in

this country. That is equally as abhorrent and just as discriminatory.

My supplementary question is for the same minister. In light of the fact that in the next few weeks thousands of fishermen will be out in the Atlantic at perhaps the worst time of the year as the new lobster fishing season opens, without the full protection of the Canadian Coast Guard and fisheries patrol vessels as a direct result of this fully avoidable strike, will the minister finally put his money where his mouth is and give wage parity to these east coast workers now? Or, is he content to wait for tragedy and loss of life before he comes to his senses, does the right thing and conclude a decent agreement with these workers?

Mr. de Cotret: Mr. Speaker, I can only assure my colleagues opposite and all Canadians that we are very conscious of safety and security. We have made all the contingency plans necessary to ensure the safety and security of Canadians during this labour dispute.

Once again, I strongly invite the unions to come back to the table and have meaningful discussions so that this issue can be resolved once and for all.

* * *

RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Canada endorses the United Nations convention on the rights of the child which will be passed today, but we are in breach of this convention at home in Canada. Over 150,000 children each month line up at institutionalized food banks. This is a national disgrace. It is immoral.

What are the Deputy Prime Minister and his government doing to eradicate child hunger in Canada?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Lise Bourgault (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Clearly, Mr. Speaker, all the members of the House of Commons are quite concerned about the problem of child poverty in Canada. In previous statements, the Minister of National Health and Welfare has described what the Government is doing, together with the provinces, to deal with the problem of child poverty in this country. The provinces have implemented programs to feed hungry children. Under the Canada Assistance Plan, we can help them too, but again we are quite concerned with this problem and I am sure that the Minister of National Health and Welfare could give a more complete answer some other time, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

Ms. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, our national government has a responsibility and has signed an agreement at the United Nations to this effect. We are in negligence in this respect. Obviously government measures are not working when hundreds of thousands of hungry kids have to eat from food banks. What we need is more affordable housing, higher minimum wage levels and incomes above the poverty line.

As a senior minister of this government, will the Deputy Prime Minister undertake in the upcoming year to make hungry children a priority? Will he increase the family allowance and the child tax credit, as well as undertake other measures to eradicate child poverty?

We have done it for seniors. We have almost eradicated poverty. Why can we not make children a priority next year?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Lise Bourgault (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Since 1984, Mr. Speaker, the government has implemented measures which, although not perfect, have nevertheless been useful. For instance, we have doubled the child tax credit from $367 to $565 per child in 1989. The Refundable Sales Tax Credit was adopted in 1986 to help low income families, and 850,000 Canadians were struck from the tax roll through the tax reform. In addition to the day care program which will be further discussed in the House, we have increased the Refundable Child Tax Credit. Of course, I agree that this is not perfect, but in view of the budget cuts we must deal with, our record in this respect is far better than that of the previous government, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Brian O'Kurley (Elk Island): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

In the past the provinces of Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan have expressed their intention not to adopt in provincial legislation the national standard for truck drivers' hours of service. As this situation could make the national safety standard virtually unenforceable, could the minister provide this House with an update to this potentially difficult situation?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, it is true that three western provinces have not yet adopted those regulations.

On October 20 there was a meeting in Vancouver between the provinces and the officers of Transport Canada. We made a proposal. We are expecting an answer from the provinces, and we expect to be able to make an announcement soon.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Douglas Young (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance.

The Minister is well aware that a number of Tory Members seem ready to extend the goods and services tax to the sale of existing houses. I am quite concerned about their approach.

Because Canadians deserve to know, my question to the Minister of Finance is this: Does his government intend to extend its new goods and services sales tax to every house being sold in Canada? Under its proposed policy, is the government bent on taxing not only food, but also existing as well as new houses?

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I have not seen the finance committee report. I am sure my hon. friend is aware of what is in it, but at this point I am not. Whatever comes out of that report is a decision on the part of the committee. Whether it is a majority report or a unanimous report, I am sure he will have something to say on it as well.

At this point in time the government's view is the proposal that is on the table, the proposal that is set out in the technical paper. That does not include the taxation of existing houses. It has the taxation of new houses but with a generous rebate in order to offset the impact on new houses to meet the commitment we made as a government a year ago last September in stating that the GST would not adversely affect the affordability of housing.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, I have another question for the Minister of Finance. Recently we were told by the Minister of Finance that behind closed doors provinces were agreeing with his proposed goods and services tax. We are hearing today that the province of Prince Edward Island, which offered to enter into negotiations, was told that it was not important enough to be considered in any negotiations relating to the goods and services tax.

In view of the fact that he no longer wishes to even discuss the matter of the goods and services tax with the provinces, does this mean that finally he has seen the light and is prepared to withdraw his proposal for a goods and services tax?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, the simple answer to that question is: No, I am not prepared to withdraw. I think the hon. member knew that before he stood up and asked the question.

The statement on the part of one of the finance ministers indicated that there was some veracity to what I had said before, but clearly there are some differences of opinion on the part of the provincial governments. The premiers are not in favour of proceeding at this time.

We have said that a preference would be for a national sales tax. We are not doing things in the GST proposal that would preclude that at some later date, but at some later date future governments will have to make that decision.

* * *

VIA RAIL

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. Between the months of January and August of this year more than 86,000 people travelled on the VIA train called The Canadian. Information I have received shows

an over-all load factor of 93.8 per cent with most of the routes carrying a load factor of 98 per cent.

How can the Minister of Transport justify eliminating The Canadian from VIA Rail's passenger network with these kind of statistics?

• (1500)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am not disputing the numbers given by my colleague opposite, but they should be checked because they are based on two, to four weeks or two to three months.

Mr. Speaker, decisions concerning VIA Rail have been taken and those numbers refer to previous years. It has been proven without a shadow of a doubt that the services use had fallen overall by 20 per cent over the last eight years. The decision has also been based on considerations of national interest and funds available for transportation as a whole. Again, we can check the numbers available.

Obviously, Transport Canada and I will make no decision based on numbers gathered over two or three weeks or two or three months. That is very obvious.

[*English*]

Mr. Nault: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the same minister. Many Canadians attempting to travel on The Canadian were turned away because the trains were booked to capacity. In my endeavour to get on with the debate and as the minister has discussed, statistics can be looked at in different ways. I asked VIA if it could give me a statistic on how many people were turned away, and lo and behold, they do not keep that statistic. But based on what I have been told, a large number of people are being turned away.

Based on that, would the minister reconsider his decision to eliminate The Canadian now that there are up-to-date statistics? Will he look at the possibility of keeping statistics on those who are turned away at certain periods during the year when the train is full and running at capacity? Those turned away are a statistic and an important one in the debate on VIA Rail and its use in this country.

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, I would like to understand the rationale of my friend and I cannot. When the trains are full, normally we make a profit. We have to pay $1.5 million a day for the deficit of VIA Rail. We have to put in more and more money and this train, as any other train in the country, does not go over 50 per cent occupancy rate and not over 30 per cent or 35 per cent of cost recovery.

I will explain again what I have said for a couple of months. We cannot afford to put a billion dollars into a system which is not used by Canadians. If we were to turn people away, we would make money and we do not make money.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TRIBUTE TO JEAN-CLAUDE MALÉPART

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members already know that we have lost a colleague and a friend in the person of Jean-Claude Malépart. I will now ask some of his colleagues to pay tribute to his memory. The Right Hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, God has taken from us one of his most faithful children, a man who valued and practised faith, charity and honesty.

Only a disease as merciless as cancer was able to fell Jean-Claude Malépart, a man of gigantic courage, generosity, will and perseverance.

[*English*]

Jean-Claude had the biggest heart in Parliament. He was, in his way, the conscience of the House of Commons. He had a natural eloquence, a commanding presence, always a man of the people, friend of the lonely, champion of the weak and voice of the poor. He was the greatest advocate of his generation of our country's senior citizens.

[*Translation*]

However, nothing in his youth seemed to prepare him for the important role he played in our society. His mother died a few days after his birth, and his father died when he was 12. He had to drop out of school to work in the factory in order to help support his family.

At this point, his employers noticed that Jean-Claude had a very special talent for helping his fellow citizens organize and for motivating them to carry out their projects. They decided to let him go temporarily and

asked him to organize recreational projects in the neighbourhood.

Until the day he died, Jean-Claude was still a member of the union in his factory, released from his job to help the people in the neighbourhood.

Confronted with the tremendous needs of a community with very limited resources, the sports and recreation organizer quickly turned into a community worker.

After years of work and dedication to the needs of his fellow citizens in East Montreal, Jean-Claude finally embarked on a long and successful political career. First in the Quebec National Assembly, where he served for one term, and subsequently here on the federal scene since 1979.

Mr. Speaker, Jean-Claude Malépart worked in this House for more than ten years. Never on the front benches, he was always just an ordinary Member. However, his impact vastly exceeds and for a long time will continue to exceed the usual range of the average member. The fact is, Jean-Claude Malépart was not an average member. Throughout his adult life, he provided the weak, the needy, the elderly and the sick with a voice, motivation and pride. To him, politics was a vocation, a calling. As the altar boy who demanded wage parity for his fellow workers and as the thundering orator who was able to make a government retreat, Jean-Claude Malépart was always guided by the same acute and agressive sense of social justice.

His approach to justice and equity was not theoretical or philosophical. He was totally instinctive, dynamic and marvelously effective.

"When I see injustice", he said, "I don't know why, but I always feel I have to do something to correct it". For him, to see poverty and get angry about it was not enough. He had to take action and do everything humanly possible to find a remedy. His philosophy was very straightforward. It is not enough to condemn injustice. We must do something about it. Actions speak louder than words.

It was this militant, active and resolute approach that made him lead honourable battles such as the fight against deindexation of old age security pensions, his campaign "Tax food: Never!" and the last one, "Lets invest in our health!". These will remain forever, not only in the political history of our country but above all in the hearts and minds of millions of Canadians.

[*English*]

Jean-Claude Malépart's vision of our country was one of justice and equality. He was a proud son of Quebec. By choice, he wanted also to be thoroughly Canadian. His roots and his first loyalty was his home province, but in the 1980 referendum, he fought and fought hard to convince Quebecers that they should also choose Canada.

In his last speech to this House of Commons in April 1989, he begged English-speaking Canada to look at reality as it is and to recognize that Quebec is a distinct society. He was worried about the future of his two daughters. Jean-Claude said that Quebec wants to take its place in Canada adding, and I quote what he said to the House, "We want the assurance that in Quebec, my children will be able to continue to work in French.

[*Translation*]

A man who, in his youth, dreamed of wearing the uniform of the Canadiens, finally carried the torch of dedication, royalty and pride, not for a hockey club but for an entire people.

• (1510)

Just as Maurice Richard was the idol of his youth and of a generation of Canadians, Jean-Claude was an inspiration, to us and to all who want to serve their fellow citizens and help defend the less fortunate in our society. They now know that by following the example of Jean-Claude Malépart, they can make the difference. They can change things to make our society fairer and more equitable. Time and time again he showed us the value of being loyal, loyal to one's roots, language, neighbourhood, city and friends.

Personally, I had the honour of being a friend of Jean-Claude Malépart, and I had the privilege of enjoying his perfect loyalty. Of course, he often rocked the boat. He didn't always agree. And he said so loud and clear. But, when it came down to the crunch, he was always there, solid as an oak, ready to help, like a friend and brother.

If there was one spot in the world where Jean-Claude would have wished to be more often, it was with his wife Pierrette and his daughters Sylvie and Nathalie. "My family", he said, "is my inspiration and support. I have said so over and over again: Without the support, advice

and understanding of my wife and daughters, I would never have been able to fight my battles and especially, I would have never been able to win them". We also wish to thank Pierrette, Sylvie and Nathalie for being so generous and letting us have Jean-Claude.

Many people will remember that for them, Jean-Claude Malépart made the difference. That is why thousands and thousands of Canadian men and women throughout the country now mourn, with his family and with us, the man who defended them so valiantly.

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, to begin with, I would like to offer again our most sincere condolences, on behalf of the Government of Canada and all members of the Conservative caucus, as well as personally, to the family of our colleague, the Hon. Member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie, Jean-Claude Malépart.

Mr. Speaker, we all know already that his absence will be keenly felt by his colleagues in the House of Commons. Indeed, the passing of this accomplished parliamentarian will be felt far beyond this Chamber.

Throughout the time he spent here, as well as in the Quebec National Assembly, for he represented his riding in both legislatures, the Hon. Member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie never forgot the main reason he was in politics, which was to defend the interests of those who knew him so well. A hard worker, he very soon earned everyone's respect.

On both sides of the House, we very quickly noticed an exceptional Member of Parliament, one who said out loud that he did not want to be a minister, so that he could remain concerned with those who chose him. He made a point of personally looking after all matters that came before him in his riding.

He cooperated with everyone. The constituents of Laurier—Sainte-Marie are not the only ones in mourning. With his strong commitments and enthusiastic personality, he won the hearts of many Canadians. He had a deep sense of the dignity of the most humble in society and an authority that let him keep everything in perspective.

I am told that he fought the good fight right till the end. No one here can doubt it because he fought for his people until the last minute and his work was just that—fighting.

Mr. Speaker, he fought for his constituents in his riding and he fought for his province. He fought here in this House; he fought for his country. For that, I believe that we must respect and pay tribute to Jean-Claude Malépart for all the work he did over the years.

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): On behalf of my fellow members from the New Democratic Party, I would like to pay tribute to Jean-Claude Malépart. The career of that warm, exceptional member was marked by significant struggles. His steadfastness on the issue of senior citizens' pensions earned him the reputation of being the champion of social rights, just as his strenuous work on the *Comité de relance de l'Est de Montréal* helped address the economic situation of that underprivileged area. But in his constituency, surely the establishment of the *Centre d'information communautaire et de dépannage* will remain his most significant achievement. Even after he was elected in this place, he went on fighting passionately for the have-nots in our society and more specifically in his own area.

He also fought relentlessly on behalf of Quebecers, as well as for the recognition of their place in Canada.

[*English*]

Jean-Claude Malépart was an exceptional Quebecer and an exceptional Canadian. He worked day in and day out, for the poor, principally who needed a spokesperson at all times in his area, in his province, but indeed, for the poor all over Canada. He was an effective voice in this Chamber.

At the same time it was in his last speech in the House that he drew the attention of English Canada to the importance, at this point in our history, of recognizing the distinctiveness of the province of Quebec. He was a passionate Quebecer and a passionate Canadian and he wanted, to the end, to be able to see himself in these two categories.

We as members from all Parties of the House of Commons send our deepest sympathy to his wife and to his two daughters. We take no pleasure but a great deal of sadness in recognizing the passing of a man who

contributed to this place and to what it should be all about—passion, intelligence, commitment to the well-being of the people he represented. No one at his time in this House has done it better.

[*Translation*]

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie, Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart, is no more. He died with dignity and courage, as we always knew him. To his wife Pierrette, his daughters Nathalie and Sylvie, all members of his family, especially his sisters, and indeed his close friend Georges Boudreau, we extend our deepest sympathies.

The Leader of the Opposition, on behalf of the Liberal Party of Canada, paid him a very eloquent tribute. I would like simply, and in all humility, as a Member of Parliament from Quebec, to testify to the great place Jean-Claude Malépart always had on the Quebec political scene, although Jean-Claude viewed himself as an ordinary citizen. But in many respects he was an extraordinary citizen whose involvement in social matters was of tremendous service to thousands of his fellow citizens, and whose fiery speeches in the House of Commons influenced governments, both Liberal and Conservative, to better care for the needy in our society.

I knew him in the early 70's when I was mminister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and he applied to my department for a grant for his *Centre d'information communautaire et de dépannage*. This was of course before he got into politics. I was immediately conquered by the man and his work. Needless to say he got his grant, and of course he deserved it because his claims never were of a personal nature. They were always for the defenseless and the needy

• (1520)

Respect for others and their dignity was important to him. All his life he found ways to help people in need without humiliating them, without embarrassing them. He therefore leaves, not only in Quebec but across Canada, admirers who will miss him and remain very grateful to him.

In Parliament, his departure certainly will leave a very great void. We very much will miss that friend, that colleague we all loved and admired, irrespective of political allegiance, because Jean-Claude was much more than a party member, he was above all a true defender of great and beautiful causes. On his hospital bed he had this to say about himself: "I never lived for Jean-Claude Malépart because I needed reasons to live."

Till the end he gave us examples of his relentlessness, courage, abnegation and dedication. We will miss him deeply for a very long time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu): Mr. Speaker, as a private member of the party opposite, I would like to say a few words on the occasion of the death of Jean-Claude Malépart, a noble-hearted man who had the courage of his convictions.

I was very saddened by the death of my colleague, the Hon. Member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie, Jean-Claude Malépart, with whom I had the honour to travel for a week just two years ago.

His illness took us by surprise. A kind and brave man, Jean-Claude Malépart had the respect of french-speaking Members of Parliament in Ottawa for his ideas and his courage. He said out loud what many thought privately. And, despite our political differences, he was one of the members I felt closest to. It almost seems as if I have lost an ally in the House of Commons. He fought his battles and I fought mine.

I had supported him in his battle against deindexation of old age security pensions, he had endorsed my anti-scab bill and my battle to champion the cause of the french fact in Quebec. We also shared the same faith in Quebec society, its values and its people.

The GST and the Meech Lake Accord were his last great battles. He may have lost his fight against cancer but he won the respect of each and everyone.

In Jean-Claude Malépart, Quebecers have lost one of their most ardent champions. I wish to offer my sincere condolences to his wife and his two daughters.

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, today we mourn the death of a colleague, of a friend, of a fellow parlementarian who had and will always have a special place in our hearts.

Over the years the House has been the public forum of gifted speakers, discriminate intellectuals and elected members possessed of unmistakable leadership qualities.

Yet I do not believe that this House has ever known, at least certainly not in my time, such a unique and exceptional member as Jean-Claude Malépart.

The day after Jean-Claude died an editorialist described our colleague as having been the voice of the voiceless, the messenger of the destitute, the spokesman for the ordinary man.

Mr. Speaker, our friend Jean-Claude was all that indeed, but he was also a militant and an activist, totally and fully given to helping the needy.

The list of cases handled and fights led by Jean-Claude is endless, as are his sucesses. We all remember the major issues which attracted national attention and which were the subject of often outstanding debates in this House.

First, Montreal East. Within a single month in the fall of 1985, no fewer than seven companies announced their intention to close their doors, thus depriving more than 5,000 workers of their jobs in a region which, in normal times, was already so unfavourably treated.

Jean-Claude took it upon himself to rally all interested parties. He set up the *Comité de survie de l'est de Montréal* with the workers of Vickers, Bombardier, Canadian Steel Wheels, Canadian Steel Foundries and Gulf Refinery, along with all politicians at every level, representing not only his riding, but the Greater Montreal region as well.

After weeks and months of tireless work Jean-Claude and his survival committee did succeed in slowing down and, finally, stopping the extensive economic decline which had been the hallmark of our region.

This tangible victory was won by solidarity, dedication and perseverance, three words that admirably describe the colleague we mourn today.

However, Jean-Claude fought for more than his riding and his region. He also defended the paper mills at Desbiens and Matane.

His vast campaign against cuts in unemployment insurance benefits for early retirees started in the area around the old capital, spread to cover the entire province of Quebec and finally took on national dimensions.

Across this country, he also fought his battle against deindexation and old age security pensions, a battle he won, and the one against deindexation of family allowance, which he unfortunately lost. He also waged a national campaign against a tax on bread and butter and a tax on medicine.

Finally, during the darkest days of his illness, he discovered how cuts on transfer payments to the provinces resulted in a decline in services for the ill, including those stricken with terrible diseases like cancer. Once again he went on the war path, demanding that the government take the budgets earmarked for two nuclear subs and spend those billions of dollars on medical research.

In most cases, he started his battles alone, sometimes giving the impression of being a voice crying in the wilderness.

I remember vividly his campaign for early retirees, whose unemployment insurance benefits had been cut by the government. It was just a few months after his historic and victorious battle against the deindexation of old age security pensions.

For months, the early retiree benefit cuts had been practically his only topic of conversation. Morning, noon and night, he tried to persuade colleagues, friends and reporters to join him in this struggle. Most refused to get involved since they felt it was a lost cause. Many explained that we were in the opposition and that he would not succeed in making the government retreat every time. However, he was not discouraged. He went on as though this fight were his first, or his last.

In time, he managed to get together a large number of these early retirees and instil in them the hope that they would be able to persuade the government to correct this injustice. Then he used his famous "hammer and nails" technique. Like the carpenter who hammers the head of his nail until it is properly sunk, Jean-Claude went into the fray, time and time again, with patience, energy and determination. He felt that what we had to do, both in and out of the House, was to keep on banging on the same nail over and over again.

He won one more time. Finally, the government re-imbursed 34 000 early retirees to whom it had unfairly denied benefits. This was great Jean-Claude Malépart in action.

Last year, he told me that he loved his work so very much that he could not understand how he could ever get sick. There is no doubt that if love of work, dedication and compassion had been the criteria for a long life, our friend Jean-Claude Malépart would have been eternal.

Yet, our friend has left us. He will remain for quite a long time a source of daily inspiration and motivation.

The first time I was elected to the House of Commons in 1984, Mr. Speaker, Jean-Claude taught me right away the ABC's of good parliamentary life.

He explained to me that if I wanted to promote an idea, I had to work, work, work. I had to do my own work and convey my ideas in clear, colourful and universal understandable sentences. After that, all I would need would be patience, a lot of it, and determination.

This may seem easy, but one needs a lot of willpower to promote a cause the way our colleage did. From now on, every time a cause may seem lost, we should seek and find inspiration in Jean-Claude Malépart's example.

• (1530)

Mr.Speaker: We will now rise and observe a minute of silence.

[*English*]

[*Editor's Note: Whereupon the House stood in silence.*]

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties in order to allow members to attend the funeral of Jean Claude Malépart and I think you will find there is consent to put the following motion without debate to the House for approval.

I move:

That the House sit the following hours, and conduct the following business, on Tuesday November 21, Wednesday November 22 and Thursday November 23:

On Tuesday November 21, meeting at 10 o'clock for Statements by Members, Oral Questions at 10.15 a.m., Routine Proceedings at 11 a.m., following which (but, in any case, no later than 11.30 a.m.), the sitting will be suspended until 6 p.m. when Government Orders

will be called for resumed debate on Bill C-43, with adjournment of the debate and of the House to be at 10 p.m.

On Wednesday November 22 and Thursday November 23, in addition to its normal sitting hours, that the House sit until 9.30 p.m., on resumed debate on Bill C-43; provided that the Adjournment Debate be held at 9.30 p.m.

During the tribute to Mr. Jean Claude Malépart it occurred to me that there might be a possibility that the debate would collapse prior to 9.30 p.m. on Thursday. It was the intention of the Prime Minister, who is in Russia, to enter into the debate on Tuesday, November 28 in the morning right after Routine Proceedings.

Therefore, if at any time prior to 9.30 p.m. on Thursday there are no further speakers, we would simply adjourn the debate on Bill C-43 until Tuesday, November 28 at 11 a.m. This would not preclude any further speakers after the Prime Minister but there would be an effort to use the time of the House wisely and accommodate as many speakers as possible.

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, the draft order that the Minister of Justice has just read out is in conformity with discussions that we had beginning on Friday. Also he has brought to my attention the interest of the Prime Minister in speaking in the debate on the abortion legislation and we would certainly agree with his suggestion in that regard.

However, just as he thought of an additional point in the last few minutes, another one has occurred to me as well. I hope he will give it his consideration as we have given consideration to his request about the Prime Minister, namely, that the Order be amended to make clear that committees of this House are not to sit during the period from 11.30 a.m. to 6 p.m. when the House sitting is to stand suspended so that those who wish to do so can attend the funeral of Jean Claude Malépart.

It has come to my attention that some of the committees intend to sit during the period when the sitting of the House is to be suspended pursuant to the Order. I really do not think that is consistent with the spirit behind the proposed Order.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I think the remarks of my hon. friend have been helpful and I would agree with the spirit of those remarks. It would be the suggestion of the government that no committees should sit during that time in order to fully respect the arrangements and

ability of any member on any committee to attend those funeral arrangements.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I too certainly agree with the intent of the motion but I seek clarification on two points.

The government House Leader has indicated that it would be the suggestion of the government. Are we to conclude that it is more than a suggestion and that committees will not be sitting tomorrow afternoon to allow members to attend the funeral? Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, if the debate were to collapse prior to 9.30 p.m. on Thursday the understanding would be that the Prime Minister would have an opportunity to participate in the debate on November 28, and presumably other members as well. The government House Leader is not precluding other members from participating at that point as well?

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the second question, yes, that would definitely be the case. With respect to the first question, I am not sure that the government House Leader has the ability to order committees not to sit but I think the committees would understand the spirit with which all members in this House are agreeing to this motion. I would think that that should take care of that particular question.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, if there is any doubt that the committee chairmen will respect the wishes expressed here, it would be very simple that the House order have words added to it that not only will sittings of this House stand suspended between 11.30 a.m. and 6 p.m., but the same shall apply to all committees. The committees are subsidiary bodies of this House and subject to its direction.

Mr. Lewis: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: The House has heard the proposal of the Minister of Justice and has heard the comments of the hon. member for Windsor West and the hon. member for Kamloops. The motion is:

> That the House sit the following hours, and conduct the following business, on Tuesday, November 21, Wednesday, November 22 and Thursday, November 23, 1989:
>
> On Tuesday, November 21, meeting at 10 o'clock a.m. for Statements by Members, Oral Questions at 10.15 o'clock a.m., and Routine Proceedings at 11.00 o'clock a.m.; following which (but, in any case, no later than 11.30 o'clock a.m.), the sitting shall be suspended until 6.00 o'clock p.m., when Government Orders will be called for resumed debate on Bill C–43, an Act respecting abortion, with adjournment of the debate and of the House to be at 10.00 o'clock p.m.; and no committees shall sit between 11.30 o'clock a.m. and 6.00 o'clock p.m.; and
>
> On Wednesday, November 22 and Thursday, November 23, in addition to its normal sitting hours, the House shall sit until 9.30 o'clock p.m., on resumed debate on Bill C–43 and the adjournment debate shall be held at 9.30 o'clock p.m.; provided that if no more Members rise to speak before 9.30 o'clock p.m., the debate shall be adjourned to another sitting day.

Is there agreement?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I was not in the House earlier when a question of privilege was raised with regard to brochures on the goods and services tax that were being distributed through the supermarkets. I felt it might be useful to you if I made a comment on that particular matter.

Since your ruling, Mr. Speaker, there have been no further information materials on the proposed goods and services tax made available for distribution through supermarkets. These brochures were printed originally in early August around the time of the release of the technical paper. They were intended to be complementary to the technical paper to provide more information to Canadians. As you can see, they are in a much more accessible form and therefore easier for Canadians to read.

As was planned at that time, the contract for the distribution of the brochures has ended and has not been renewed. At the expiry of the contract it was the responsibility of the contractor in his dealings with the supermarkets to collect the unused brochures and return them to the Department of Finance.

I am advised that the contractor responsible for the distribution has assured my officials that by end of October there were no brochures remaining in supermarkets. If any member of Parliament has any informa-

tion to the contrary I would appreciate it if they would let me know and we can gather them up accordingly.

The proposed GST is a key part of the government's plan to build a strong economy. We believe Canadians have a right to know and understand how the proposed tax will operate.

Let me assure you, Mr. Speaker, that in accordance with your ruling we will respect the principles that you have established in our information efforts and certainly any future information efforts that would involve the release of brochures by my department.

As a government we have a responsibility to explain why the GST is being introduced. The importance of public understanding is a key lesson from other countries where similar tax systems have been introduced and, indeed, the Finance Committee of the House has commented specifically on this. Where business people and consumers have been well informed implementation has gone smoothly.

So, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to pursue a broad campaign of public information about the GST but to do so consistent with the ruling that you set out about one month ago and certainly in the production of any new materials will be very mindful of the parameters that you set out in that ruling.

• (1540)

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, first, I wonder if the Minister of Finance could inform the House as to exactly when the contract to which he referred ended. What was the date of completion of the contract?

Second, I would like to point out to the Minister of Finance that our concern is not about the government giving information about a proposal it wants to make to the House and the country regarding a new tax, but rather that it has been conveying information to the public in a way which conveys to the public the idea that this House has spoken, has made a decision on this tax that it will go into effect on January 1, 1991. This is not the case, and no matter how much the government believes in this proposal it has no right to convey to the public any information suggesting this House has acted, has taken a decision such that this tax will go into effect. I think this is the point, and I am sorry the Minister of Finance still has not got it.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, I thought I had made it clear that I had got that point, that I had made it very clear that we would be mindful of the parameters that you have set out in your ruling.

In answer to the specific question, I do not have that date in mind but I think the key point is that information is not being sent out. The brochures, I have been advised, have all been withdrawn from the supermarkets which has been part of the contract, so the information will not be provided at this point.

Mr. Speaker: This matter was raised earlier today by the Hon. Member for Kingston and The Islands and I appreciate very much the fact that the Minister of Finance has come into the House and given the statement that he has. The Hon. Member for Windsor West intervened and the Hon. Minister has responded. I think the Hon. Member for Kingston and The Islands would understand why I would now think that the matter has ended.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, it would be of interest, I respectfully submit to the House and to yourself, as to whether the distribution of these leaflets, pursuant to the contract, continued after you gave your ruling of some weeks ago.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps I spoke too hastily. I do not know whether the Minister can give us that information.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have not got that information. What I do know is that the contract is completed. The materials have been withdrawn. I am not going to say to you today that there were not materials that were in the supermarkets following your ruling that did get out into the hands of the Canadian public. The point is that by the end of October we were advised that they had all been withdrawn and that there are no further brochures being distributed through the supermarkets.

Mr. Speaker: Following the comment of the Hon. Member for Windsor West and the comment of the Minister of Finance, I will come back to the House with some comments about this matter after I have had a little more time to look at it.

Again, I thank the hon. minister for coming into the House and I thank the Hon. Member for Kingston and The Islands for raising this important matter.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

INCOME TAX ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre) that Bill C-28, an act to amend the Income Tax Act, the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Federal Post-Secondary Education and Health Contributions Act, the Old Age Security Act, the Public Utilities Income Tax Transfer Act, the War Veterans Allowance Act and a related act, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): When the House rose at 1 p.m. the hon. member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing had the floor. The hon. member.

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Madam Speaker, as I was saying, we have seen in the changes and the clawback to family allowances and old age security massive protests across the country from young and old, from all Canadians, to the end to universality of social programs. The government on the whole has insisted that there is not attack on universality in these programs and yet there are, as we know, members on the government side who have recognized, indeed, that universality is under attack and is being threatened by this legislation.

In addition, the government's own advisory body, the National Council on Welfare, made it quite clear that it sees these clawbacks as putting an end to universality. The Council says there is no question that the clawback puts an end to universality. A social program that delivers benefits to everyone and then collects them back from some recipients is not universal. That is clearly the case, and that from a government-appointed advisory board. Surely the government should take some notice of those it appoints to advise it on important matters of social policy as in this case.

In addition, apart from ignoring the advice of Canadians from all across the country, the government had, prior to the election, made commitments to Canadians, as we know, and in particular the Prime Minister made commitments as to the sacred trust with regard to social programs. In addition, as late as 1985 the government in fact had committed itself not to introduce a clawback or a surtax on old age pensions on the grounds that it would seriously disrupt the retirement income system.

So in spite of commitments over a long period of time from all parts of the government, in spite of ignoring the advice of Canadians everywhere, the government has gone ahead to implement a program which is divisive and which attacks the social programs and the values that Canadians have held so dear.

If the government had wanted to know how Canadians felt, if the government had wanted to know what Canadians thought about its proposal with regard to clawbacks on old age security and on family allowances, it could have asked those groups across the country who work for senior citizens and for families.

For example, with regard to senior citizens, there are many to whom the government could have spoken with regard to obtaining advice. It could have, for example, spoken with people like Frances Pettit in my own city, the president of Senior Citizens Action Now in Saskatoon, a strong and effective advocate for senior citizens in Saskatoon and Saskatchewan. She has spoken out strongly and consistently against these measures and of course will continue to do so because they are wrong. The government could have spoken to people like her. They could have spoken to many, many representatives of senior citizens across the country and got their information. Surely then the government would have seen the light and not introduced a measure which begins to put an end to universality.

In spite of what the government has said, clearly the clawbacks in this bill are the beginning of the end of universality. The impact of these measures, these clawbacks, these attacks on senior citizens and families, will be major. Average families all across the country will lose some or all of their family benefits.

As I said, we should be supporting families, not attacking them. We should be supporting seniors, not attacking them. Yet clawbacks on old age pensions, as set out in this bill, will catch 120,000 pensioners by 1990 and within 20 years time will attack over 1 million pensioners. This is not a measure which just attacks a few, but one which goes on to attack a very large number of pensioners in this country. The same goes for the attacks on families. In 1990 roughly 14 per cent of families will have

their family allowances subject to clawback, but in 10 years this will rise to nearly 30 per cent.

This is not a small attack on universality but a major attack on universality, one which will affect so many Canadians. What is clear here is that average Canadians are losing the benefits of social programs, losing the benefit of programs that made us distinct from the United States. More and more of our social programs will become poorer, they will become more targeted, and they will be available only to those in need. The only effective way to ensure that our social programs and taxation are fair is to ensure the continued universality of social programs coupled with a progressive taxation system.

As we know, the Conservative government has chosen to do the opposite, has chosen to make our taxation system less fair and has chosen to make our social programs less and less adequate to meet the greater needs that Canadians are facing. Canadians do not believe this government when it says that these measures are fair. They do not believe this government when it says these measures do not attack universality. They do not trust this government when it speaks on social programs.

It poses a number of important questions with regard to the system of the government's priorities, a number of important questions about fairness in Canada. For example, why should an individual be entitled to receive $100,00 in capital gains tax free but another individual lose $4,000 he or she gets in old age security simply because it is paid as a universal social benefit?

• (1550)

Family allowances and old age security are already taxed in Canada. Why should a special tax be levied on children and the elderly? If the intention is to raise money from the rich, why not do it through a more progressive tax system instead of a super tax on children and on the elderly?

And to ask a more general question with regard to the whole process, when was it that Canadians voted for a means test being applied to the family allowance and old age security? When was it that the Government of Canada asked for Canadians' advice on that matter? It was not an issue in the 1988 election. It has never been an issue which has been presented to Canadians and yet the government is going ahead anyway.

What the government is doing is constantly increasing the tax burden on ordinary families and reducing the tax burden on the richest of Canadians and larger corporations and at the same time programs that make us distinct from the United States, those programs to which the government committed itself prior to the last federal election.

The choices this government has taken would not be taken by any government which is committed to fairness and to supporting Canadian families, Canadian children and Canadian senior citizens.

It is not the only course the government could have taken. Many opportunities have been presented for the government to change its mind. Many alternative approaches have been suggested but, so far, to no avail.

It is worth remembering that senior citizens did turn the government back in its first term when it made its first attack on senior citizens' old age security. Those senior citizens are making their presence felt once again as we have indicated.

In closing, the government needs to reassess its priorities. There is no doubt about that. Anybody who spends any time going across this country will hear that from almost everyone. It needs to listen to what people are saying and it needs to respond to what people are saying. It needs to stop doing the opposite of what people are asking it to do and do what is good for Canada. Madam Speaker, it needs to put people first.

Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas): Madam Speaker, I take pleasure in being able to speak in this House today on Bill C-28. As you know, the title of Bill C-28 is quite lengthy. I will simply refer to it as an act to amend the Income Tax Act and the Old Age Security Act.

Given my time restraints and not to diminish the importance of the other acts and their amendments included in Bill C-28, I will confine my remarks to clause 48 of this bill.

As we know, this clause concerns a clawback proposal on old age security and family allowance benefits. I believe this is of great importance to a number of

Canadians and to the nature of Canada's universal social programs.

Bill C–28 will have a serious impact on two special groups in Canadian society; our senior citizens and families with children. These groups are important in any society. However, the amendments to the Income Tax Act contained in Bill C–28 will have a severe negative impact on two elements of our society which the government should be doing its utmost to protect and support.

With the implications of Bill C–28 one can truly see just how much this government really cares about the elderly and the Canadian family. Clause 48 uses the taxation system to institute the clawback of family allowances and old age security pensions. Clause 48 amounts to an attack by this government on two major components of Canada's social system; old age security pensions and family allowance benefits.

Bill C–28 is yet another example of this government's plan to eradicate piece by piece our universal social programs and, I suspect, to limit or eventually eliminate our social systems entirely.

The Canadian Council on Social Development has condemned the government's proposal to clawback old age security and family allowance benefits. The council did not criticize the government on this issue for any partisan reasons. It is, in fact, an independent, national, non–profit organization concerned about the future of Canada's social policies.

In the opinion of the council, "The clawback is the latest step in a serious erosion of the principle of universality and the clawback imposes a surtax on pensioners and families with children".

I believe this is a correct assessment of Bill C–28. This legislation will unfairly penalize old age security and family allowance recipients. The government would like us to believe that because the clawbacks only apply to recipients with an individual net income of $50,000 or more, they are not unfair. However, there is a serious flaw in this line of reasoning. Right now the clawbacks would indeed only affect a small portion of those who receive these benefits. However, the government is not so quick to point out that over time the clawback will apply to a much greater number of recipients as the $50,000 threshold is not fully indexed to the rate of inflation. By not indexing the threshold for the first 3 per cent of inflation, within seven years the threshold will actually be $40,000 and will be at $35,000 four years later.

The National Council on Welfare, which is a citizen's advisory body to the Minister of National Health and Welfare with its members appointed by the cabinet to advise the minister on matters of social policy, has added its voice to the opposition against the clawback. This past September the council released a report entitled *The 1989 Budget and Social Policy.* The report called upon the government to abandon the clawback proposal. Obviously the council would not have made such a recommendation unwisely. However, the government has decided to ignore the excellent advice it has been offered.

According to the National Council on Welfare, and I quote from the report: "There is no question that the clawback puts an end to universality. A social program that delivers benefits to everyone and then collects them all back from some recipients is not universal".

Under the clawback every parent or senior citizen in this country will lose all or a portion of his or her family allowance and old age pension if he or she has an individual annual net income of $50,000 or more. Recipients will lose 15 cents in benefits for every dollar in net income above $50,000. The National Council on Welfare states quite clearly that this act by the government is, in its words: "The most significant change in social policy in a generation. Yet it was announced by the Minister of Finance in the budget speech without prior consultation."

Is truly amazing that this government is determined to end the universal characteristic of Canada's social programs. By using income levels, old age pensioners and family allowance recipients will be placed in a series of classes with some having their benefits taxed back. At the same time the government is ensuring that more and more recipients will fall into the clawback scheme over time. All this is being done without the slightest consideration of what this will mean for the people who receive these benefits and for our society as a whole.

The fact that the clawback was proposed by the government without consulting with experts in the social policy field should not come as too much of a surprise. The insensitivity of this government is quite appalling. It

is not content with cutting VIA Rail to pieces. It is not satisfied by withdrawing from unemployment and it is not very concerned about the negative impact the proposed goods and services tax will have on many middle and low-income Canadians. Instead, the Conservative agenda includes an outright attack on the universality of our social programs and the government is actually going after senior citizens and families.

The National Council on Welfare estimates that as the clawback proposal is not fully indexed to inflation, in less than 10 years more than one million Canadian families could be subject to a full or partial clawback of their family allowance benefits. The clawback proposal discriminates against one-income families and seniors. A single income family with two children with a net income of $58,000 will lose all its family allowance benefits while a two-income family with one spouse earning $45,000 and the other earning $30,000 would escape the clawback. This despite the fact that their combined income totals $75,000. This is by no means an example of fairness.

The clawback proposal is also unequal for senior citizens receiving the old age security pension. We should remember that seniors have already earned their pension as a result of the income tax they have paid over their working years. Now the government steps in and says, "Forget it, we are taxing back your pension regardless of what you have paid in taxes." There is something incredibly wrong with this kind of action from the government. Our seniors, regardless of their incomes today or in the future, are deserving of their old age security pensions. None of them should have to see a lifetime of work, savings, and taxes ignored by a single piece of legislation from this government. They deserve better treatment, far better treatment.

• (1600)

The idea being expressed by the government with Bill C-28 is one which is very clear. The clawback proposal means that seniors and families in Canada do not count any more. Of course the government will argue that it is prepared to assist those who receive these two benefits by adjusting the threshold figure in the future, that there will be some element of fairness to protect the majority of recipients from the clawback.

We are left wondering when will the government actually come through on this promise? How badly will the $50,000 threshold have to dip in real money terms before the government will raise it? How many recipients will have to be caught in the clawback net before the government announces an adjustment?

I certainly find no comfort in this empty promise. One need only remember the Prime Minister's own words on social programs being a "sacred trust". By looking at Bill C-28 we see how much that trust has been maintained by this government.

The Conservative government views the clawback of old age security and family allowance benefits as one means to address the federal deficit. Given that the government has played a considerable role in raising the deficit since being elected in 1984, I guess it would do just about anything to reduce it. However, there is a rather large problem in the logic of having seniors and families address the deficit through their social benefits. We all know that the reduction of the deficit is important to every Canadian, but is it fair or fiscally prudent to fight the deficit with our social programs? One voice, the Canadian Seniors Network, has stated, and I quote:

> Why should a family pay more towards the deficit than a childless couple, and why should a pensioner pay more than a wage earner with the same income?

This group suggests it is incongruous for the government to introduce the clawback proposal which, in its opinion, will only recover a relatively insignificant amount when compared to the massive public debt. This organization has suggested that the same amount or even more revenue which the clawback would provide the government can in fact be generated by raising the top income tax bracket by a single percentage point. This would tax all high-income individuals and not single out old age pensioners and family allowance recipients with an individual net income of $50,000 or more. The government, however, seems convinced that the clawback proposal, without full indexation, is the better route to take. The clawback is obviously punitive, unfair and a discriminatory measure.

There is no moral or fiscal justification for the government to proceed with this blatant attack on benefit recipients and our universal social programs. Why then is the government willing to implement the clawback? Why is it eager to dismantle universality?

A strong case can be made that the clawback proposal is not an attempt at reducing the deficit, it is really the universal nature of Canada's social programs that is the real target of this government. We know that the free trade agreement with the United States plays a large role in the actions of the government. Some may well argue that the agreement has led the government to its attack on universality.

The Canadian Council on Social Development has stated, and I quote:

> The Canada–U.S. Free Trade Agreement generates inevitable pressure from within Canada and from the United States for the social programs of the two countries to be harmonized so that neither partner has the competitive advantage. Since the United States does not have the extended universal programs we in Canada enjoy, it is more likely that our own plans and programs will be stunted or rolled back.

This is a very perceptive view from the Council on Social Development. I believe the clawback proposal fits nicely into this government's agenda. The plan calls for the reduction, if not the elimination, of universality and, indeed, most of Canada's social programs which are considered to be out of step with the small amount that is available in the United States social system. Surely, this really cannot be the case. It cannot be the real reason behind the clawback or the assault this government is launching on our social programs and the principle of universality. After all, the Conservative government has assured Canadians that our social programs—our entire social system—has not been nor ever will be up for negotiation with the United States because of the free trade agreement. We have this promise from the government.

I urge the government to rescind the clawback proposal contained in Bill C–28. By doing so it would remove any doubt about the government's sincerity in protecting the universality of Canada's social programs. It would tell us that our social programs are not under attack and will be preserved. By removing the clawback proposal the government would also be informing the United States that it will maintain the universality of our social programs and policies.

In conclusion, if the government is truly serious about maintaining universality and in providing a fair, equitable and non–discriminatory social system for our seniors, families, and all Canadians, whether they receive these benefits or any other ones now or in the future, it will heed the advice it has been given by various national organizations and social experts and abandon the clawback proposal.

The government must realize that the clawback will effectively punish current recipients and the many others it will draw in over a relatively short period of time. To proceed with the clawback would be an injustice. It would indicate that this government is not really interested in true deficit reduction efforts but with the destruction of universality and the eventual disintegration of Canada's long–cherished social system.

Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to take advantage of this opportunity to speak against Bill C–28, and in particular against clause 48 which has to do with the clawback of two particular types of income.

This bill is a special bill, special in that it applies only to two kinds of income. We are talking about the old age pension and about family allowance. These are the only two types of income to which this special tax will apply.

It is special in that it applies to individual income as opposed to family income. There are other examples of taxes, of course, where that principle applies as well, but not all. This tax falls in the category of applying to an individual's income as opposed to family income, which is going to increase the possibility of members of a family, certainly between the income earner and the spouse, and perhaps even beyond that, changing their income pattern among themselves so that they will pay a minimum of income tax to the government. It is going to encourage that kind of tax planning. So it is special in that respect as well.

It is special in that it is only partly indexed. Certainly, if members of the government intended it to be fully indexed they would have provided for that in the legislation. But they do not intend that. They intend to leave it flexible so that at any time at all the minister, if he chooses, for whatever reason—perhaps for a political one if an election is on the horizon, or perhaps for an economic one if it is after an election and he wants to have more money to do with whatever he wants—has the flexibility to change it so that it will be fully indexed over one period, or leave it as it is, which is partially indexed, or change the basis or the formula. It is totally flexible in that respect which makes it special in that way as well.

It is special in another way. It is a major step toward the Americanization of our social programs. The Americans do not have anything like the kind of social network that we have here in Canada. For example, they have pensions, but they are contributory pensions. The people intending to benefit from these pension programs contribute regularly to them. They have plans set up in the manner of our contributory Canada Pension Plan, for example, or the Quebec Pension Plan, and as means tested programs such as our guaranteed income supplement.

These are some of their programs. But they have no universal pension program equivalent to our old age security system. No pension exists in the United States where residents have a right, simply by virtue of the fact that they have reached the age of 65 and have been residents long enough, to qualify. This is a step to bring us in line with the American plan of not having a universal program. It is a major step toward Americanization. Perhaps it is even more than that because, in some instances, some of our senior citizens did contribute to the old age security plan.

• (1610)

Madam Speaker, you are not old enough to remember, but some of us in this House are, when there was a special 2 per cent income tax that was levied for the express purpose of providing funds for the old age security system. So seniors are having that taken away from them with this clawback provision in this legislation. It is special in that way as well. It is the first time that the government has ever said, "Contribute to a plan and later on we will confiscate the funds". So it is special in that respect as well.

It is special in another way. It is a special tax in that it is a major step toward the end of universality. In spite of the Prime Minister's reassurances, and other members have spoken about this—but I think they are important enough to read into the record—he said on March 7, 1984, when he was not the Prime Minister, "Our position is simple and straightforward. We are in favour of universality of social programs and they shall not be touched."

Speaking on October 15, 1988, at Summerside, P.E.I., the Prime Minister told seniors—and you will recall, Madam Speaker, that we were in the middle of an election campaign then, which might make a difference—"Let me say a special word to the senior citizens. In the future Canada will be doing more, not less, for all of you". He said, "all of you", he didn't say for some, at the expense of others.

He went on to say, "As long as I am Prime Minister of Canada, social benefits, especially those for the elderly, will be improved, not diminished, by our government, which is committed to social justice and fairness for Canadians". He made it very clear in the middle of an election campaign that he was totally committed to the idea of universality, that he would do more rather than less.

There are other ways in which the budget takes away from senior citizens, not specifically, but it certainly affects them. It means that they will have lower net incomes. In this instance the government is going after them again with this clawback provision of the old age pension. It is a major step towards the end of universality because it applies particularly to the kinds of income that the Prime Minister dealt with very specifically when he said that the government would not do exactly what it is doing right now.

The Prime Minister made the same promises with respect to other social programs. He said the same thing with respect to medicare. Dare I ask, Madam Speaker, will that be next? He said the same thing with respect to hospital insurance. Dare I ask, Madam Speaker, will that be next? Where will he stop?

We can quote others. We can quote the Conservative chairman of the finance committee when he admitted, quite candidly, what the government is doing in this legislation. He said, "We have decided to eliminate universality". That is precisely what the government is doing with this legislation in this particular section. He also said, "While the clawback may be unfair and sneaky, it is there." I agree with the person who said that. I do not think there is any question about it.

I think many members of the Conservative party, if you could get them separately and quietly and ask them to speak candidly, would also agree. They would also agree that during the election campaign they went around reassuring people that there would never be any danger of any Tory proposal that would in any way at all affect universality. Yet they are supporting this legislation now.

If that is the way they feel about it, if they really believe that Canada cannot afford universality, that it is not proper for us to make universal programs available, such as the old age pension, the family allowance, why do they not have the intestinal fortitude to come out and say so and simply bring in legislation doing away with these programs? Why not admit it? Why not be honest about

it? I do not think the question will be answered. There is not much point in my belabouring it.

It is a special provision in another way. To benefit the affluent, members of this party in office have made some special provisions. This clawback is not the only special thing they have done to the people as a whole who are getting old age pension and family allowance. They also have special treatment for other people in our community. I am speaking now of the affluent.

The progressive income tax rate, that is, the marginal rate for those in the highest income tax bracket, was reduced by the previous government in 1981. The highest marginal rate in 1981 was reduced from 43 per cent to 34 per cent. The Conservatives opposed it at the time no doubt.

In 1987, the Conservatives brought in legislation that reduced the rate from 34 per cent down to 29 per cent. The old age pension is being taken back from everybody, not just from the poor or middle-income people but also from the most affluent. We might say that they are being fair. They are taking it away from everybody. In fact, the clawback is phased in to help those in the lowest brackets for a while.

But the combination of the clawback and of the gifts to the most affluent by reducing the marginal rate on the highest incomes, leaves the top 1 per cent of taxpayers with an average of $3,770 more in their pockets at the end of the year. They do not mind the clawback because they are still almost $4,000 ahead. That is the kind of special treatment that is provided in the budget, not solely in this legislation. The net effect of other budget provisions and this clawback proposal is to leave the people at the very top of the heap better off than they were when the Conservatives were first elected. At the same time, the working poor and the middle-income people will be worse off.

It is not fair to load 80 per cent of the population with the cost of lowering the marginal rates for those with $100,000 or more net income. It just is not fair. It is typically Tory, but it is not fair.

Why should there be special and preferential treatment for the income of the affluent in the realm of capital gains, something which was mentioned by my colleague earlier? On capital gains up to $100,000 accumulative there is no tax at all. That is not for the poor. That is not for the working poor. That is not for the middle-income people.

Let me talk about the tax exemptions for residences. It is one thing to say that a $100,000 residence is tax free, but it also applies to a $1 million residence. So even that is not applied fairly, not progressively.

Why is there special treatment for investment income? Again, there is special treatment, not the special kind of treatment that helps the lowest income people, but special preferential treatment on those affluent who are receiving investment income. They get special rates of tax that are lower on the average than on income that workers earn by the sweat of their brow.

There are special rates for corporations. Why is there a large corporation tax also included in this budget which taxes some 3,200 corporations which were not previously paying corporation tax on their income, but which still lets some 60,000 large profitable corporations escape from paying any income tax at all? If they are catching 3,200 and letting 60,000 go when they could have brought in legislation that would have caught all 64,000 of them, then the answer must be that they are looking after their friends. There does not seem to be any other choice.

I can appreciate the government's need for money. There have been cutbacks in expenditures that we have complained about and are still complaining about and no doubt will continue to complain about. There is the tremendous deficit that, this year, went up by some $5 billion. While there are projections that it will come down in the future, the deficit for this year was supposed to have come down too, if we were to believe the estimates of the Minister of Finance. No one really believes that he knows what is going to happen two, three, four and five years down the road when he could not say what was going to happen tomorrow.

We know that the government needs money to reduce the deficit, to wipe it out and even to work on the accumulated debt. There are fair ways of getting that money. We have talked about such methods. I do not

intend to go into them in any great detail now other than to mention one which I have mentioned before and which others have mentioned.

• (1620)

In 1962 the government of the day was concerned about revenue, but it also had some silly ideas. It must have been a Liberal government at that time, but I do not know for certain. It was really a novel idea. It was that the new tax system should be fair. So that government appointed the Carter Commission in September of 1962. It took until December of 1966, four years and ten months later, to produce a nine volume report which described in detail a fair tax system for Canadians. It was not universally applauded. As a matter of fact almost everybody in the country found something to say against it, anyone that would talk about it. But it was, on balance, a fairer system. It was so fair that the government of the day filed it away and it now gathers dust in libraries and archives around the country.

If members of the government really want to be fair, and I doubt very much that they do, then I want to recommend something to them. Certainly their record to date has given no indication that they are the least bit interested in being fair to the population as a whole. They certainly want to be more than fair to their friends, the most affluent ones at the top, and more than fair to the large profitable corporations that are not paying any tax. They do not want to be so fair to the middle-income people, and they are unfair to the ones at the bottom. Everything they have done points in those directions. But if they want to be fair, if they want even to consider it, and perhaps there is one person over there who would, and that is the chairman of the finance committee, I would recommend that they dig up the Carter report, blow the dust off it and start reading the details. I said at the time, and I think I was one of a relatively small group who did so, that it was a good report. It is a report that could be the basis of a fair taxation system in Canada.

People do not like paying taxes. I am sure, Madam Speaker, you have maybe said yourself on platforms during election campaigns, and you have certainly heard it many times, that the only fair tax is the one that you pay and I do not. Nevertheless, I think there is a feeling among Canadians that if taxation were convincingly fair, then they would support it.

The Carter Commission was fair, "a buck is a buck". It does not matter whether your income comes from the old age pension, from family allowance, from a lottery win or from dividends of a corporation, it is one more dollar that you have, one more dollar of spending power, and you should pay the same rate on this dollar as you do on every dollar that you get regardless of the source. It should be progressive beyond that, yes, but it should be taxed all in the same way.

I am not giving you the details of a nine volume report, Madam Speaker. You could certainly get those if you were interested, as could the government. But it was a good report. There were many criticisms of it, but on the whole it was a good report, one that could form the basis of a fair taxation system in Canada. It is one that I would strongly recommend to the government to take up, at least take it out of the library and blow the dust off it. Start reading it. Bring it in instead of all these changes that you are making, each one of which makes the system more unfair.

I can recall, and I have repeated this on other occasions, when the finance critic for the New Democrats, Lorne Nystrom, said in debate, "When in the history of Canada was a major tax change ever made which shifted the load of government from the very poor to the affluent?" When did it improve the lot of those at the bottom of the heap at the expense of those at the top? To this day no one has given any answer to that. Every major tax change has left the most affluent better off and the ones at the bottom worse off. The various changes that are being made by this government follow that pattern right down the line.

There is a better way. There is a better answer. I would recommend to the government it take a look at the Carter report.

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Madam Speaker, I stand today to speak to Bill C-28, a bill that makes 59 different amendments to the Income Tax Act. There are a whole series of areas that are impacted which, among others, includes the family allowance and old age security pensions. That particular clawback is what I wish to address today. I do not want anyone listening to think that that is the only thing being impacted by the amendments to this package that has been deposited by

the Minister of Finance and which is going to cause great distress and financial hardship to many people in our society.

Part 1.2 of Clause 48 in Bill C-28 implements the clawback of family allowance and old age security pensions. The amount of the repayment is equal to 15 per cent of the taxpayer's income over $50,000. That is what I wish to address.

In general, I think those of us who are concerned would recognize that with respect to family allowance this particular measure is going to take $1.686 billion out of family budgets in the next five years, or $500 million a year by 1991. It is true that certain family allowance benefits are taxable. Thirty per cent of family allowance benefits are already paid back to the government through the progressive income tax system.

Within ten years, close to one million Canadian families who currently receive family allowances or old age pensions will begin to lose these benefits due to the partial indexing that is inflation less 3 per cent of the $50,000 threshold. So it is with great concern that I participate in this debate because it is an attack on children and families, as well as an attack on those who helped to build this country, the seniors of this land.

I want to speak in particular, and make my remarks on behalf of the people of the Mount Royal riding, as well as those in the rest of Canada. I have had the opportunity to speak to hundreds and hundreds in my riding. There is very serious concern. They feel that they are going to suffer directly as a result of this very negative, regressive legislation.

I would suggest to you that in fulfilling our responsibility as legislators we have to keep a careful eye on the government and its agenda, particularly in opposition. But I think that conscientious members of this government and of the legislature here should be speaking and expressing the concerns that are brought to their attention by their constituents, irrespective of party policy when it comes to matters as serious as this.

It is, therefore, ironic that after a weekend when the news was filled with the reviews of the Conservative agenda one year after the last election, today we are in the middle of a debate that symbolizes that agenda, one of the most serious attacks on social change and social policy in the history of the last 25 years.

I refer to the clawback of seniors' pensions, an erosion of the universality principle that has always guided our social programs in this country. The Conservative agenda appears aimed at cutting and reducing the caring aspects of government saying it is in the national interest. Where we differ on this side of the House is by believing in a more balanced approach to financial responsibility, always respecting the compassionate traditions upon which our country was founded.

Most people would agree that a government exists to make changes possible and to make things happen. However, Liberals do not believe in change for change sake but rather making things better. That is why a balance must be struck between the economic and social impact of change. We believe in this balanced approach. We believe that while it is the economy that grows, it is society that cares.

Throughout Canada's history, with all the changes brought in its short 120 years, there has always remained a deeply held conviction, a cornerstone of our national life that would never change, our tradition of universal access to social programs, Canada's way of demonstrating tolerance and fairness as members of a society. Yet, in 1984, that tradition began to unravel, to erode. It is this unravelling that I would like to address now.

Since coming to office the Conservatives have time after time, year after year, continued a slow, often deceptive, but always real plan, a plan to dismantle the safety net of social programs that most of us believed was part of the fabric of this country. Once it was everyone's right as a Canadian to have access to social programs, but that is no longer true. The social contract established decades ago gave every Canadian equal access to the benefits of our social programs. That is the contract that has been broken. There is not fairness and equal access.

• (1630)

Universality is quite a simple idea. It is the expression of a belief that over a lifetime every single Canadian contributes to the building and flourishing of this society in their own way and that no one should be shut out from the benefits of the country that they have helped to build. That is universality. It is simple, true, and Canadian. We must remember that this principle has survived governments of two political stripes and has survived recessions. Indeed, it grew out of the Depression. Yet this spirit and tradition of a government looking out for

the health and welfare of every Canadian, no matter their means, came to a sudden end in 1984.

Under this government in Ottawa, universality has become little more than words on paper, words offered to Canadians on the one hand then quickly erased with the other. How familiar we are with the Prime Minister standing before a crowd and declaring to all the country that our social programs were a sacred trust. Yes there were days when this government's smooth rhetoric tricked Canadians into believing they shared this caring approach to social programs. But it seems to have been a mask behind which lay the real truth.

Time after time this government has used fast talk and colourful packaging to hide from Canadians the true facts, the slow dismantling of universal access to well established and important social programs. As a result, for five long years the opposition has devoted endless energy trying to stop the government's slow erosion piece by piece of these social benefits.

We are lucky that sometimes challenges to the government do succeed because Canadians are not fooled; they see past the rhetoric. They speak out, sometimes they do this successfully and they force this government to back-track. It was very early in the Conservative mandate that the unravelling of universality began. I go back to December 21, 1984, just weeks after the Conservatives took office, when the Leader of the Opposition rose in this House, trying to fend off the finance minister's deindexing of old age pensions.

Today we paid tribute to my colleague, Jean Claude Malépart, who unfortunately passed away this past weekend. He was one of the strongest critics of the government's insensitivity in the deindexing of old age pensions.

The leader of our party stood by the principle of universality and began a battle with this government that continues to this very day. He put it this way: "Why are we so committed to universality? It is because Canadians believe in equality. Canadians believe that all individuals, no matter their social status, deserve equitable treatment. If you segregate services only to the very need, then those services meant only for the poor become poor services". Preserving the social contract is what my party has always believed in, and that is what we have fought this government over since 1984. Fortunately, on the deindexation of pensions, the people won.

The reality is that the 1989 budget did cut old age security benefits through what is now called the clawback clause. They have cut family allowances as well and they have cut health care funding allocations. They have also privatized unemployment insurance, which is another important aspect of our social contracts.

Today the practical implications of the clawback are that anyone receiving $50,000 a year in retirement income net will have their pension benefits taken back into the government treasury. The same applies to family allowances. There is an additional piece of trickery for 70 per cent of seniors whose net income is based not only on pensions and interest funds but also on dividends. If dividends are collected, the amount of those dividends are grossed up by 25 per cent.

Just a word of explanation here where I think we must focus some of the fight as well. The tax system treats dividends for Canadians in a very special way. They are grossed up by 25 per cent in calculating net income and then this is offset by the dividend tax credit in the final tax calculation. The clawback, however, is based on the inflated net income figure. I would say that that is grossly unfair, that grossed up figure, on top of everything else. I will come back to that a little later.

What about tomorrow? Within 10 years nearly 1 million more Canadian families will lose all or part of their family allowance and old age pensions because of this action. The threshold will change. It will only rise in future years by the amount that annual inflation exceeds 3 per cent. That means that eight years from now the tax-back threshold will have fallen to the equivalent of $40,000 today.

In a careful reading of a *Globe and Mail* article of Monday, May 15, Hugh Windsor outlines this. I wish to quote much of what he has to say because it is very important. I have checked this out and it would seem that these are very well-founded figures. He states that while it is true:

> —that the $50,000 income threshold for the beginning of the clawback affects relatively few seniors—about 13 per cent of old age security recipients who file income tax forms, with only 3.5 per cent of those paying back all of the pensions. At first glance, the $50,000 seems a reasonable level to begin the cut; indeed, it must seem like Easy Street to the approximately half a million seniors who live below

the poverty line. The $76,000 where the clawback tops out is beyond the expectations of most Canadians, whatever their age group—

But sneakiness and potential unfairness enter into the way Mr. Wilson chose to treat the $50,000 over time. The threshold will not rise in step with inflation—

Which must be done when assessing such a major public policy change.

So, if we look down the road at maintaining current buying power while evaluating seniors' income in constant dollars, and if we project current inflation rates forward, by the year 2000 the clawback will start at $35,765. Fifteen years from now, the threshold will be down to $30,000; five years later when the first of the baby boomers start retiring, and that is in the year 2010, it will stand at $28,000 and will affect at least two million Canadians.

It is a crafty thin edge of the wedge, eroding universality and not taking into account the goods and services tax or the potential for lowering the threshold to $40,000 or $45,000 and raising the rate up of taxing at 15 per cent. Tampering with indexation was wrong in 1985. It is wrong in 1989. This is not taxation. It is ideologically driven confiscation.

Mr. Thacker: What about the six and five program?

Mrs. Finestone: That was not good either. Not that that should make it any different. It did not take effect at that point either, so do not try to deny the erosion of rights that you have put into place right now.

As some members try to look for arguments and blame it on the other guy, blame it on someone else, not me the Conservative, let me quote the Minister of State (Seniors) who stood in this House and cited senior citizens groups which were were supportive of budget clawback provisions and were reacting very favourably. It is amazing that the reaction of these senior groups' to her remarks was one of disbelief and indignation over what they saw as a blatant misinterpretation of their position. It goes right along with the blatant misinterpretation of our Prime Minister who swore that he would never touch his mother's pension. He would never touch anybody's pension and only enrich the well-being of the elderly in our society. It goes along with the Minister of Finance saying that he has not touched universality. That too is an exaggeration.

• (1640)

The problem is that a buck is a buck is a buck. There is a fairness argument to be made that $1 of income should be taxed the same way no matter where that income comes from. Second, most of the people receiving this old age security have paid many times over in the past. Those presently receiving old age security payments of approximately $4,000 a year have been paying since 1952. They paid at a rate higher than that of a pension plan even at the self-employed rate of contributions of employee and employer share. In the beginning in the 1950s the amount of the contribution was 2 per cent of taxable income subject to a maximum payment of $60, that is those who have an earned or unearned income of $3,000 in taxable income.

By 1965 they were paying 4 per cent with a top of $120 a year. That was the year before we even introduced the Canada Pension Plan. In 1967, it stayed at 4 per cent, but the maximum payment on $6,000 of taxable income went up to $240. In 1971 we remember that the then Finance Minister Edgar Benson removed the ceiling of total payments on taxable income, and I refer to page 11 of the summary of the 1971 tax reform legislation where he kept the 4 per cent but rolled it into the tax revisions that he made. He set no limits so that those at $50,000 of taxable income paid $2,000 into their old age security. It was not an attack on universality or a cut in the old age pension, it was a different way of paying for it. Since 1971 to 1987 this has been the case. We are all paying into it and we pay all our life for our old age security whether we are in need or not in need. That is the point.

Mrs. Dobbie: And we believe in paying for our brothers, if we are rich enough to.

Mrs. Finestone: Aren't you lucky we all fought for you before so that you could earn income. Lots of people did not earn income.

I would suggest that there are many serious problems that we are facing in this whole cut-back. It is an inhuman approach. It is an unfair approach. The changes that the Minister of Finance brought in with his tax reform obscured the reality of what he was doing in terms of changing the whole system of paying for the old age security.

One of the things that I think bothers us over here is the whole global view. First of all, there will be people who will lose all or part of their old age security, not based on real income but based on a financial decision taken with a false premise because there is a grossed up amount in there which is totally unfair. The minister took away the first $1,000 worth of taxable income from investments. That is another attack. Now the minister takes away old age security cheques and wants to claw them back. I think that there is gall on the part of the Minister of Finance, and the people should rise up and complain steadily about what is going on.

The danger is that once you start tinkering with and undermining the principle of universality, you put everything into question. Who decides who gets what benefits? Where do you draw the line? Who decides which Canadians deserve more help than others? It is time for all Canadians to write to their Members of Parliament, particularly those on the government side, deposit those petitions, make them stand up, and make them talk to the issue that is of great concern to many Canadians. This debate, more than any other debate, has crystalized the difference of opinion over the future direction of Canada and people are not pleased.

Mr. Robert E. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): Madam Speaker, I was holding back a little bit, hoping that some of my Conservative colleagues across the way who prefer to debate from their seats might stand up and provide some kind of defence for this program, but it seems that some Tory members feel that their only job in this House is to occupy a seat and when it comes time for a vote, to vote for whatever the government puts forward, rather than to express any kind of commitment, concern, or support for a particular program. Even if they are opposed to the program, they sit on their duffs, keep their mouths shut, and provide the 150 votes that are necessary for the government to ram it down the throats of the rest of Canadians. That is unfortunate.

When we are debating an issue like this, those who take some pleasure in sitting over there and shooting from their seats really have a right to do that, unless they show a little commitment to what the government is doing by standing up and providing some defence for a program. In this case the program is absolutely indefensible, especially given the promise that was quoted over and over again by my colleagues, the promise made by the Prime Minister. "Our position is simple and straightforward. We are in favour of universality of social programs and they shall not be touched". Somebody has not been telling the truth to somebody and these Conservatives on the other side should be standing up and making the confession.

This program is a direct attack on universality. It is not the only attack that has come from this government, unfortunately. Universal programs in this country have traditionally been supported by two pillars of federal policy. The one pillar is the progressive income tax system that makes sure that those who are favoured by this country, those who are favoured in terms of wealth and those who are favoured in terms of income, pay at least their share and then some, and are recognized for the amount of contributions they make and rewarded for these contributions. The progressive income tax system is an important pillar of the universality concept that we have used in this country for a long, long time.

The other pillar of the universal social programs are the programs themselves, the family allowance system and the Old Age Security system. This government has now begun to attack those two pillars of universality from both sides. First, they attacked from the side of the tax system. By reducing the effective tax rate on those who are earning the highest incomes in this country, they have made that tax system much less progressive.

Certain types of incomes which are only earned by the wealthy in this country, incomes such as dividends and capital gains that are skewed predominantly toward the wealthy and the high-income earner end of the tax scale are less heavily taxed than other types of income, for example, hourly salaries and the types of income that are earned by the poor and the middle-class. The rich and the high-income people in this country are being favoured by changes brought about in the tax system that have reduced its progressivity.

At the same time, this government has gone heavily into other areas of taxation that are the most regressive. For example, the one we are debating these days is the goods and services tax, which bears more harshly on the poor and lower-income people than it does on the wealthy who can afford to pay a high price for the things

that they purchase and can afford to pay the tax, but unfortunately, poor people cannot. By extending the services and the goods that are taxed under consumer taxes, the poor pay heavily on everything they purchase, especially on the necessities that they use, whereas the wealthy tend to pay on luxuries which probably should be taxed at a higher rate. We have seen the Conservatives attack the fundamental pillars of social programs from both pillars, from the progressivity of the tax system and from the social programs themselves.

• (1650)

This is after the Prime Minister promised that the principle of universality would not be touched in this country, that it was a sacred trust. Like other sacred trusts, it has now gone by the board. It appears to me that the Prime Minister, even when he was saying this, knew that he had a policy to undermine those social programs, to undermine the progressivity of the tax system, and in fact to undermine the universality principle itself. He simply was not saying it to the public. He was saying the opposite, knowing it to be untrue and he was misleading the people of Canada at the point that he said that.

When I look at this bill what concerns me is not that the family allowances and old age pensions are going to be taxed back from the wealthy. In fact, I think that that is a good idea. That was the basis of universal social programs in the first place, in order to avoid those demeaning means-tested programs that we had in the past. For example, a whole system of means testing had to be gone through to get family allowances, or old age pensions. One of the ways of eliminating those means tests was to make the programs universal and then to tax them back through the progressive income tax program. By destroying the progressive income tax program, the Conservative government has now made that system virtually unworkable.

What the government is doing in this legislation is isolating old age pensions and family allowances as income which should be taxed specifically and separately from all other types of income. They are isolating that particular form of income to be taxed back on a different basis than other types of income. In the universal system, it is combined with all of the other types of income and taxed on the same basis.

I believe that at some point in the future, when those who are at the high end of the tax scale recognize that pension income and family allowance income is being taxed specifically and directly, they are going to be petitioning the government and saying that they do not want that kind of income at all. "Why not just provide those programs for the poor, because for us they are a nuisance because we have to deal with them on our tax forms". They will be speaking to the government and suggesting that we no longer pay old age pension and family allowance to those above a certain income level in this country. What will happen is that we will return to the means-tested program, that demeaning system where poor people are put through a whole series of questionnaires and analyses to find out if they are cheating on their declarations of income so that these programs will apply specifically to the poor.

That cannot be done. In a country like Canada these programs are extremely valuable even to high income families. I want to point out an example to you, Madam Speaker, of how the family allowance system is extremely important to women because the family allowance cheques are paid to women, even in relatively high-income families. I will use the example of a community that I used to serve when I was a provincial member of the legislature in British Columbia.

That community was a single-industry community, a forest industry town with a pull mill. In that community most of the men worked and most of the women stayed home and looked after their kids, or if the kids were in school, they simply stayed home, but not in all cases. Although the men made relatively high incomes in the pulp and paper industry and in the logging industry, did they bring that income home? In some cases, they would gamble it away on pay day or drink it up and the family would never see any of that income. In other cases, since the man decided that it was his income from his employment, he would parcel it out to his family and an inadequate amount of income was shared with the family. As a result, even though the male income earner was relatively well off, the rest of his family was relatively poorly off. In fact, it could be argued that they were below the poverty line.

I recall that some of the women in the community, the wives in the community came to me as a provincial member of the legislature seeking money to set up a day care centre so that their children could be looked after and so that they could go out and seek employment. I

told them that because they had such a high family income they did not qualify for the day care supplements that were provided by the provincial government or for the capital grants that the provincial government at that time provided.

They told me in no uncertain terms that while their family income was high, they as spouses, as women, were poor and that the only income on which they could rely was the family allowance cheque that they got once a month, a cheque that was addressed to the women themselves, but was inadequate really to provide a decent standard of living for the family apart from what the men were earning in the pulp and paper or in the forest industry.

My argument is that we should be raising family incomes in this country, raising family allowance income in this country, raising old age pensions and then increasing the tax on the wealthiest people so that the amount of increase can be paid for directly from income tax. There should be a balancing not only between rich and poor but also within families so that the women in that family have the same amount of income as the breadwinner. There should be a distribution of income in the family as well as between the rich and the poor people in our society.

What this legislation does is precisely the opposite. It focuses on a type of income. It makes that income liable to a different kind of tax than the way the rest of the income is taxed. It is going to create pressure in this country, especially from higher income earners, to do away with this universal system of pensions and family allowances altogether.

It is bad legislation. It violates the promise that the Prime Minister made when he said that he would not touch universal programs, that universal programs were a sacred trust. It is a subtle—and as the chairman of the finance committee said—a sneaky way of getting around that promise and actually destroying universal social programs by this system that we see in this legislation. It is dirty, it is underhanded, and if the members on the other side had an ounce of conviction, if the members on the other side supported and believed and campaigned on the basis of the promise that the Prime Minister made back in 1984, they would be on their feet in this House, in caucus, and in cabinet demanding that the Prime Miniter live up to his promise and that he withdraw this legislation and respect his promise to maintain the universality of social programs rather than bringing in sneaky, underhanded legislation such as this which is designed to destroy the universality of those social programs, but in a very underhanded way.

We have seen countless studies and countless statistics showing that since the Tories took office in 1984 the rich have actually been excused from paying taxes in this country. They have paid less since the Tories came into office, and the poor have been frozen, ghettoized in poor income levels. The middle-income people and the people who pay income taxes based on salaries and hourly rates of earnings have seen a tremendous growth in the amount of tax they have to pay. The rich are getting away with murder as a result of Tory policy, the poor are frozen in a ghetto of poverty as a result of inadequate Tory policies, and the people who are at the lower end of the income scale and the middle income scale end up paying a heck of a lot more as a result of the Tory policy which supports the rich and ghettoizes the poor and leaves the rest of us paying far more than we should.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): It being five o'clock p.m. the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS—MOTIONS

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of amending the Access to Information Act to ensure that all Canadians have right of access to all environmental information gathered or held by the government.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to speak on an issue that I know is of pressing interest and concern to Canadians from coast to coast. This government, much like its Liberal predecessor, was proven to be among the most if not the most indifferent in the western world when it comes to

allowing the public access to information regarding environmental matters.

I believe Motion M-104 is very straightforward. It simply requests the following of the House:

> That, in the opinion of the House, the government should consider the advisability of amending the Access to Information Act to ensure that all Canadians have right of access to all environmental information gathered or held by the government.

Over the last 10 years or so I have had the opportunity, in fact the duty, to attempt to get all kinds of information from the Government of Canada and from time to time from the provincial and territorial governments.

I am saddened to say that the Government of Canada is the least likely to release information that is of public interest. Quite often there are excuses. The government says that it can't release certain information because it is commercially confidential or because a particular group of individuals in Toronto, Montreal, Yellowknife, or Queen Charlotte City might not understand what the information really means and would not be able to do anything useful with it.

As I have learned in the years that I have had a particular personal and political interest in environmental matters, the public out there is much more knowledgeable than most members who sit on the floor of the House of Commons. It is much more capable of and much more likely to read the information made available and, if necessary, to go to the experts, whether it is in forestry, in water quality, in atmospheric matters, or in terms of toxic or hazardous wastes. It is much more likely to dig into it and try to find practical and pragmatic solutions, something the government does not give the Canadian public much of an opportunity to do.

More and more we find not only here in Canada but around the world people who talk about thinking globally and acting locally. The fact of the matter is that one cannot act locally. A local farm family cannot in fact approach a lot of the difficult issues it might face in terms of soil erosion, flooding, or various problems with insects, disease or whatever unless it has information to work with.

One thing this chamber must do is respond democratically in terms of allowing the public to access the information that we as the Canadian public have collectively paid for.

Let me give examples of why it is so important that this information be made available. Let us take a look at what many scientists are now describing as the last green gold rush in relation to the massive proposed investments particularly by international firms that come to Canada to turn our forests into pulp to be sent off for various paper related purposes around the world.

In B.C., for example, one of the pet projects of the minister of forests, Mr. Parker, who has just recently been dumped, was trying to give away one-seventh of British Columbia to a firm from New Zealand known as Fletcher Challenge so that it could come in and pulp one-seventh of British Columbia. There were no attachments to a forest licence requiring recycling. There were no qualifications attached to it in replanting, no priority requirements in relation to wildlife or the replanting of certain areas within a certain time frame for certain of the natural ecosystems that were disrupted; nothing like that.

A third of the province of Alberta, with almost not a peep from the federal government, is in the process of being turned over to a consortia primarily from Japan that wants to cut down almost a third of the province of Alberta over the next 20 years and turn it into pulp to be shipped to various areas of the world.

One fifth of Manitoba has been turned into the hands of one company, simply to have it pulped away. Half the province of New Brunswick, a few years ago, was handed over to four large firms. That is just a smattering of examples from across Canada.

What is being done? I know Environment Canada has all kinds of information on the cumulative impact of these kinds of harvesting proposals in terms of the negative impact of these pulp projects on the Athabasca and the Peace rivers in Alberta and, as we already know, on the water systems of British Columbia.

We know that 40 per cent of marine pollution in Canada comes from pulp mills. Environment Canada has a library filled with information on the direct, cumulative and bio-cumulative impact, and in terms of bio-magnification, on water systems from furans, from dioxins, and from organo-chlorines.

We have heard long tales from the Minister of the Environment, all well meaning I am sure but not backed up by any kind of real political action. We hear the

minister saying that he is concerned and that new regulations and so on will be brought in.

We know that there is a proposal to clear cut one-seventh of British Columbia for one pulp mill, one-third of Alberta for six pulp mills, one-fifth of Manitoba for one pulp mill, and one-half of the province of New Brunswick for four other pulp mills. No cumulative impact has been done in any of those provinces, either in terms of the impact on the atmosphere, the impact on the forest ecosystems, or the impact on the water systems.

What is going on? This is the latter part of the 20th century and we have a government that either does not give a damn or is acting as a front for certain corporate interests so that the public is not really told the impact of some of these projects.

This brings me to what I think is really the key point in terms of this debate. It is that the Government of Canada is intentionally withholding vital information that the public should be given.

Let us take a look at another area. I will come back to the forest sector in a moment. We know that today 50,000 tonnes of hazardous waste were produced in Canada. We know from debates that have taken place in the House that about 80 per cent of the toxic and hazardous waste produced on a daily basis in Canada is not properly disposed of.

For example, it is dumped. As we hear from the Ontario Minister of the Environment, "The industrial polluters along the St. Clair River suffer from industrial incontinence". In the last couple of months there have been 35 major potentially life endangering and certainly life threatening spills in the St. Clair.

Some papers shuffle hands. The people say they deplore this. The fact of the matter is that the federal and provincial regulations and their likelihood of enforcement are so weak and so slow that industry in Ontario and industry in most of Canada have decided that it is in their interest to pollute. It is the cheapest way of doing business. Rather than having proper disposal methods with closed circuit technologies so that waste does not escape into the air, on to the land or into the water, they have decided it is just a cost of doing business.

Let us look at my home province. A study done by Dr. Rankin who teaches law at the University of Victoria took a look at the environmental permits structure in the province of British Columbia. He found, last year, that 63 per cent of the Class 1 permits were in significant non-compliance for more than a year.

Let me tell you what that means because it is quite a mouthful. It means that two-thirds of the permits given to municipalities or to industry which are dumping waste into rivers or into lakes or into the ocean were not in compliance. They were not living up to the absolute minimum terms of their permit. Some 76 per cent of the Class 3 permits were in significant non-compliance for more than a year. That is for land fills, dumping on to land, dumping into the atmosphere.

A considerable number of permits that Dr. Rankin examined had never been in compliance, never. It was only because Dr. Rankin knew how to access this information and to get it out that it ever became public. It was not released by the government. It is only where you have people who are persuasive, dedicated and persistent that they can dig a little information out and find out what is really going on.

Public trust in my view is breached and violated constantly in this country due to the political control of most governments right now by powerful private sector interests, whether it is in the nuclear sector, the mining sector, the forest sector, or in terms of hazardous and toxic wastes.

What of PCBs? What of the St. Basile le Grand fire and all the concern not only in the province of Quebec but right across the country about what happens to PCBs when they are burned and about the long-term problems that are known.

• (1710)

I was shocked during that period of time when there was debate in this House and a member on the government side got up and said that all this stuff about PCBs is all blown out of proportion. The fact of the matter is that if one takes the time to speak to professionals in the field of medicine, people who are interested in the impact of long-term low-level exposures of all forms of life to PCBs, one finds that there are in fact intractable, dangerous problems that come from associations with PCBs.

For Mr. Klein, the Minister of the Environment in Alberta, to say it is okay to drink PCBs and for members on the government side to suggest you could go and wash your hands in PCBs is in my view a repugnantly, intellectually and medically dishonest approach to a

serious chronic problem that we have not only in Canada but around the world right now.

We have to start thinking globally and acting locally. That is the way to start seriously addressing problems that may well bring about the end of life with a whimper. It will not be with a big bang; it will be a whimper.

Many of these global problems are starting to have what is called bio-feedback. They are starting to respond to other symptoms of the degeneration of our ecological systems. A lot of Canadians who know it is starting to happen. It is a visceral feeling. They look at a government that seems to be more interested in things that while important do not deserve the degree of intellectual, emotional and political time spent on them in this chamber.

Why can we not have access to information? Why should I have to spend what I do on some of the files I have been working on more than two years to try and get a little teeny bit of environmental information out of the minister, the department and other departments? I am persistent. I have staff that can help me. There are very few Canadians who can possibly even consider that.

My colleague from Vancouver Island was speaking a moment ago about the nature, the structure of what is happening in Canada. I think there we can find part of the symptoms and perhaps part of the reason the access to information in this country is so difficult to get. It is because those who control it are so powerful.

Over 50 per cent of the wealth in Canada is now controlled by less than 10 per cent of the population. Some 70 per cent of the wealth is controlled by the top 20 per cent, and the bottom 20 per cent of income earners in Canada control no wealth at all. They owe. They are in debt. They are the ones who often, if not always, face the significant, negative environmental impacts of many of the things going on around us that can be controlled and in fact can be of great economic and direct environmental benefit.

Here is a study that this government of Canada refuses to release. Of course, as you would expect, I am going to release some of the contents of it right now. It was done for the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. It was done in relation to the greenhouse effect and the actual cost benefits of reducing the amount of CO2 and greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere in Canada.

On page 1 it points out:

> The World Resources Institute estimates the man-made contributions to the greenhouse effect to be as follows: carbon dioxide, 49 per cent; methane, 18 per cent; chlorofluorocarbons, 14 per cent; nitrous oxide, 6 per cent; and other gases, 13 per cent.

This group, working for the Government of Canada, paid by the Government of Canada, but never of course a report to be released to Canadians who might be interested, goes on to say about the costs of carbon dioxide emission reductions:

> Most of the measures that reduce emissions of carbon dioxide also save energy. In many of these cases, the value of the energy saved over the life of the measure exceeds the initial investment required. As a result, the net cost of most of the measures is negative; that is they produce a net benefit. Most of the measures selected reduce carbon dioxide emissions, save energy and save money.

That sounds like a winner to me. Let me repeat so government members can hear of a document that their minister of energy is sitting on. Most of the measures selected reduce carbon dioxide emissions, save energy and save money. That sounds like a pretty good idea.

The total cost associated with the carbon dioxide emission reduction measures in each penetration scenario is as follows: market penetration, minus 42 billion; measures economically attractive to society, negative 150 billion; technical potential, negative 99 billion. I am not talking millions. I am talking billions that this government over here could save. It got the report but it does not want to do it. I will come to why it does not want this information out and why it also does not want to do it. I am quoting:

> Implementing the measures economically attractive to society yields a net benefit of $150 billion on the basis of energy savings alone. The technical potential scenario achieves larger carbon dioxide emission reductions by including some measures that are not economically attractive to society. As a result the total net benefits, at $99 billion, are somewhat smaller than under MEAS. However, it is important to recognize that the technical potential scenario still yields a significant net benefit to society.

> These economic benefits cannot be achieved without significant investment. The incremental capital investments required are estimated as follows: $23 billion for market penetration; $74 billion

for measures that are economically attractive to society; and for technical potential, $128 billion.

You might ask, Madam Speaker, what are the benefits of making this investment. Saving Canadians $150 billion probably is not a bad idea on its own. What about the other great benefit? We heard the Minister of the Environment, and we have heard the Prime Minister saying they are going to do all these great things about global warming. Even from the most recent conferences the government has not even been able to adopt the suggestion that Canada reduce the amount of CO2 we are producing by 20 per cent by the year 2005. Yet it can do more than that and save Canadians $150 billion.

If I were a government member I might say: "Why is the minister of energy withholding this report from me as a government member if it is going to save Canadians $150 billion? We are slashing unemployment insurance. We are clawing back pension and family allowance. We are gouging middle and low-income taxpayers. We are kicking the crap out of this province and that province. What is going on?" Well, try and get a government member to talk seriously about hydrogen technology. They say: "Hydrogen, you cannot drive a car on hydrogen". Of course you can. If you have a beaker of water, you have got energy to drive a car. And government members say: "Good grief, this is not possible".

We have allowed a very select group, not just in Canada but around the world, to get a stranglehold on a lot of people. Whether it is for industrial or residential fuel consumption or for motor vehicles or for aircraft, there are alternate fuels, hydrogen being the prime one.

Why are we not moving on hydrogen? It does not create carbon dioxide. It is not going to add to the greenhouse effect. It is not polluting. The only thing that comes out of the tail pipe of your car is water and oxygen. I have people in my constituency who have already converted their vehicles and now they have all kinds of heat and pressure from the provincial government saying: "You are not taxes". There are intelligent approaches to be made.

The plea that I make to this chamber is that we start to use even a small fraction of the native intelligence that each of us was endowed with and the capacity to read. Why is a report that would save Canada $150 billion being hidden in the safe in the minister of energy's office? Why will he not tell the Prime Minister? Why does he not come in here and say: "Look, I can save $150 billion. I can reduce the carbon dioxide being released into the atmosphere." We can do something serious. There are entire countries that are going to disappear between the oceans within the lifetime of many of the people sitting in this chamber if we do not do something about the greenhouse effect.

In conclusion, I could go on, as you could imagine, Madam Speaker, at some length about the benefits and the reasons why, not only members of Parliament but Canadians generally have a right to access environmental information that is vital to them in their community, to them and their family, to us as a global species and to the other species on the planet. We have paid for it as Canadians. We deserve access to that information, and I would hope that all members would support such a proposal.

• (1720)

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by saying that the government and, I am sure, all members of Parliament understand the importance of providing the public with the type of information which it needs in order to become informed and to build upon the concern which is already there with respect to manners in which we can collectively work together to improve the health of our environment.

Even a passing interest in public affairs and environmental issues would cause any observer in these last few months to understand and to appreciate the fact that there is a growing awareness of the importance of the environment. In a very real sense there is a thirst for knowledge and how we as individuals can lead toward that healthy environment.

I use as an example a letter I received from a constituent that really struck home. This constituent living in one of the smaller communities within Brandon—Souris wrote to say that she was heating her house with fuel oil. She wondered if in so doing she was contributing in any significant way to the degradation of the environment. I was pleased to use that particular example to go to the department to ask for the type of information she obviously wished to have in order for her

to determine whether or not she was doing her part to assist in the development of a healthy environment.

This is but one example of the importance of providing information to Canadians wherever they may live in such a way that it is comprehensible to them and that it meets their everyday need for knowledge.

I think it is also important that the information be as comprehensible and readily available as possible, because I sense there is a tremendous danger as well that sometimes a little information or information improperly understood can contribute to misinformation and sometimes unnecessary fears.

The whole area of the threat to the environment is so scientific in nature that many Canadians are having difficulty grappling with the information before them. I would hope and believe that the government is beginning to provide its information in such a way that it is, cohesive in nature and leads to the kind of better understanding which will permit Canadians as individuals to lead a healthier and more environmentally pleasing lifestyle, as well as enable them as individuals to play a role in policy making. There is no question that virtually everyone who is a part of public life in Canada today would concede the fact that the public in many instances is leading and government is at best responding. As a member of government, I would readily concede that. I must say to my hon. friend who has just spoken that I very much respect his knowledge of the environment. I readily recognize that his commitment to the issues has made him a leader in this House and throughout the nation. I would say, however, in defence of this government that I do believe it has done more than he has given it credit for in terms of trying to provide the kind of information the public is seeking. I refer specifically to the hearings which are taking place in Alberta with respect to proposed pulp mills there because the hon. member made reference to it.

I think most people who have followed those hearings would concede that the information provided by those who have spoken on behalf of the federal government has been information in depth. It has been information that has made a valuable contribution, although one cannot judge that process until it is completed.

I would say in passing that I think many people were surprised by the breadth of evidence made available to that hearing by the spokesmen on behalf of the Government of Canada. I would not like members of this House or the listening public in any way to fail to appreciate the extent of the knowledge being provided in the hearings and as part of the environmental assessment review process.

We have been doing one thing which I think is worth noting, that is, the development of a state of the environment reporting system. This system, as you know, is given legal recognition in the Canadian Environmental Protection Act under section 2 which states: "The government of Canada shall provide information to the people of Canada on the state of the Canadian environment."

As part of that process there has been created a public advisory committee to determine the type of information needed as part of state of the environment reporting and to ensure that the information provided is accurate, up to date, and meets the needs of Canadians wherever they may be. This committee consists of individuals from environmental groups, consumer organizations, industry and the academic community, all of which have a direct interest in the state of the environment and all of which recognize the importance of the dissemination of accurate and up to date information.

The government has made a very deliberate and, I think most members would agree, positive step to involve the community at large in the issues which are ours. The environmental issue is not something which is in any way unique to this House. In fact, one would be less than honest if one were to try and pretend for a moment that the House has led in the development of environmental issues throughout Canada because I do not think it has. I think it is following. I think it is providing equal leadership on occasion, but it has not in the strictest sense of the word led.

This government is trying to involve the public in ensuring that our knowledge is as complete as it can be and the information which we are providing is as comprehensive as it can be. One of the ways we are doing that is by involving as many people from all sectors of the community as we can.

In 1986 the first national state of the environment report was published. Following the example of other governments and other countries, a 260-page publication was issued examining conditions, trends and our renew-

able resource systems. It looked at the effects of our human activity on our ecosystems and discussed the responses of institutions and organizations to environmental change. We are now working on that second national report which is scheduled to be published in 1991.

In addition, the state of environment fact sheet series is made available. It is designed to stimulate interest in environmental concerns among the media, non-governmental groups, high school students, libraries and the interested public.

If I may say so in passing, I think one of the most encouraging things I have noticed these last few months is a very evident interest among young people in environmental issues and also their willingness to do the type of research they must do in order to be well informed. I think the state of the environment fact sheet series contributes to that. Also young people in the province of Ontario, by way of their own leadership, have contributed to changing practices in requiring fast food restaurants to provide the product to them in a more environmentally satisfying manner than had been the case before.

Young people, as a result of the kind of information which they have been accumulating, some of which has been provided by this government, some by other governments, and some by their own research, are now playing a positive role in the sense that they are going into the industry, exercising their power as consumers and demanding that product be provided to them in a way which is environmentally sound. At first their efforts to ensure that hamburger packages did not contain CFCs were scoffed at and management paid little attention to them. More recently I have noticed, however, that they have succeeded and now the products they wish to buy are being packaged in such a way that it is much more satisfying to them and much more environmentally safe than would otherwise be the case.

In addition to the fact sheet series which I mentioned before, there is the state of the environment report series which will feature insights into a wide variety of environmental issues of national and regional significance. These reports will be aimed at universities, resource managers and interest groups as well as at individuals who want information in depth. Some of these reports currently under way deal with endangered species, peoples and parks, air quality, ground water, prairie water resources and impacts of global change.

In addition there is also the state of the environment reporting newsletter which we have made available three times a year. We are trying to build up a data base within Statistics Canada that will provide Canadians with quick access to a wide range of environmental information. Preliminary efforts have been made to develop key indicators of the state of the environment comparable to traditional economic indicators such as the Consumer Price Index. The availability of all this data will ensure that the public will have a greater access to information in the future than it had two, three or four years ago.

• (1730)

I think that all of us will benefit from that because a well informed public is certainly the most important step in ensuring the legislation and practices in this country and in other countries throughout the world are what they might be.

For too long, economic development has occurred at the expense of the natural and cultural environment. That, of course, was recognized and dramatized by the report associated with former Prime Minister Brundtland and those who worked with her. One of the results of that, of course, is a growing interest in the words "sustainable development". It may well be that many Canadians as yet could not define the term "sustainable development", and if they were to attempt to, they probably would not agree on what that definition should be.

I think what has developed is a realization that Canadians, by acting together in as well informed a manner as possible and by ensuring that their governments act on their behalf as well that we can indeed ensure that economic development in the future will occur in such a way that it will not be at the expense of future generations as has occurred in the past. Unfortunately, in the past, we made decisions based almost entirely on economic considerations alone and later we asked what the environmental consequences of those decisions would be.

I think as a result of the information which is now being made available by government and others to the public, we will ensure that in the future, consideration of

the economic implications of a decision will be a forethought rather than an afterthought.

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Madam Speaker, it seems to me that if the parliamentary secretary had read the commitments to open government made by his leader in the 1984 election and had been consistent with that pledge, he would also have had something positive to say in support of the motion of the member for Skeena and would have indicated his government's intention to let this motion pass. The Parliamentary Secretary refrained from saying that, however, ignoring the commitment of his own party to a more open government which was one of the basic pledges made in the summer of 1984.

Worse than that, the parliamentary secretary decided to develop a reply on the subject of transfer of general information and interpreted the motion of the member from Skeena as meaning that all he wants is to provide fact sheets, state of the environment reports and that kind of general information which we all know has been made available to the public but really contain very little hard data.

The member for Skeena talks with his motion about ensuring that all Canadians have right of access to all environmental information. He means the hard facts and the hard studies and the interesting stuff which does not see the light of day, if I understand his motion correctly. Of course there is merit in what he is proposing. The public ought to know about the hard econometric studies as to what are the options and policies when you make a decision affecting the economy, energy and other aspects that have an impact on the environment.

It would be a question, therefore, of making available to the public studies made on the cost of inaction on environmental matters or studies that I am sure are being made by the Department of the Environment on the evaluation of water quality in the Great Lakes about which we would like to know. What is the pattern and what do scientists in the employ of government say these days on this subject matter which is, however, not disclosed to the public on a matter that is basically one of public health.

The member would like, I am sure, to see studies made on energy options and the real cost of these energy options and he made a reference in his intervention to that particular report which we would all dearly love to read. I am sure the public would like to know more.

Since I see the Minister of Labour in the House tonight, I will say that the public would like to know what studies are being conducted on the subject of ergonomics, on the subject of health at work, on the use of video screens and how that impacts on the health of workers. In other words, this is what is meant by greater access to information on the part of Canadians as to what are the workings of the various facets of government.

In that respect the parliamentary secretary has disappointed us. He has made a speech on the subject of public relations, of governments communicating to the public news, data or propaganda which are not necessarily the hard and difficult substance of studies that are probably being conducted by the government on a regular basis.

We come down to this basic issue of sharing of information which is a question of the sharing of power. When you have an imbalance in the knowledge of what is stored and accumulated by a unit called a department or by a larger corporation called a state and the public does not have access to that information, you have a considerable imbalance of power in that respect and therefore an inability to assess the gravity of a situation or an inability to decide which route to take when options are available.

I wish the parliamentary secretary had in his intervention given us some of his thoughts, for instance, on the Rafferty–Alameda Dam and how that was handled in terms of public information. Why were the basic facts not put out despite the pressures that developed? Why, for instance, was there not a public consultation process launched when it came to the so–called environmental study with relation to VIA Rail? All of a sudden, we saw a study that came out of the blue, without any public involvement, without any sharing of information beforehand with the public. It was a conclusion made by a department in isolation from the public affected. It was described as "an environmental study".

Why is there no sharing of information on the proposed and several times announced Winnipeg Centre on Sustainable Development? The parliamentary secretary filled the time out toward the end, because evidently he was running out of steam. Why is there not access to information as to what has been going on since June, 1988 when the Prime Minister at the United Nations General Assembly announced the opening of the Winnipeg Centre on Sustainable Development? We know

nothing about it. We do not know the substance of intergovernmental negotiations. We do not know anything about where the matter stands at the present time.

We know that the Minister of the Environment went to the United Nations in September and once again made an announcement. Actually, that announcement has been made several times and probably will be made many more times. Each time it will sound as if it is a great revelation, a great step forward by the so-called Progressive Conservative government. Here you have an example of how you could practise the open government promised in 1984. The report to which the member from Skeena referred is a very good example.

I will conclude, because my time is running out, by bringing out another example of not practicing what is being preached. Why did the government preclude the publication of *Storm Warning* in 1985? It was a brochure produced by Environment Canada dealing with the impact of transboundary movement of air pollutants as they affect the food chain which was suspended from publication for one year by the Minister of the Environment of the day. There was such an uproar on the part of the public that the government subsequently had to publish it. What kind of a record is that, Madam Speaker? These are probably the basic issues that the parliamentary secretary would have wanted to explain to us when it comes to access to public information.

• (1740)

Because of lack of time, I cannot go into the sham of the Rafferty-Alameda approval process, where the minister himself did not follow the requirements of his own regulations and he knew it. He denied it many times in the House, but he knew that he was not following the requirements.

Time does not permit me to go into the so-called environmental impact assessment on the VIA Rail decision which falls under the very same rules and regulations which this government proclaims that it is respecting. So, because of the time element, it is impossible now to go in depth into the subject, except to say that if this government intended in 1984 to practise open government—

Mr. McDermid: Time!

Mr. Caccia: And I know the minister is crying "time" because it disturbs his hearing system and his political conscience. He does not like to be reminded of these elements, but for a government that promised on the hustings to be the defender of open government and to inform the public of what goes on really has very little to be proud of and very little to write home about. The minister of so-called public works over there has to learn a lot on the subject of making information available to the public as well. I hope that on another occasion, the parliamentary secretary will be more forthcoming on these outstanding issues.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Desjardins (Témiscamingue): Madam Speaker, I welcome this opportunity today to speak to a very important subject, namely, the public's right of access to all information on environmental matters. Madam Speaker, we cannot expect opposition members to consider the fact that things have been changing for a number of years and that this kind of information is becoming increasingly available. There were many references in the course of this debate to the situation in western Canada. I am more familiar with what is happening in eastern Canada and especially in Quebec, where the Government of Quebec is to be commended for environmental legislation that is among the strictest and most effective in this country. For instance, Madam Speaker, as a private citizen, I asked the Government of Quebec a few weeks ago to give me some vital information about mine tailings which are a major source of pollution in my region, and I did so following announcements made by the Minister of the Environment in Charlottetown, together with his colleagues, the provincial environment ministers, when it was decided to earmark $200 million for decontamination of abandoned sites in this country. I asked for a list of these sites, which happen to be mine tailings, and a week later, I was given all the information on these sites which are a health and environmental hazard for my region. This is one example to show that when we ask for information about subjects that concern us, that information is available.

Madam Speaker, I would like to take a few minutes to show that the situation has improved in the past few years, and that as far as the environment is concerned, the federal government is making more and more information available to Canadians.

The government is so aware of these issues that it now has a vast range of programs, provinding the public with access to up-to-date information on climatic change, water quality, land, forests and other natural resources in this country. The most recent and most exhaustive program is the system of reports on the status of the environment included in the Canadian Environmental Protection Act we passed in 1987, and I quote: "The federal government shall provide information to the people of Canada on the state of the Canadian environment".

Reports on the state of the environment are an excellent way of identifying problems and setting priorities, because after all, actions speak louder than words when the delicate balance of our planet is threatened.

Following the example of countries like the United States, Australia, France, Sweden and Japan, Canada in 1986 published its first national report on the state of the environment, a document of some 270 pages that looked at our use of renewable resources and our policies in this area, the impact of human activity on our ecosystems and the way our institutions and organizations respond to environmental changes. The second edition, which is to appear in 1991, will include information provided by federal agencies, the provinces and territories, and industrial, academic and non-governmental groups. I am convinced that from such a diverse report will come a complete and accurate description of the state of the environment in Canada, in a form that is easily accessible to the public.

In order to add to knowledge on the state of the environment, the federal environment minister has begun to publish a series of information leaflets dealing with important environmental issues and trends and their impact on the natural world, economic opportunities, health and quality of life. These leaflets are intended to make the media, non-governmental organizations, high schools, libraries and the public more aware of environmental concerns.

This series of leaflets was launched last year with the publication of *The Urbanization of Rural Canada, 1981-86*, which dealt with the loss of agricultural and other resource-rich land as it was converted to urban use. This publication of the Canadian Wildlife Service reports on the urbanization of rural land in 70 regions of Canada. Coming leaflets will deal with the contamination of sea birds and the pollution of the marine environment in British Columbia, among other subjects.

The department also intends to better inform the public by publishing complementary reports on the state of the environment which will shed light on a host of national or regional environmental issues. These reports will be for universities, resource managers and interest groups, as well as anyone who wants detailed information on specific subjects. Reports are now being prepared, in particular, on endangered species, the public, parks, air quality, ground water, water resources in the Prairies and the impact of change on a global scale.

Madam Speaker, we also want to encourage exchanges of information between governments, individuals and non-governmental organizations interested in approaches, methods and publications in connection with reports on the state of the environment; to this end, we will publish a state of the environment bulletin three times a year. At Statistics Canada we are also setting up a data bank which will give everyone instant access to a wide range of environmental information. Preliminary efforts have been made to define key environmental indicators similar to economic indicators such as the consumer price index. This source of information will prove invaluable useful to Canadians who want to know how to improve the environment.

Now more than ever, Madam Speaker, Canadians are deeply concerned about environmental problems. They have also expressed their willingness to share responsibilities for their future on this planet. That is why, if we hope to preserve and improve global environment, Environment Canada must let people know about environmental changes and their consequences. For too long now economic development has been pursued at the expense of the natural and cultural environment. The World Commission on Environment and Development, chaired by Mrs. Gro Brundtland, called for a reversal of this tendency in favor of sustainable development. Every

Canadian will have a key role to play in the achievement of this objective.

By giving people the means of information they need to shape their destiny, we believe they will be in a better position to exert an influence on the health of the environment. Environmental reports give us a better perspective on ourselves and our habitat. They are the foundation of sound resource planning and management. We hope that the people will put this information to good use. The success of environmental reports depends on everyone taking part in the protection of our environment.

• (1750)

[*English*]

Mr. Brian O'Kurley (Elk Island): Madam Speaker, the hon. member's concern for the well-being of our environment is shared by millions of Canadians. I am sure that he would agree that the protection of our natural resources is a serious responsibility and one that requires the legislative power to prosecute polluters as well as to protect the rights of individuals who have provided Environment Canada with confidential information for the good of the country.

Without legislation governing the disclosure of information to the public, our ability to protect every Canadian's right to a healthy environment would be seriously impeded. Under existing legislation, exemptions from disclosure relating to environmental issues, as well as other information within the federal government, are specified in the Access to Information Act.

If I may quote from Section 20(1) of the Act:

> The head of a government institution shall refuse to disclose any record requested under this Act that contains:
>
> (a) trade secrets of a third party; (b) financial, commercial, scientific or technical information that is confidential information supplied to a government institution by a third party and is treated consistently in a confidential manner by the third party; (c) information the disclosure of which could reasonably be expected to result in material financial loss or gain to, or could reasonably be expected to result in material financial loss or gain to, or could reasonably be expected to prejudice the competitive position of a third party; or (d) information the disclosure of which could reasonably be expected to interfere with contractual or other negotiations of a third party.

To summarize, these exemptions are generally designed to protect information that has been submitted to the government on a confidential basis. Environment Canada receives much information through confidential consultations and negotiations with provinces as well as with other countries. The total release of this information would seriously damage the department's ability to carry on these relationships and would hamper our negotiating position.

It should also be noted that the department and the Conservation and Protection Service, in particular, gathers information in the course of investigations that may lead to prosecutions against polluters. If this information were to be released without agreement by the third party involved, as specified in the Access to Information Act, it could well compromise the success of any subsequent investigation.

As well, the consequences of releasing trade secrets and other confidential business information under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act should be self-evident. Sources could be reluctant to divulge important information for fear that public disclosure could prejudice their competitive position in the market or result in material financial loss.

There is already an extremely thorough public interest provision for disclosure in Section 20(6) of the Access to Information Act. It states:

> The head of a government institution may disclose any record requested under this Act, or any part thereof, that contains information described in paragraph (1) (b), (c) or (d) if that disclosure would be in the public interest as it relates to public health, public safety or protection of the environment and, if the public interest in disclosure clearly outweighs in importance any financial loss or gain to, prejudice to the competitive position of or interference with contractual or other negotiations of a third party.

In addition, other legislation, particularly the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, CEPA, has provisions dealing with access to environmental information, including the possibility of public interest disclosure. CEPA limits the type of information that can be considered confidential and allows for a number of circumstances in which information may be disclosed.

Section 20(2) of CEPA specifies the wide range of types of information that may be disclosed. These include information on a substance's use, its safe handling, its disposal and elimination, safety measures to be taken in case of accidents involving a substance, certain physical and chemical data on a substance, a substance's effect on health, safety and the ecology and the methods and

results of product or environmental tests done on a substance by or for a government institution.

Section 20(4) of CEPA indicates various circumstances in which information may be disclosed, namely:

> (a) with the written consent of the person who provided it or on whose behalf it was provided; (b) as may be necessary for the purposes of this Act; (c) under an agreement between the Government of Canada and the government of a province or of a foreign country, or between the Minister and any other Minister of the Crown in right of Canada where (i) the purpose of the agreement is the administration or enforcement of any law, and (ii) the government of the province or foreign country or the other Minister undertakes to keep the information confidential; (d) to a physician or prescribed medical professional who requests the information for the purpose of making a medical diagnosis of, or rendering medical treatment to, a person in an emergency; or (e) in accordance with the Access to Information Act.

Further, Section 20(6) of CEPA specifies circumstances under which the Minister may disclose information on 24–hour notice. I will quote from this section:

> Notwithstanding subsection (3), the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act, the Minister may disclose information—where (a) the disclosure is in the interest of public health, public safety or the protection of the environment; and (b) the public interest in the disclosure clearly outweighs the importance of any material financial loss or prejudice to the competitive position of the person who provided the information or on whose behalf it was provided.

Clearly, the implications of removing all restrictions on the access to information regarding the environment would not serve the interests of Canadians in situations where it could seriously hamper the government's abilities to protect the right to a healthy environment.

I ask the hon. member to consider seriously the negative implications that such a change would have on the government's ability to collect information that is vital to the protection of the environment.

Mr. Blaine A. Thacker (Lethbridge): Madam Speaker, I am privileged to rise on this motion to give the perspective of the committee that looked into this whole question of access to information. I think my friend opposite will find my comments germane.

In the last Parliament, a special committee of this House looked into the whole question of access to information and reviewed witnesses, ministers and officials from across the country and had a unanimous report.

Mr. Fulton: It had a unanimous report, none of the recommendations of which were followed.

Mr. Thacker: I am not sure whether my friend wants to hear my comments or not.

In general, we found that with cabinet confidentiality, the memos that go between cabinet minister, the memo that goes from a senior deputy minister to a cabinet minister, of course have to be confidential. But in general, we formed the view that the more information that the ministers could get out to the public, the better it would be indeed for the minister, because often these problems are not simple. Simple problems are solved and are not before the ministers or the cabinet. The more options that people can see the minister considering, given the complications of the issues they are dealing with, in actual fact would see that the decisions that are often taken are in fact the best decisions and the wisest given the circumstances.

So I agree with my friend when he says that more information should be revealed because I think it would perform a very valuable role for our fellow citizens. They would then see that most often the decisions that cabinets make are, in fact, wise ones. I want to encourage my friend to keep this motion on the order paper and to keep bringing it up, because I think more members need to express themselves. We should express ourselves sensibly. Indeed, more information is being revealed today by the ministers of this cabinet than in previous Parliaments. I can say that from personal experience. So we are going in the right direction. As more ministers come in—

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired.

Pursuant to Standing Order 96(1), this item is dropped from the Order Paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1800)

[*English*]

INCOME TAX ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of motion of Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre) that Bill C-28, an act to amend the Income Tax Act, the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Federal Post-Secondary Education and Health Contributions Act, the Old Age Security Act, the Public Utilities Income Tax Transfer Act, the War Veterans Allowance Act and a related Act be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River): Madam Speaker, I rise today on behalf of senior citizens in my riding to debate the legislation before the House.

Bill C-28 will, in effect, put an end to Canada's most respected and envied social programs. In fact, the Canadian Seniors Network described the measures in the April budget more precisely. In its summer newsletter *One Voice* this organization said, "History will remember the clawback as the end of universality, not for its drop in the deficit bucket."

Senior citizens in Kenora—Rainy River have never been more disillusioned than with this Conservative government. This is not the government's first attempt to destroy universal social programs. In 1985, the Conservative government tried to deindex old age pensions even after the Prime Minister had solemnly pledged during the 1984 election campaign that, "social programs were a sacred trust never to be tampered with."

Senior citizens in this country believed the Prime Minister in 1984 but they soon realized how wrong they had been. The government will say it listened to the voice of senior citizens in 1985 and withdrew the deindexing proposal. In reality, the government backed down in the face of a public outcry by seniors right across Canada.

The Prime Minister continued to assure senior citizens since the 1985 coup attempt on old age pensions that his government would preserve and protect social programs. During the 1988 general election the Prime Minister, standing on the stage with his own mother, repeated his pledge.

Senior citizens in Kenora—Rainy River no longer believe anything this government says. They know that as soon as one promise is made, another is broken. My constituents know that this Conservative government has a hidden agenda when it comes to universal programs. One of the government's own members admitted as much in an article which appeared in *The Ottawa Citizen* on September 23. The chairman of the House of Commons finance committee said that his government's real agenda was to do away with universal social programs.

The clawback provisions for old age security benefits and family allowances are a definite and real threat to Canada's social programs. There is widespread opposition to the clawback measure. The government says that everyone must help to reduce the deficit. Many respected Canadians and senior organizations say otherwise.

Allow me to quote from a few sources. Don MacGillivray said in *The Ottawa Citizen* September 14, "The policy pretends to continue universality but in fact cancels it."

Hugh Winsor of *The Globe and Mail* said on May 5, "If, as Mr. Mulroney subsequently admitted, tampering with the indexation was wrong in 1985, attempting the same thing with the threshold levels is wrong in 1989.

Leonard Shifrin said in an article published in *The Ottawa Citizen* on May 4 that the finance minister proceeded to undermine the universality of family allowances and old age pensions.

A report from the National Council of Welfare states, "A social program that delivers benefits to everyone and then collects them all back from some recipients is not universal."

The President of the Canadian Council of Retirees, Bill Corns, said in a *Toronto Star* interview on May 7, "This is the start of the end of universality and an introduction of a means test."

So there you have it. Everyone who looks at the clawback provisions believes that this government is putting an end to universal social programs. If the clawback provision goes through, what is there to stop this government from attacking other universal programs? We have already seen changes to the unemploy-

ment insurance system which threatens universality. What's next? Medicare? Canada Pension? Who knows?

Within 10 years close to one million Canadian families who currently receive family allowances or old age security pensions will begin to lose their benefits due to the partial indexing of the 50 per cent threshold. It is estimated that by the year 2000 the threshold will fall to the equivalent of $35,000 in today's dollars. By the time the baby boom generation reaches retirement most will have to repay their benefits under the clawback provision.

Furthermore, once Canadians accept the principle of the clawback provision as part of our system, there is nothing to stop the government from setting the threshold as it sees fit.

Canadians do not support the clawback provision and they will never accept it. Canadians are prepared to share the burden of deficit reduction. However, they are not prepared to carry the burden alone.

My constituents want to see responsible government spending. They do not tolerate the millions of dollars spent to promote the goods and services tax. My constituents believe, as I do, that universal social programs are a right of citizenship. As the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition stated to this House on October 11, it is part of the social contract in return for a lifetime of contribution to our community.

Reducing the deficit on the backs of senior citizens is unfair and it is downright criminal. I myself have a large seniors population in my riding, senior citizens make up 18 per cent of the population of Kenora—Rainy River. I have been inundated with calls and letters opposing this measure. Senior citizens are telling me that they are living in fear for their future. They see their incomes reduced as a result of higher taxes. Not only is the government taking away what they have spent their lives working for, it is imposing a 9 per cent tax on goods and services. Senior citizens are having to live on a tighter budget because of reduced buying power.

Senior citizens in Kenora—Rainy River are worried that further erosion of their benefits and increased taxes will mean that the rest of their lives will be spent in poverty. Many of them remember the depression years and wonder if they will have to relive that time in 1989.

The clawback provision is also extremely discriminatory. It attacks one income families like no other measure. A family with two incomes, each earning less than $50,000 will not have to repay any family allowance benefits. However, a single income family with two children earning $56,000 a year will see its family allowance benefits clawed back. Where is the fairness in this? I think the clawback provision will have the most devastating effect on single parent families earning over $50,000 per year. That sounds like a lot of money but when you have children and are on your own, I do not think that is a whole lot of money in today's world. There are more expenses in a single parent family than in a two parent families.

I was speaking with a constituent of mine over the weekend who is a single parent with two children. One child is in grade two and the other child is a preschooler. My constituent has a net income of $54,000 per year. That sounds like a lot of money. Her job requires that she attend meetings in the evening and on occasion she must travel on weekends. My constituent pays for child care services during the day for her preschooler and babysitting fees in addition for her grade two child after school. On top of that she must pay additional babysitting fees in the evenings when she has meetings and on weekends when she must travel. She is faced with higher transportation costs as a result of driving her children around.

Given that she is a single parent, she must also take time off work when there are functions at the school or when her children are sick. The family allowance benefits she receives every month have helped her to defray some of these costs. They at least cover some of the gas expenses for her car. Why should she have her benefits clawed back? She is already paying taxes on the family allowance benefits she receives through the income tax system. My constituents looks at the clawback provision and she worries about her family's future.

She has worked extremely hard to provide her young children with a good family life. She is dedicated to providing her family with a secure future. Why should my constituent be discriminated against because she is a

single parent? Why should she be penalized for working hard at providing her children with a financially secure environment?

The goods and services tax will further erode her income. She told me that the clawback of her family allowance benefits, combined with the goods and services tax and higher personal income taxes, will mean a net reduction of some 6 per cent in her income. She does not see these measures as a fair distribution of the burden, nor do we on this side of the House. These measures discriminate against seniors and against families.

• (1810)

The government must withdraw the clawback provisions of old age security benefits and family allowances. Our Canadian senior citizens and families must be treated equally and fairly. The universality of our social programs must be preserved as a sacred trust. I ask the members opposite to consider that before they put this very discriminatory legislation into law.

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to participate in tonight's marathon session. I was assuming I was going to start nine minutes from now but my neighbour to the west surprised me.

I want to start by reflecting on events that led up to all of us being here. As I look at the clock I think back to what I was doing this time 365 days ago. I was in the final poll on election night working to pull out the voters to make sure their votes counted, getting them to the ballot box. I say that in terms of reflecting on why we are here tonight under the imposition of closure, why we are debating a piece of legislation that we believe fundamentally changes this country and the manner in which it is operated.

I want to take you back in time to March 7, 1984 when the then-to-be Prime Minister said, and this was recorded in a CP wire story, "Our position is simple and straightforward. We are in favour of universality of social programs and it shall not be touched."

Then after four years of majority government, on the election trail once again the Prime Minister, in Summerside, an interesting location in which to make pronouncement about the future, told senior citizens this:

> Let me say a special word to the senior citizens. In the future Canada will be doing more, not less, for all of you. As long as I am Prime Minister of Canada social benefits, especially those for the elderly, will be improved, not diminished, by our government which is committed to social justice and fairness to Canadians.

Here we are a year to the date of the eve of the election. A year ago at eight o'clock the polls closed, returned the Conservatives with less of a majority, but a majority albeit. And what has happened to the promises? Tonight is a prime example. We are debating a bill that eliminates universality for our old age pensions and for our family allowances. How does it do that? It does it by clawing back those universal benefits at a certain threshold; in terms of the old age security at $50,000.

You may ask what is wrong with that. Two things. First of all, the whole point of universality is the minimization of the bureaucracy required to administer such a scheme. It means that every Canadian who reaches that magic age qualifies. It is much easier, much more efficient, and much more cost effective, dare I use that phrase, to have everybody on the list rather than establishing some sort of means test, whether it is tied into the income tax system or through specific applications or what have you. It is much more efficient in terms of the cost of delivering that service.

I do not have the figures with me, but I can give you the ranges of an answer to an order paper question provided to me by the Conservative government in, I believe, 1985 or 1986. I asked what was the cost of delivering those income support programs. I was amazed to find that the most efficient income support program, the cheapest per hundred dollars to get a hundred dollar cheque into the hands of a Canadian citizen, was old age security, including the income supplement. It was down around 32 cents per $100. Family allowance was not too far away from that. But then we get into the real heavy ones, the ones that this government likes to attack, such as unemployment insurance, with all of its checks and balances. It was up around $8 or $9 per $100 to deliver.

When I checked with the local welfare officials of the city of Thunder Bay, it was $13 per $100 to deliver that service. Workers Compensation in Ontario was around $18.

Just from the aspect of efficiency, let alone the humanity involved, it makes much more sense to have a universal program than one that is selective.

There is another reason, and that is why we pride ourselves as a nation on treating all of our people, as much as possible, in the same way. By providing every senior with the full benefit of his or her pension, or every family with the full benefit of the family allowance, we are making a statement to the world. We are saying that we care about our citizens. We as a society are prepared to assist those who have less than we do. That is extremely important. It is also important that we recognize the value of those programs. Yes, there are people, both seniors and families who "don't need the extra money".

Old age security and family allowance are already part of the income tax system. If you make more money, you pay more money back into the system, and that is only fair. So what is happening to seniors in this case, in terms of the clawback, is double taxation. The same thing for families. It is not as if they are getting a free ride. It is not as if they are getting the full benefit of the income support. They are paying their fair share based on their ability to pay. That is the way it should be.

Let us go back to the promises made by this government time and time again. Before the election, government members used words like "sacred trust" and "supportive universality", all those very nice phrases that brought warmth to the heart. They were all lies. There was clearly no intention whatsoever of fulfilling them. The Minister of Finance, a few days before the election a year ago, said that all our promises are spending commitments. We have money to pay for it. Lo and behold, all of a sudden we do not have any money to pay for then. We do not have money for VIA Rail. Where is the child care program that was promised for the day after they got re-elected? We will bring in a child care program, they said.

• (1820)

Well, it is a year and no child care program. That is the kind of government we have in power in Canada these days, a government that has no qualms whatsoever of saying one thing to people before the election and not only just not doing it after the election, but doing the opposite. The attack on universality, the attack on VIA Rail, the lack of child care policies, the attack on unemployment insurance, the attack on post-secondary education, where again the Prime Minister promised that we would do better than ever before. What do we find? We find cuts, reductions of transfer payments to the provinces that can least afford to lose the money.

Perhaps it is okay for me to be from Ontario and say, "We're okay. We can afford it." But in some of the prairie provinces, and specifically the Atlantic provinces, the only hope is the human resource and access to higher education so that they can go on to build a better life for all of us. But no, this government is cutting funding in that area as well.

That is not why the Conservatives were elected to govern this country. People believed them when they said they had enough money to live up to their commitments, that the deficit was no longer a problem, that they had it managed, it was under control. I have to wonder how it can be under control on the eve of November 20, 1988, and then two days later, after the dust settles, it is chaos, it is a major crisis, that we need to reconsider everything that we have committed ourselves to. They never did use the word "promise", maybe because people have a great suspicion about promises. Maybe they do not think that promises will be kept. But when the finance minister, supported by the Prime Minister, says that these are commitments, we have the money in the bank to pay for these, people say, "Maybe this time they are going to live up to it, maybe they really mean what they say".

We have seen over the last year that there was never any intention to live up to those commitments, that this government had a very specific agenda. As the current Minister for International Trade once said, "If we told you what we were going to do, you would never elect us, you would never vote for us". For all of his failings, the hon. minister is a very honest man. He tells it like it is. When we said, "Look what he is saying, you had better listen to him", people said, "Oh, no, no, no, he doesn't know what he is talking about." The government said, "No, he doesn't know what he is talking about. We are going to live up to our commitments".

The commitments have not been lived up to. The people of Canada have been sold out. They gave their vote to a particular party but were really robbed of it because they expected something in exchange. They certainly did not get what they expected. That is very unfortunate because that taints all of us.

In this House we are partisans. Whether it is between the Conservatives and the New Democrats or the New Democrats and the Liberals, we pick at each other because that is the nature of our parliamentary system. But those kind of lies fundamentally undermine the political parties and the system in this country because people will look at us and say, "Well, if we can't trust them how are we going to trust you folks? What makes you say that you will be any different?" My answer of course is, "Try us, and if you don't like us then you can boot us out too", which I hope the people of Canada will do to the hon. members opposite. It seems that the government cannot be straightforward with the people of Canada and this really bothers me.

Let me return for about five minutes, if my clock reads correctly—as you know, Madam Speaker, I have had some disputes with the clock in this House over time, but never in terms of five-minute spans and not with you but with one of the gentlemen who sits in that chair, has knees like mine, but was able to play football a lot better than I was.

In terms of the clawback itself, the Minister of Finance says it will have a minimal effect on Canadian individuals and families. He may believe that. For example, he claims that only 4.3 per cent of seniors will be paying back part or all of their pensions, with 54,000 individuals paying back all of their OAS and 74,000 paying back a part of it. On family allowances, he claims that only 14 per cent of families will be affected; 368,000 of them mind you, paying back all of their family allowance and 167,000 paying back a part of it.

The important thing to note, though, is that that is for this year. That figure is going to go up rapidly year by year so that more and more retirees will end up repayng their pensions and more and more famlies will repay all of their family allowances.

Here is how it works. The income level at which the clawback starts will move upwards according to the same deindexing formula that exists in the tax system, i.e., inflation minus 3 per cent. This means that if you assume an inflation rate of 4.5 per cent, which I think is about where we are at right now, the income limit will move up by only 1.5 per cent a year. A worker earning $40,000 a year and watching his or her income rise with inflation will be earning enough to put his income over the clawback level for family allowances of $56,309 by 1997.

When we think about that, that still seems like a lot of money. But I can tell you that when I was earning $20,000 at Parks and Rec a number of years ago, having started at $6,000 a few years before, $20,000 was quite a significant sum of money. So we have to recognize what inflation does and what wage increases do over time. Ultimately, hundreds of thousands of people will be affected by the clawback. People who are working now expecting to retire in 25 years will be included and they will have a healthy level of income according to 1989 dollars but it will be eaten away so that more and more Canadians will be caught by this big claw.

It will come to a point where more people will not get it than people who will get it. That is one of the other reasons why we fundamentally oppose the concept of the clawback, because of its impact on the social services program, the income support programs of this country.

Mr. Thacker: How many budgets will there be by then?

Mr. Angus: My hon. friend asks how many budgets. Well, perhaps he would like to make another promise. Am I hearing him suggest that the government will reinstate this at the next budget, or promise at the next election to reinstate it and become the defenders by saying, we have money now, we found some extra cash and we can afford this again?

You do not tamper with the income support programs. There are other things you can do. You can lower interest rates, save a billion and a half dollars for every point. You could increase employment. Every 1 per cent employment increase leads to a $2 billion influx into the federal treasury.

Mr. Thacker: How do you do that?

Mr. Angus: You work at it. You do not leave it to the private sector, you do not leave it to the Americans. They are just going to buy up our companies and move them into the states like they are doing now.

The first thing we do is to defeat the Conservative government and put in a government that cares about people.

• (1830)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur): Madam Speaker, I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to join the debate on Bill C-28.

Still, Madam Speaker, I can hardly say I am pleased to take part in a debate on a legislative measure which strikes at the basic principle of the universality of Canada's social programs.

Besides, the government is going after elderly people and families when it launches such an attack against old age pensions and family allowances. Only a callous government would so mistreat seniors and Canadian families.

Madam Speaker, you will certainly ask me how the government goes about attacking all these people. Well, let me explain. This bill includes 59 amendments to the Income Tax Act, 59 amendments which signal the demise of social programs of which Canadians are so proud.

The principle of universality was adopted so that all Canadians would be treated the same way and to create such a feeling of belonging to the community as would make it possible for all Canadians to share the riches of their country and be entitled to certain benefits.

This Bill marks the end of all that. No more universality, no more social justice, no more equity in Canada. This is the beginning of the end for this government.

Yes, Madam Speaker, the beginning of the end for this government which in 1986 began to levy a special income surtax which it described as being temporary. Well, surtaxes are still with us. They went up, from 3 to 5 per cent. Talk about nerve, Madam Speaker.

As to the family allowances and old age pensions clawback provisions contained in this bill, they only confirm the fact that the government has gone too far and driven one more nail into its own coffin. The Prime Minister told us in 1984 that social programs were a sacred trust which was untouchable. He repeated the same thing in 1988. Now this legislative measure tells us that the Prime Minister did not keep his word and that he is heartless. The Prime Minister and his heartless government have given us umpteen examples of their insensitivity towards Canadians. They once assured us that VIA Rail passenger transport services were extremely important and that they would be maintained at any cost. Yet not so long ago we learned that VIA services would be cut by one half.

Madam Speaker, the government's unemployment insurance reform is a sure sign of its insensitivity: henceforth Canadian workers will simply have to accept shorter benefit periods and pay for training programs.

Canadians in a number of communities will also have to accept the fact that they no longer have access to their own post offices.

Madam Speaker, the new tax on goods and services, the deplorable condition of infrastructures throughout the country, the reduction of funds earmarked for regional development—I will not mention them all—are as many concrete examples of the heartlessness of this government.

Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister told us on many occasions that social programs were a sacred trust, but what he says and what he does are two different things.

The obvious danger when one begins to tamper with the principle of universality of social programs is that the whole thing hangs in the balance. When they reduce the rates to the minimum, they give themselves the power to reduce them even further. Then it becomes difficult to know who is entitled to benefits, where to draw the line, and who will be in a position to decide which of our fellow citizens most need assistance.

[*English*]

Bill C-28 shows us that the government does not care about seniors. It does not care about Canada's social net. It does not care about the needs of the regions and it does not care about students. This bill puts an end to universality.

The National Council of Welfare in the annual report which it tabled last month claimed that this clawback puts an end to universality. It strongly urged the government to abandon its clawback proposals.

The National Council of Welfare is a citizens' advisory group appointed by cabinet to advise the government on

matters of social policy. The council's annual report strongly decries the government for its harsh policies.

This National Council of Welfare has claimed that the move away from universal benefits is the most significant change in social policy in a generation and that the Minister of Finance announced this change in the last budget speech with no prior consultation.

The Council further reported that the federal government had publicly rejected the idea of a clawback or surtax on old age pensions as late as January 1985 on the grounds that it would seriously disrupt the retirement income system. The government is now changing the rules of the game without obtaining the consent of Canadian seniors. Does the government not understand that these people have already paid for their old age pensions through a lifetime of hard work and paying taxes?

In the case of family allowances, the National Council of Welfare made it very clear when it said that the clawback discriminates against one-earner families because it is based on individual net income. For instance, a one-earner family with two children and a net income of $56,000 would lose all its family allowance benefits. On the other hand, a family with two incomes where one spouse earns $45,000 and the other $35,000 would escape the clawback despite the fact that they are making a total of $80,000.

Is that what you would call fair? Is that what Canadians have come to expect from their government? Will the rich keep getting richer and the poor sink further and further below the poverty line? As long as this government is in power, the answer is clear. This is a government that does not care for this country and its traditions. It is deliberately undermining the social fabric of the Canadian federation. How much longer will families and seniors have to put up with this type of government?

The National Council of Welfare does not stand alone in its criticism of this legislation. The Senior Citizens' Federation has also claimed that the clawback is biased, grossly inequitable and that it seriously undermines the principle of universality.

In a letter to the Prime Minister, the President of the Seniors' Federation, Mr. Les Batterson said with respect to this policy: "We view this proposal as a serious breach of faith by our government, an insidious effort to undercut the social security programs that you have on numerous occasions stated are a sacred trust".

Mr. Batterson also added later in his letter: "We are also aware that we had previous deficits as serious as the present one and the government of the day did not tax back pensions to which Canadians had every reason to believe they had the genuine right."

The present government has often claimed that the deficit imposes an unfair burden on future generations; that the deficit indeed is larger than what some economists believe. Indeed, it has cut many programs which were vital to the future of this country in its efforts to reduce this deficit. With this mean-spirited legislation, it is now taxing back the pension benefits of those who worked hard to build this country, and it is reducing family allowances, all in the name of reducing the deficit.

• (1840)

However, despite the Prime Minister's constant rhetoric about the need for budgetary restraint and the downsizing of government, Treasury Board estimates show that his own Privy Council Office budget will jump almost $5 million. It will go up to $59.1 million in the next fiscal year and its staff will increase from 579 to 591.

What is sauce for the goose should also be sauce for the gander. How can the Prime Minister preach budgetary restraint to everyone while increasing his own budget? Moreover, how can the Prime Minister justify attacking the families and seniors of this country in order to achieve his aims?

To all intents and purposes Bill C-28 spells the end for universality of social programs. The Canadian Council on Social Development has said that the government is eroding the fundamental principle of universality which requires the collective responsibility of caring for children and seniors. It is doing so by withdrawing family allowance benefits from approximately 368,000 families and by eliminating old age benefits from 54,000 seniors. Furthermore, it will be reducing the amount of these benefits for many other families and seniors.

What the Conservative government is doing to this country is unimaginable. Over the next five years the clawback of family allowances will withdraw $1.68 billion from family budgets. This means that $500 million a year will be withheld from these families. That is outrageous.

These families cannot afford this kind of loss or reduction in their incomes.

In conclusion, I would like to say that every organization representing families and seniors in this country has said that the government is eliminating universality. If the government had been really honest, it would during the last election campaign have told everyone that it would end universality, that it would gut VIA Rail and that it would cut unemployment insurance benefits. If this government had had the courage to clearly spell out its intentions before the Canadian people it would not be standing where it is today. The Canadian people would not have elected a government which knew that it would be bringing down these Draconian policies.

Finally, a government which claims that the deficit imposes an unfair burden on future generations should ask itself whether the imposition of substandard education and health services, dilapidated transportation and communication infrastructure which will inevitably result in this fixation with the deficit does not impose an unfair burden on future generations.

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina—Lumsden): Madam Speaker, I rise with more than mixed feelings. The definition of "mixed feelings" is watching your banker go over a cliff in your new car.

I want to say that the basic principle of universality is that it is universal—there are no ifs, ands, or buts, no qualifications, no hestitations. There used to be measures in the Criminal Code, I do not know if they are still there or not, concerning perverts and perversion. If there ever was a perversion of the principle of universality, this is it. You cannot have it both ways. It is either universal and people get it as a matter of right or you snoop into all their private affairs, their incomes and so forth and withhold some or all of it because in the view of the government of the day, no matter what political stripe, that is more than they need or more than they should get.

There is a basic flat in all of this, and I will repeat myself, it is either universal or it is not. If the government wanted to be completely honest, it would say that universality should be scrapped or severely amended so that anyone getting more than so much does not get it or not all of it. No, it does not have the courage of its convictions to do that.

All my working life I think I have tried hard to make my contribution to my country in the various occupations I have been in, on the railroad, working for my party, as a member of Parliament, working for some farmers, that sort of thing. I have paid my taxes. During the late 1940s, the 1950s and the 1960s, I believe even into the early 1970s, when you made out your income tax there was an item stating "Old Age Security Fund". I believe, certainly back in the 1950s and 1960s it was 3 per cent. It varied from around 2 per cent, 3 per cent or 4 per cent. I paid for the darn thing.

Madam Speaker, this is a confession. I am going to put in my application this month for my old age pension. I do not look like I should be doing it. I do not act like it. I did not know whether to laugh or cry when I was making out the application.

I spent all these years earning my old age security pension. It is not all that much. It might come to $4,000 a year. I am not sure. But I spent all my working life earning it, and my fellow Canadians who could not earn it were also entitled to it. My fellow Canadians who did not need it were entitled to it and got it because it was universal, pure and simple.

I will never forget a fellow that I fought against—and I fought against his party for a lot of years—Louis St. Laurent. At that time we had not reduced the retirement age to 65, it was at 70. Mr. St. Laurent was Prime Minister of Canada. He had a sort of semi-public ceremony at which the press were present to receive his first old age pension cheque to emphasize the universal principle of old age assistance pensions. Whether or not you needed it, it was universal.

I also will never forget when my honoured colleague, Stanley Knowles, reached the age of 65. That is a long time ago, but then I have been here a fair while. Arthur Laing from British Columbia was the Minister of Public Works. We had a party for Stanley downstairs in Room 112 North. Arthur presented him with his first old age security pension cheque. He guaranteed him that the Government of Canada, no matter of what political stripe, would ever consider that a conflict of interest—after all the years of fighting Stanley did for pensioners.

• (1850)

Before I got the opportunity to speak in this debate, I made it a point to read the letter that Mackenzie King sent to J. S. Woodsworth in, I think it was, 1924 or 1926, somewhere in there. It was a minority Parliament. In the letter he guaranteed that the government would bring in the first old age pension and unemployment insurance. Reading Canadian history and listening to old timers in my party, there were only two of them left, Woodsworth and A. A. Heaps, Woodsworth got up and said: "Mr. Speaker, I welcome this. On behalf of my group we will support this measure." It was $20 a month at age 70 with a means test. A. A. Heaps got up and said: "Mr. Speaker, I support my leader. He's the leader and I'm the group."

The long history of the efforts of people in this country enabled us to arrive at just where we are now, people of all political persuasions, of every kind of group you could think of in this nation. We finally got to it.

Let me give you an example, Madam Speaker. I refer to someone who gets a company pension after 25, 35, 45 or whatever number of years of work of, say, $45,000 or $50,000 a year to which they contributed tens of thousands of dollars, but had been allowed to deduct the contributions from their income tax. When they drew the pension, they would have to pay income tax on it. It was the same with the Canada Pension, which I think is a good deal. It could still use some improving, but it is a good deal, especially for the younger people.

If you add the two together you are looking at $52,000, $54,000 or $55,000 a year gross pension from employment pension and Canada Pension. I have done some calculating. A person in that category will pay somewhere between $15,000 and $17,000 income tax on those two pensions, plus a clawback of some or all of their old age pension.

I suppose people like us from the NDP are not noted for supporting the wealthy. I suspect we have some reputation, depending on your point of view whether it is good or bad. You pay on a basic, fundamental principle based on ability to pay. Nobody is complaining about what you will pay on your company pension or your Canada Pension. That is perfectly proper. But on something that is supposed to be universal, to tax back some or all of it from people who, for all of their working lives, or even if they weren't working got it as a matter of fundamental right as a Canadian citizen, a basic right which has been established since the 1920s, brings me back to the whole question of perversion.

If someone is making $75,000, 100,000 or $1 million a year, I do not care what the amount, you get them to pay their share through some other way, but old age security and the family allowance are inviolable. I repeat, they are either universal or they are not. The government had better make up its mind and say: "We are no longer going to have universal pensions". I know there are some who say, both in this House and outside: "No use giving them the universal pensions, they do not need it". That immediately denies the principle of universality.

The other thing is something that is going to affect me and many hon. members of this House when we are no longer here, either because we get defeated or retire, but we will leave that aside. We cannot say that we are suffering. But for tens of thousands of people earning the amounts I mentioned earlier, they will be lucky if they net $30,000 a year. One is not going to live very high off the hog on that, not in this day and age. That is only about $6,000 or $7,000 above the poverty level. The government wants to start a clawback on old age pensions or family allowances when these people's net pay is around the $30,000 mark. This flies in the face of any kind of reason and decency. For my hon. friend who is sitting there and not paying attention, I want to say it even flies in the face of Christian decency.

The other thing that is scary and worrisome is this. What is to prevent this government or a succeeding government of the same or a different political stripe from saying: "Well, we think the $50,000 is too high, let us make it $40,000, and apply that to both the Old Age Security pension and family allowances"? What is to prevent any government, now or later, once the principle of universality is betrayed and perverted from saying: "Well, if your income is over a certain amount, then you have to pay half of your own hospital bills and doctor bills"? What is to prevent the government if your income is over $50,000, or whatever amount is set by the government of the day, from saying: "Your kid is going to university and your income is over that amount, you're

going to pay half, three-quarters or all of the cost of that university education"? This flies in the face of any kind of decent reasoning.

There are other ways for the government to recover more than what it loses in income taxes or clawbacks out of the old age pension. There are many ways to do it. I can make a few suggestions. We keep getting asked by the Minister of Finance: "What is your alternative?". How about a 10 per cent tax on deferred corporation taxes? That will bring in nearly $4 billion a year, and it is nearly four points below the current interest rate.

• (1900)

How about closing some loopholes in income tax, both for individuals and for corporations, which are totally out of date compared to when they were brought out? How about restoring the corporate tax rate to what it was in 1984? That is worth $4 billion to $5 billion a year. I have not noticed corporations passing their production and their goods on to us consumers at lower prices. All that has happened is that they kept the money. That is all that has happened.

I recall a famous occasion in the 1950s when the government of that day decided to take the 10 per cent sales tax off drugs. There was great fanfare as that was going to mean lower drug prices. It did not mean lower prices; it meant higher prices. The drug companies kept the money. They did not reduce their prices a nickel.

I return to my main argument. The government has to decide and tell the people of Canada that it is no longer a universal program. Don't give me this nonsense about we are going to send everybody a cheque and then tax some or all of it back. That is the perverted part of it. It then becomes not universal.

I do not understand. I guess all political parties are guilty of this: The longer they are in, the harder they work at losing. Far be it from me to advise Conservatives how to stay in power. This is another one of those idiotic, unreasoning, nonsensical attempts by the government to pay the country's bills. I am not objecting to that. There is no one in the NDP caucus objecting to us making extraordinary efforts to pay our bills, debts, and our current deficit. No problem. That is not the argument. The argument is: how do you go about collecting the money and how do you go about paying off and reducing the debt and the deficit?

I want to remind my hon. friends that at the end of the Second World War the national debt or the annual deficit translated into 1989 dollars was almost double what it is now, and we paid it off. We had relatively full employment. We did not have nearly so many tax loopholes, and we paid it off. We did nothing more than learn some lessons from our own experience in our own nation, that what we did before we could do again even better. There were other ways of doing it. By the way, not a nickel of the national debt at the end of the Second World War came from outside of Canada. We did the whole thing ourselves, and we paid off that deficit and that debt. By 1955 it was paid.

We do not have to claw back on the backs of old age pensioners and families with children, no matter what is their income. We must keep it universal and collect it some other way from those with higher incomes. Do not mess around. Do not try to destroy something that people of all political faiths since the 1920s have supported and agreed to. It is the only decent, civilized thing to do. It is for the government to say: "All right, we will withdraw this one. We will bring in some other measures to get the same amount of money". In that event we would likely support it.

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Madam Speaker, I must say I am delighted to have the opportunity to speak tonight on this bill. I have heard many speeches in the House today on the subject of Bill C-28. There certainly seems to be a general theme, and the theme seems to concern all the speakers with about the same amount of amplitude.

We all know that Bill C-28 makes 59 different amendments to the Income Tax Act, implementing many of the budget provisions. Now it is not possible, of course, to speak on all these. There are some that concern me more than others.

I want to set a scenario which is perhaps a slightly different approach than some of the previous speakers have taken this evening. I do this with cognizance of the fact that aspects of the clawback are of concern to seniors as are the deindexation factor and the misrepresentation, if I can call it that. However, it is important to set the the stage by mentioning some of the things that

are going on in my riding right now against which people judge these 59 changes.

I have a situation now in which the telephone virtually has not stopped ringing in my riding. I just took some calls a few moments ago when I was talking with my constituency office. Literally the phone is just ringing off the hook. People who are listening to the speeches in the House of Commons tonight and watching them on television are concerned about these changes in the Income Tax Act. They are concerned about many of the things that we have talked about here. It is so important to understand what their basic concerns are at this point in time, and to understand that I have to tell the House about my riding.

If not the largest fishing riding in Canada, my riding is certainly one of the largest where 85 per cent of the employment comes from the fishing industry. A month before Christmas, and we are now concerned, literally, that people have bread on their table and a cup of tea to drink.

I am referring to the emergency response job development program recently announced by the Minister of Employment and Immigration. I cannot tell you the number of people who will not qualify under that program although they have been employed in the fishing industry all their working lives, 15 to 20 years. Because of the criteria that has been set up it is not possible for them to qualify to get unemployment insurance under the job development programs. Because of the stringencies in the requirements and the inability right now of the bureaucracy to review those people they cannot fall directly under the criteria.

It is all very well to talk about the income tax changes and about all the difficulties we are going to have with clawbacks, deindexation and family allowances, but it is against the backdrop of people who will not have any money in their pockets to buy Christmas presents for their children, to make a Christmas cake, or to feed themselves when Christmas day comes. That is not a very nice thought as we talk about those issues in the House today.

While I feel it is incumbent upon me as a member for Bonavista—Trinity—Conception to talk about Bill C–28, my major concern today and for this week is to get some kind of redress against the stringent criteria that has been set up and the lack of review process that has not been going on, although the Minister of Employment and Immigration in fact stated in her press release that it would go on.

• (1910)

Let me talk just a little bit about the clawback. The clawback does a number of things, but what it does more than anything else is remove the rug from under the faith that Canadians have in what their politicians say and what their politicians from all sides of the House promise them during election time.

The right hon. Leader of the Opposition and several members here in the House tonight reminded us of a lady by the name of Solange Denis who was so concerned about deindexation and a promise that was made which was not being kept that she became, if not a heroine, somebody who represented the concerns of the seniors in Canada.

In my riding there are around 10,000 senior citizens, all of whom either watched that or heard about it. They believe that what she did was so responsible and so representative of their feelings that even as I was campaigning last fall and I mentioned her name people remembered who she was. They remembered that television clip of that lady standing in front of the House of Commons and making a statement to her Prime Minister that she was being let down.

Common sense prevailed and deindexation was, we thought, forgotten about. The Prime Minister of the day said that universality was something that they would not have to worry about. They were going to make sure that these programs were universal, but our finance minister announced the clawback mechanism in his April 1989 budget which effectively ends universality.

The family allowance program and the old age security is paid to everyone now. Everyone receives the benefit regardless of income. Clawback, however, will recover the full amount of the benefit from those earning a certain income through a higher income tax rate. I refer now to clause 48 of Bill C–28 which implements the clawback on family allowance and old age security pensions. The amount of the repayment is equal to 15 per cent of the taxpayers' net income over $50,000.

The Minister of Finance introduced the measure as a deficit reduction device, but the amount to be recovered by the clawback is relatively insignificant when compared to the massive national debt. In fact somebody worked out that the same amount of money that is going to be realized by the clawback could be generated by raising the rate of the top income tax bracket by only 1 per cent,

thereby transferring what benefit this would have to the deficit to high-income earners.

Many view the mechanism as discriminatory since it taxes pensioners and families at a higher rate than others earning the same income. Mr. Speaker, a buck is a buck is a buck. Why should people with families and people drawing old age security pensions be penalized more so than somebody else in a different age bracket or somebody without a family?

They do not understand why and, quite frankly, I cannot explain it to them, particularly since there was a promise made of universality and that these programs would be a sacred trust. I did not want to use that word because I think it is overused, but I have to use it to emphasize the promise that was made to Canadians.

Of greater significance and concern is that over the years more and more pensioners and families will start repaying these benefits. People have put together their savings, they have worked out their RRSPs, and they have worked out their investment programs. While $50,000 may seem like a lot of income for a senior citizen, many of the people in my riding—and I can assure you that there are those who do have that amount from a combination of their pension and their investments—have proceeded on the basis that they would be receiving this income and have projected their whole life after retirement on this assumption. Now they are told that they are going to have to rework the whole system. They are going to have to redo the whole thing. Their whole plan of financing will have to be reworked. The whole business will have to be redone. In other words, they are not getting the income that they had expected or that they had hoped to get.

Partial indexation is responsible. The threshold is now $50,000, but it has been calculated that by the year 2000 it will have fallen to the equivalent of $35,000 in today's dollars. That is 10 years from now. By the time the baby boom generation enters retirement, most of them will have to repay their old age security benefits through the clawback.

Is that fair? I do not think it is fair. I know that many of my colleagues do not think that is fair. I know that other members who are not my political colleagues but whom I have come to know very closely in the last year or so do not believe it is fair. I would suggest that there are many people on the other side of the House who do not believe it is fair either, although I have not heard too many of those this evening. I believe they will have to explain to their senior citizen population and to those who are drawing the family allowance as to why they think it is fair. It is going to be a difficult thing to explain.

In the meantime, once we have accepted the principle of clawback as part of our system, governments of the day are free to set the threshold at any they wish. The principle has how been established. It is $50,000 this year, and we know what will happen by the year 2000 if nothing is changed. But next year, if the government decides that more money is needed to address the budget or for another reason, the threshold could be changed to $45,000, to $40,000, or to $30,000. Who knows? I have not even heard any promises that this threshold will not be breached.

There are also widespread fears that the clawback is the thin edge of the wedge, a wedge that will destroy our much envied universal social programs. This country has been very proud of the way it has treated its senior citizens, certainly over my lifetime.

I know that seniors have been very proud of that. They have spoken to me about it. I know it has been a source of security and pride to senior citizens who have travelled outside the country and compared their lot with seniors in other countries. They have been able to say: "My government is proud of me and I am proud of it because it has been able to provide this universal service to me and it has been able to provide it in an unfettered manner with no strings attached". That is all gone.

History will remember the clawback as the end of universality, and not for what it has done for the deficit. My colleagues and I have been concerned that the government has not held any real public hearings on this issue. We have heard about the goods and services tax. We have heard about legislative committees on Bill C-21 and other legislative committees, but there has not been very much discussion about this issue. There has been a

decision. It has been capped at $50,000 with a 3 per cent limit on deindexing or indexing or whatever you want to call it. It does not look very good for the future as far as seniors are concerned.

Again, I do not know how to say this any more eloquently or with any more colour than I believe that senior citizens have and should have a very special place in all our hearts. Let us face it, if it were not for them a lot of us would not be here today. I would suggest most of us would not be here today. However there is a general feeling that when you reach a certain magic age something magic happens.

That may be the case, but in my riding there are many senior citizens who continue to make a contribution and to do things that they did before they reached the magic age. They do not look at themselves as much different from you and I or anybody in this House. They think they are average people who need to have average chances, who need to have the average opportunity to take advantage of all the programs that are in existence. They do not understand why they have to be made special by having money taken away from them more so than any other segment of society. I cannot go home and explain that to them, and I do not think anybody in this House can.

• (1920)

There is another area that concerns me and that is the income surtax on individual incomes. It has been raised from 3 per cent to 5 per cent and to 8 per cent for high income earners. Clause 47 of this bill raises the surtax on personal incomes from 3 per cent to 5 per cent. It also raises the surtax to 8 per cent for Canadians whose tax payable is more than $15,000. The minister made the proposal that personal income surtaxes would be a permanent feature of the income tax system. Essentially, what the minister said he was going to do is not what is being done. Therefore we have universality which is not being done and then we have the surtax increments which are not being done. What else is not being done?

Since 1984 this government has increased taxes 31 times. There are 59 clauses in this particular bill now. Canadians have not received the lower income taxes promised. In 1984 and 1985 the federal government collected $29 billion in income taxes from Canadians. This year the government expects to collect over $50 billion in income tax. That is more than 72 per cent in five years. That is a big percentage increase.

The clawback of family allowance will take $1.686 billion out of the family budget in the next five years. That is around $500 million a year by 1991. There must be a better way to look after our deficit financing than hitting the pocketbooks of those individuals who can least afford it, those individuals who having achieved the status of senior citizen should not have it happen to them.

Perhaps I can take you back to the scenario I set earlier this evening, Mr. Speaker, to those people who could not spend all their time in the fishery because of a bad year in 1988. They are being penalized this year because they cannot get the right number of stamps, the right number of weeks to qualify for the emergency response job development program.

Next year, because of the quirk in circumstances unless the Minister of Employment and Immigration does something about it, they will have to work for 20 weeks to qualify. If they cannot find three or six weeks of work in one year, they are not likely to find twenty weeks in the next year.

This is the circumstance in which I find myself as the member for Bonavista—Trinity—Conception. It is the unfortunate position that one has to get up and speak on this, one has to be perforce negative while I tend to be positive. I think you know, Mr. Speaker, that I like to be positive. It is very hard to be positive on Bill C-28 in any or all of its features.

If I could somehow wave a magic wand and cause Bill C-28 to go away, if I could wave a magic wand and have the Minister of Employment and Immigration allow the review to be conducted for those people who cannot get the job development strategy and get the right number of weeks this year, or if I could get all the bureaucrats in her department to carry out a review for these unfortunate people who are on the phone to my office and to me tonight as I speak, I would do so. However I do not know where the magic wands are. I was not issued with one when I became a member of Parliament. I am still looking for it. I am still looking for it. If I had one, I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that tonight I would take my magic wand and I would wave Bill C-28 away. I would wave on the review of those people who cannot get their proper review done. In the same wave of that wand I would restore the universality that has been promised to

our senior citizens, the people whom we should be spending a lot of time thinking about and working for.

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight on the eve of the anniversary of last year's election on November 21. Today is November 20, and I rise to speak on a bill which is very indicative of the kind of bill that this government has brought in since that election victory. This bill is an omnibus bill dealing with a lot of matters related to the changes in acts affected by the spring budget.

It speaks to the kind of deception this government perpetrated on the Canadian public in last year's election campaign. That is why I bring it to your attention on this date, the eve of the anniversary of the election.

This bill deals with the amending of the Income Tax Act, including the clawback of family allowances and old age security pensions. It deals with the Federal–Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Federal Post–Secondary Education and Health Contributions Act. It deals with the Old Age Security Act. It deals with the Public Utilities Income Tax Transfer Act. It deals with the amendments to many of those acts.

Basically it allows for the opportunity to highlight the record of this government in all of these areas. We can speak to the contrast of what government members said during the election campaign and what they have actually done since they were elected. This is the government of deception.

The clawback of family allowances and old age security pensions on incomes of over $50,000 which the government introduced in its May budget and presented in this bill is a major step toward the Americanization of our social programs and the end of universality. This is exactly what Conservatives said they were not going to do. They said that we should not be worried about the trade deal, that it was only a trade deal and we could tear it up if we did not think it was a good deal.

We in the opposition spoke out strongly against the trade deal seeing it in its insidious nature as affecting our social programs. Here it is a year later. The government has invoked closure on this bill to do that, to really erode the universality of our social programs.

The Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister have tried to deny this, but the hon. member for Mississauga South was more honest. In a letter written to an Edmonton man he said: "We have decided to eliminate universality. While the clawback may be unfair and sneaky, it is there." That is the nature of this government, unfair and sneaky in plain words but very descriptive.

For the first portion of my speech tonight I am going to focus on the effects of post–secondary education. I come from the province of British Columbia where we now have our premier in the light of recent events in eastern Europe trotting off to Europe and saying that he wants to get East German skilled labour and bring them back to British Columbia.

Are there not enough British Columbians already quite capable of taking the trades training that will be able to give them the kind of jobs that Mr. Vander Zalm is seeking for them? Federal transfer payments to post–secondary education are being eroded and the Social Credit government in British Columbia with the short–sighted vision of Mr. Vander Zalm thinks it has to bring in immigrant labour from overseas to fill the jobs we have in British Columbia.

• (1930)

Post–secondary education across Canada is being eroded by these cuts to this program under this Bill C–28. Now we spend something like $13,000 on average per student, while in the United States the average expenditure per student is $20,000. This is quite a difference. The Prime Minister promised to make education a high priority with reforms that will generate excellence in education from coast to coast. That was from the Progressive Conservative general meeting in August of this year. At the same time his government's latest budget reflected his real commitment to education as one of the priorities for its second mandate. These transfer payment cuts are going to have a devastating effect across Canada, but particularly in British Columbia where the Social Credit government has the short–sightedness not to put in the kind of funds that are necessary.

I now want to talk about some of the fundamental questions that should be asked when considering this type of legislation. Why should an individual be entitled to receive $100,000 in capital gains tax free but lose the $4,000 he or she will get in Old Age Security simply because it was paid as the universal social benefit? I am pointing out that if you get $100,000 through capital gains you are not taxed on it. But if you get it as part of a

pension you will have to pay $4,000. It is an erosion of the universality of our social programs.

The government members chided New Democrats for looking after the wealthy by voicing our concerns on this bill. What we are talking about is the fundamental injustice of this bill. Mr. Blenkarn said it was unfair and sneaky. Those are the words that we will have to keep in mind in the final hours of this debate.

The family allowance and the old age security are already taxed in Canada. Why should a special tax be levied on children and the elderly? If the intention is to raise money from the rich why not do it through a more progressive tax system? I know that is the kind of thinking that is somewhat offensive to this government in its current bid to get the GST pushed through. Why not raise marginal rates at the top of the income tax bracket to 32 per cent instead of taxing back family allowances and Old Age Security? Either method would raise about $600 million in 1991. Why not restore the 1987 top rate to 34 per cent and raise $2 billion? The highest income group in Canada has its marginal tax rate cut from 43 per cent to 34 per cent in 1981 and to 29 per cent in 1987.

For middle-income earners the marginal tax rate has remained almost constant in spite of so-called tax reform. We on this side realize that the government must gain revenue especially in light of the trade deal when $13 billion in tariffs was lost through this government's signing of the trade deal. We realize that there have to be taxes. We are just questioning whether or not they should be coming from the same people, the low and middle-income earners, families and old-age pensioners. What will the unique identity of Canada mean in a few years when our social programs exist to serve only those in need. Won't our social programs be just like those in the US, leaner and meaner?

I had the privilege of travelling with the external affairs committee last week in New York and Washington. I saw on the streets of New York and in the city of Washington evidence of a leaner, meaner social program. There were beggars in the streets with tin cups. These are not just cartoon characters, this is reality.

Up here it is reality as well. This situation will only get worse under this government. How long will the population continue the maintenance of social progress from which they have been effectively excluded as beneficiaries? What we are concerned about here is the kind of erosion of public consent to participate in these programs. If it is only to be the low income earners who are the beneficiaries, why should the middle income earners contribute to them? We have a voluntary compliance system of taxation in our country. So far this government's policy, in this budget, through Bill C-28, and with its goods and services tax proposed legislation, is eroding that. What we are going to see are taxpayers very seriously trying avoidance schemes. This will have a real impact on the attitude of those who are recipients of social programs.

Social programs have been paid for. Old age pensioners have paid for this. They have been taxed on their income. Now they are having it clawed back under this bill. Will need be redefined downwards as it has been in Britain, or in the U.S., as it already has been in our unemployment insurance and welfare programs?

If the essence of universality is destroyed through the back door, what is to protect medicare from the same attack? We see the insidious nature of this government, the kind of deception in what it promised last November 20, and what it is doing this November 20. It is like night and day. I think this also speaks to a real lack of trust if this government is allowed to get away with the lies it has told Canadians on this and other issues. What effect will it have on the cynicism Canadians already feel toward politicians of all stripes?

I think that will have implications on our whole political system. I do not want to dramatize this overly, but it is a concern. It is the kind of cynicism that is everywhere throughout this country and it does not necessarily relate to whether it is a member of Parliament or the alderperson or the member of the legislature who is doing a good job. That, of course, has an impact, but the people do not trust politicians. One wonders why. But contrast what was said last November 20 and see where we are today. We are putting forth all the things that the government said it was not going to do.

There is no question that this clawback puts an end to universality. The National Council on Welfare which is a federal government advisory group is saying there is no

question but that the clawback puts an end to universality. This report was made to government entitled "The 1989 Budget and Social Policy" and states: "A social program that delivers benefits to everyone and then collects them all back from some recipients is not universal". I know that sometimes it is a difficult concept for some of the members opposite to understand when they say that it does not have an effect on universality. But when you give to some and take it away from some, that is an effect on universality.

The clawbacks are designed to save the federal government about $500 million a year. The savings would then be used to reduce the deficit rather than increase the benefits for low-income parents and seniors.

The National Council on Welfare has taken a page out of the New Democratic books and would prefer to see the government raise taxes for upper income people generally rather than having the heaviest burden on upper income parents and upper income seniors. Alternatives to clawbacks that are outlined in the report would save the government $2 billion a year, rather than $500 million.

• (1940)

I think we should also point out that this is a government that gives a lot of lip service in support of the family. While it gets a lot of Brownie points for those nice words, this bill erodes the whole concept of the family.

In the case of parents, the clawback discriminates against one-earner families because it is based on individual net income. A one-earner family with two children and a net income of $56,000 would lose all of its family allowance benefits. A two-earner couple where one spouse earns $45,000 and the other $35,000 would escape the clawback despite their combined income of $80,000.

Now, as I said, this government does give a lot of lip service to the support of families and about the way children should be raised, that women should stay home and look after their children rather than going out into the workforce. Well, here is a real slap in the face, because it is penalizing families which do that very thing. That kind of inconsistency is a bit galling to say the least.

I would like also to talk about the complexity of this bill regarding the child benefit system. After the clawback there will be four types of families receiving family allowance: Those keeping all of the family allowance because they are too poor to owe income tax; those families who keep part of their family allowance because they pay regular income tax on their benefits; those who keep part of their family allowance because they pay regular income tax and the clawback on their benefits and those who pay all of their family allowance back because of the clawback. This is a real distinction and we are talking about universality. It is a joke.

The clawback will erode the principle of horizontal equity. Removing family allowance from families that are better off will put them at greater disadvantage, vis-a-vis, childless couples and singles who have the same income but no child rearing expenses. Once again, this government gives a lot of lip service to the support of the family, but that is all it is, lip service. Its real motivations were very apparent in Bill C-28.

As members of an opposition party we have not only a right, but a duty and an obligation to oppose legislation that we believe is wrong-headed. We also have a duty and an obligation to propose alternatives.

As I said earlier, there is a recognition, even by New Democrats, that the deficit is a problem. We think it is an over stated problem, but if there are ways in which we can help advise these government members on how to address this problem, we are happy to try to contribute to that.

I believe the deficit has been over-sold to Canadians due to the Conservative ideology and the free trade agreement.

Mr. McDermid: The NDP doesn't give a damn about deficits, or debts or anything else.

Ms. Hunter: Lowering the deficit should be a goal of a much broader economic strategy not the only goal. That sort of linear thinking of the government members is apparent by this type of legislation. We have to think of a broader economic strategy. The government member opposite is eager to hear of our alternatives, so I am sure he will be attentive. By proposing alternatives I do so in the spirit of this House. I hope that the government will take some of these suggestions and incorporate them. I have not fallen to the cynicism of some of my constitu-

ents, that we are all here just to pick fights with one another. I think that we are here to contribute.

Canadians deserve a federal budget that responds to our real economic needs such as spreading the near full employment of southern Ontario to our regions. Ultimately, a focus on jobs and fairness will bring down the deficit. I think that should be the real focus of this government, a full employment program and a fair and simpler tax system. Then we would not have the erosion of the universality of our social programs as in this bill.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Madam Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak in this debate tonight, and I may add that tomorrow is the anniversary of the Tory Government's re-election. It was a sad day last year, when the Tory Government came to power for the second time. I am sure you remember that at the time, the Tory Government laughed at the Opposition parties with their various programs and said that Canada could not afford the kind of government being proposed by opposition members and the opposition parties. However, the Tories claimed they had all the funds that were necessary to continue to administer this government. That is what they said. They also said their commitments were not mere campaign promises but were backed with the necessary funds to implement them.

A year ago, it was the day before the election, November 20, 1988, and today it is November 20, 1989. One year later, suddenly the government no longer seems to have the funds it had last year. And to rely on the party's—I beg your pardon, the government's—coffers— I get the words "party" and "government" mixed up, because the Tories have a tendency to confuse the meaning of the two words. So in the light of those facts, Madam Speaker, I am sure you will excuse me for making this mistake, but it is typical of the government opposite, and I am sure that you, as an impartial person, will understand. I am sure you understand what I have to say in this respect.

In any case, one year later, the Tories across the way no longer have any money. No money at all. They have to cut here, they have to cut there, they have to raise taxes for Canadians. None of this was mentioned.

The Tories say they need the money so badly and they are so broke that they have to invoke closure and make members sit during part of the night to get those funds right away. Not bad, for a government that less than a year ago had all the funds it needed to administer this country!

Even if we agreed with the Tories a year ago, we can now conclude that what they offered Canadians was poor government, because all of a sudden they no longer have the funds they claimed to have.

[*English*]

But the sad reality is that the government across the way was not telling Canadians the truth a year ago, and it continues not to tell the truth to the people of Canada. Now, a year ago it was claiming, as I said previously, that it had all the money necessary to administer its own campaign commitments. You see, Madam Speaker, campaign commitments are slightly different from campaign promises. Campaign commitments were the ones made by Tories and campaign promises were the ones made by the opposition during the campaign. The Conservatives identified those differences at that time. They further added that all the funds necessary to administer the programs which they were proposing were completely inside the government's budgetary envelopes and that they were already provided for by the Estimates and so on.

Mrs. Dobbie: I am spellbound.

Mr. Boudria: And I say that to the hon. member across the way. I invite her to pay attention to this because we might ask her questions later. The hon. member will not remember the people last year who were forced to listen to this.

Mr. McDermid: That is the same line I heard you say in the provincial House.

Mr. Boudria: And I hear the minister from Brampton across the way. He reminds me of the fact that I used to sit in the Ontario Legislature at the time that he was Claude Bennett's side kick.

• (1950)

I remember when he used to do that for a living, and now Claude Bennett is no longer in public office—he resigned before he was defeated, which is exactly what would have happened to him. I say to the minister that

he had better listen closely. He and his colleagues should continue to try to administer the Federal Business Development Bank, and listen attentively to what we are saying.

As I was saying before I was provoked, the family allowance is taxable. Thirty per cent of family allowance benefits are already paid back to the government through the progressive income tax system. The government is claiming that we need in addition to this a clawback provision, to snatch back the funds which the taxpayers of Canada have been receiving. It says not to worry, it only applies to rich people right now, only those earning $50,000 a year and so on. It says all those people are rich and can afford to give their money back to the Conservatives. Personally, if I were rich, which I am not, the last people I would want to give my money to are the people across the way. That is another issue and we can discuss it at another time.

The point is that this $50,000 threshold is only partially indexed—hardly at all, as a matter of fact—and will erode to such an extent over the next decade that many people who are considered not to be wealthy at all will then fall into that group of people who will see their pension clawed back by the Conservatives in the unlikely event that the Conservative party will still be in power at the time. I say extremely unlikely, because as we all know the Conservatives will be turfed out of office by then.

The other unfairness is that the proposal would put a special tax on families with children and on seniors, a tax that does not apply to anyone else. One has to wonder why the government wants to attack seniors and families. Is it not bad enough that it has tried to attack everyone with the GST proposal? It had 80 per cent of Canadians displeased with the GST. Some Conservative members looked at this and said to themselves that this was not good enough. They said: "What we should do is try to get unanimity". Do you know how they went about that? They decided to make the other 20 per cent angry, the 20 per cent of the people who are still supporting the GST. Do you know what they did? They put out a trial balloon about taxing existing homes. They sure have unanimity. Now everyone is angry at the Tories, even the few people who previously supported the GST proposal.

Returning to Bill C-28, in which the government has successfully found another way to get a lot of Canadians angry with it, it has invoked a procedure which is most unfair. Let me describe the scenario. For a senior citizen with $70,000 in income, the principle of fairness would suggest that it should not matter whether you get your income from a government pension, the stock market or elsewhere. A $70,000 income should be taxed the same way regardless of from where it comes. After all, a buck is a buck. Why should it be taxed differently if people get money from a pension, stocks, bonds, or anywhere else?

The minister sits in cabinet responsible for many government programs. Why would he, being the reasonable person he no doubt is, want to agree with such a program? I understand the minister from Brampton is agreeing with that, but not our friend from Montreal who is listening to this.

The government clawback provision would single out people who receive family allowances and old age pension cheques for a special tax. Why do the Conservatives across the way want to tax people who receive pensions any more than anyone else? Is it not bad enough that they are taxing everyone, that they would want a special tax grab directly aimed at people getting a pension? Why would they want to do that, other than finding another way to get unanimity, getting 100 per cent of Canadians mad at them again? They are bound to succeed one more time.

They have managed to do it with the GST. It took some creative thinking in those last two weeks to get the 20 per cent of Canadians who still liked the GST upset, but now they have succeeded in doing that. One hundred per cent of Canadians are mad. The Conservatives are going to do the same thing with this clawback provision. They had many Canadians mad at them for their income tax proposals. Now the few people that were not too upset are going to be upset with the implementation of this bill.

That is why we in the Official Opposition have stood for Canadians. We have contested these measures. We have indicated to the people of Canada that we do not like this bill and that we are not going to vote for it. I say to the members across, just in case the Tory members across think for instance that this is merely a partisan remark that I am making, as unlikely as that could be, to

read from One Voice Seniors Network Canada Incorporated, which is a national organization representing senior citizens across this country.

This is not the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell or someone who may perhaps be thought of being partisan by those people across the way, but what One Voice said: "If we want to maintain true universality we shouldn't tax benefits through the back door. That penalizes people who receive benefits, specifically pensioners and families, and destroys the universal nature of benefit. Meanwhile other taxpayers at the same income level are left unscathed even though they may be more able to pay."

Mrs. Dobbie: They are not getting welfare. That is the difference.

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, I am glad that the member across has said that. I do hope that *Hansard* has properly registered what we just heard. The member across has just stated that senior citizens' pensions are welfare. That is what we have now heard. She has said those people are not receiving welfare, insinuating that the ones who are receiving old age security pensions are receiving welfare. Well, for me as a Liberal, that kind of thinking is wrong. There is no way that senior citizens should apologize to the member across the way and beg to get money from this government. Senior citizens should not have to do that, and they will not do that, so long as we in the Liberal party can stand here and defend their interests.

I say to the member across the way that she should apologize to the senior citizens of Canada for insinuating that old age security benefits are a form of welfare. For me they are not. They are a richly deserved universal pension which we have consistently stood for in the Liberal party and implemented a number of years ago. We will continue to do that.

Let me get back to what some Canadians had to say about this issue of clawback which is a form of deindexation. We have here in hand from *The Ottawa Citizen* a story of September 14 by Mark Kennedy in which he interviewed the Prime Minister. I know it is unfair to quote the Prime Minister using his own words, but I will do it any way. I know it is very, very difficult for the members across the way. The National Council on Welfare issued a report in which it criticized the Tories for the clawback provisions of Bill C–28. The National Council on Welfare is a government body, of course. I am sure the member across the way knows this or she should. It stated:

> There is no question that the clawback puts an end to universality.
>
> A social program that delivers benefits to everyone and then collects them all back from some recipients is not universal.

That goes really to the heart of what the member was saying a while ago, assessing or qualifying or describing old age security benefits as being a form of welfare. We do not think that old age security pensions are welfare, but the member across gave us a different view of that and now the Prime Minister says through this interview here, and I quote: "'We don't accept that view at all,". That is what he told reporters. "It is an opinion like many others but no more than that.'"

• (2000)

The National Council of Welfare, a government organization, there to advise the government on social issues, is considered by the Prime Minister as having an opinion that is an opinion like many others but no more. In other words the Conservatives give little if any credence to what is said by this national body, describing its opinion as no more or no less than the opinion of anyone else. They do not listen to the opinion of anyone else, so that means that they give absolutely no regard to what the government's own National Council on Welfare says.

I have some difficulty in understanding what the government is trying to do here. Conservative members say they want to lower the deficit. They say they are trying to make ends meet, yet they go on wasting and squandering money the way they have been since 1984 with all kinds of schemes that have been questioned in this House, and I am not going to repeat today's Question Period or Question Periods of other days here. We all know what they consisted of. At the same time they claw back pensions of senior citizens, questioning again the universality of such pensions, describing pensions as being welfare programs when all of us including the Prime Minister called them universal programs that were sacred trusts. Now, today, they are being described by some as being welfare programs.

Mr. Les Batterson, the president of Senior Citizens Federation said to the Prime Minister on June 23, 1989:

> —our position is that the tax-back is age biased, grossly inequitable and has serious implications with regards to universality.

Mr. McDermid: Who said that?

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Les Batterson, president of Senior Citizens Federation said that to the Prime Minister on June 23, 1989. He said this in a letter, and of course the Prime Minister has the original. Maybe the minister can get someone to read it to him. Then we will understand.

The Coalition of Quebec Seniors, in a letter to the Minister of Finance of May 24, said:

> —as the clawback begins to affect increasing numbers of individuals there can be no doubt that the net effect will be a gradual reduction in the principle of universality.
>
> We consider further, that a special tax which is only directed at seniors, is discrimination on the basis of age, unfair, and contrary to the Charter of Rights.

That would make an interesting Charter case. Anyway, it says further:

> Your proposal creates a steeper tax rate for seniors than for others at similar income levels. Seniors who with great difficulty, have succeeded over the years, in saving for their retirement, are being penalized.

Those are the words of the Coalition of Quebec Seniors in a letter to the Minister of Finance of May 24, 1989.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, I think or I hope I have persuaded Tory Members opposite to change their minds and withdraw this bill. They still have a chance, and it is still a few minutes or should I say hours until a vote is taken, and the ministers opposite could call an emergency meeting behind the curtains and withdraw Bill C-28. We would give them our unqualified support for withdrawing the bill. However, if the Tory Government, if the Tory ministers refuse, all I can say is that Canadians will remember when the next election comes around.

[*English*]

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to participate in this debate on Bill C-28, legislation which flows from the Conservative budget tabled earlier this year.

This bill deals with a number of issues of concern to all Canadians. It amends the Income Tax Act and includes provisions, which I will be coming back to in a minute, respecting the clawback of family allowances and old age security pensions and a capital tax on large corporations. It cuts the federal-provincial fiscal arrangements and federal post-secondary education and health contributions. It deals with the Old Age Security Act. It touches the Public Utilities Income Tax Transfer Act and as well it amends a number of other acts flowing from the budget.

Because the time is limited, I want to focus on two or three aspects of this proposed legislation. I want to first deal briefly with the cut-backs in federal-provincial transfers for health and post-secondary education because this amounts to a very serious erosion in EPF funding. We saw just three years ago in 1986 another round of cuts in EPF funding. What this will mean for Canada's poorest provinces is devastating indeed. In fact, the four Atlantic provinces alone will lose $189 million over the next four years while the four western provinces, including my province of British Columbia, will lose some $633 million.

What we are heading for is in many ways a two-tier-system of the delivery of services in this country, a two tier health care system with one quality of health care in the rich provinces and second or third rate services in the poorer provinces. Those are the words of the Canadian Medical Association.

These cuts come on top of other cuts as well, including unemployment insurance and regional development cuts. Post-secondary education is being particularly hard hit at a time when we should be putting more funding into post-secondary education. Right now we spend something in the order of $13,000 on average per student while the United States spends an average of some $20,000 per student. We are falling further and further behind in this fundamental area of support for post-secondary education.

The Prime Minister on the one hand has said he would make education a high priority. He promised in a speech in August 1989 "reforms that will generate excellence in education from coast to coast". Instead of bringing forward meaningful reform in post-secondary education, the Prime Minister is cutting back on funding to the provinces for post-secondary education.

We have seen the effects of this across Canada, including in my constituency. I just recently was at Douglas College, a college which serves the lower mainland of British Columbia and has a very important role to play in the delivery of post-secondary education in the province of British Columbia. It is suffering under the impact of devastating financial cut-backs and at this same time, the federal government is proposing to cut back further.

I mentioned the promise the Prime Minister made to improve the level of support for post-secondary education. The same Prime Minister has made other promises which are broken in a very fundamental way in this Bill C-28. On March 7, 1984, the Prime Minister said this: "Our position is simple and straightforward. We are in favour of universality in social programs and it shall not be touched". What happened to that fundamental promise made to the people of Canada in March 1984? What happened to the promise made in October 1988 during the last federal election campaign?

My colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands noted that this evening we are on the eve of the first anniversary of this government. This is an appropriate time for us to be looking back on the promises made during that election campaign which culminated in the election of this government one year ago tomorrow.

One of the promises made was a promise made to Canadian seniors and it was made by the Prime Minister in Summerside, Prince Edward Island. Of course, the people of Summerside have other concerns these days about the promises and commitments made by this government, but this was a solemn promise made to Canadian seniors. The Prime Minister said this:

> Let me say a special word to the senior citizens. In the future, Canada will be doing more, not less, for all of you. As long as I am Prime Minister of Canada, social benefits, especially those for the elderly, will be improved, not diminished, by our government which is committed to social justice and fairness for Canadians.

Well, what happened to that promise? That promise has been broken by the Prime Minister and by the government he leads.

• (2010)

One of the things that I have found as I travelled across this land and in speaking with people in my constituency is a degree of disillusionment and cynicism about the whole political process. A part of that is because of the extent to which political leaders, the Prime Minister in this case, are prepared to cast into the wastepaper basket promises that they have made during the election campaign.

I mentioned some of the concerns that are raised in this area of pensions and the clawback of pensions, but this is not the first time we have seen an attack on the senior citizens of this country. We all remember back in 1985 when this Conservative government attempted to deindex old age pensions.

[*Translation*]

We remember very well the role the opposition played in forcing the government to withdraw its bill. I remember very clearly the outstanding role played by the former Member Jean-Claude Malépart, and it was quite fitting that his magnificent contribution to the fight against deindexing was mentioned today.

[*English*]

Indeed, it is appropriate that we acknowledge today the contribution made in particular by the late member for Laurier—Ste. Marie, Jean-Claude Malépart, in this struggle. We all know where he would be in the House today and where he has been with respect to this attack on old age pensions.

That was the first hint that we had in 1985 when the government tried to cut back on old age pensions, tried to deindex old age pensions and was forced to step back in the face of overwhelming opposition from Canadians.

We got another hint of the true attitude of Conservatives to senior citizens in the words of the member for Mississauga South who chairs the Finance Committee. This is a senior Conservative. He has been a member of this Parliament since 1979. What did he have to say about seniors?

This is the attitude of a senior member of that Conservative caucus, the chair of the finance committee. When Conservatives expressed their anger and their outrage about the GST, he said: "Well, don't worry about that, older people don't wear out their clothing, they don't wear out their furniture and they don't run around and all of that costs dough". That from the Conservative chair of the finance committee.

Where were all of his Conservative colleagues? They were probably shrinking back in horror at the words of their Conservative colleague, but where were the members from British Columbia, from Alberta and from across this country? Where were they standing up for seniors and telling their colleague, the member for Mississauga South, that this was an insult?

Mr. Blaikie: They were silent.

Mr. Robinson: As my colleague from Winnipeg Transcona has said, they were silent, not a word. That is the attitude of this government. Fortunately, the member for Mississauga South had the honesty to voice that attitude. It is rare that that happens. But that in fact is the attitude of this government.

There are other concerns as well and the member for Brampton—Georgetown has expressed some views on this bill. He supported this bill which would erode the quality of life for senior citizens in this country and if he wants to stand up and defend that, he is certainly entitled to do so.

What we have seen is a clawback provision which over time is going to hit more and more seniors. In fact, the fundamental element of the clawback proposal is that it is only partially indexed to the amount of inflation which is over 3 per cent.

We all know that one of the impacts of the Conservative goods and services tax will be a significant rise in the level of inflation. What we will see over the course of time is more and more families will become subject to this clawback because their incomes will rise faster than the amount of the clawback income threshold.

This clawback, of course, has other weaknesses as well. The fact is that it is a breach of trust with senior citizens of this land because for many years they paid in, in good faith, assuming that one day, having paid into the program, they would in fact receive the pensions to which they are entitled. It was from 1952 to 1971 that seniors in this country paid a special surtax on income that was earmarked for old age pensions.

I remember a senior citizen, an elderly gentleman from Stratford Gardens in North Burnaby, who came to my constituency office and said: "Svend, I'm sure I remember back in the 1950s and the 1960s, when each year when it came time to pay my income tax, having to pay a special surtax for my old age pension. Now, they want to take it away". Well, so much for the Prime Minister's sacred trust. So much for the Prime Minister's promise to the senior citizens of this land.

We are aware as well of the fact that this government has said that it wants to reduce the deficit. Reducing the deficit on the backs of Canada's seniors is not only wrong, but it is fundamentally immoral.

Mrs. Dobbie: You're immoral. You're misrepresenting.

Mr. Robinson: In fact, the Canadian Seniors Network—one of the hon. members for Winnipeg suggested it misrepresented the facts. She can rise in her place and take issue. What they have said is that this partial indexation will mean that by the year 2000, the threshold which is now $50,000 will have fallen to the equivalent of $35,000 in today's dollars. Thirty-five thousand dollars is a significant drop and certainly that will affect hundreds of thousands of Canadian families and Canadian seniors.

The Canadian Seniors Network has pointed out as well that if this government were looking seriously at tax reform, it could raise the rate of the top income tax bracket by 1 per cent and generate exactly the same amount as it is by clawing back old age pensions. That would be a much more just and equitable way of raising these funds.

A government which purports to be concerned about a fairer tax system is doing nothing whatsoever to deal with the appalling problem of child poverty in this country. We learned in a report just this week that a survey was done by the Canadian Association of Food Banks showing that some 400,000 Canadians, almost half of them children, are lining up for food hand-outs at soup kitchens, churches and drop-in centres.

What is this government doing to deal with the problem of poverty, particularly among children in this country? What does Bill C-28 which is now before the House and which represents this government's attempt at tax reform do for the poor and the children in this country who are living in poverty? In fact, 151,000 children every month depend on food banks for their food in this affluent country of ours. There is something profoundly wrong which is not in any way being addressed by this legislation now being debated under the hammer of closure this evening.

• (2020)

This legislation will do nothing whatsoever to reduce the disparities between the wealthy and the poor. In fact, in 1984 the top 10 per cent of the population in Canada held more than half of the country's wealth. The top 20 per cent held close to 70 per cent of all the wealth and the bottom 20 per cent had less than nothing. In fact, they owed more than they owned.

Surely any government that believes in social justice would recognize that we have a fundamental task here to redistribute wealth, to ensure that no one in this land is dependent on food banks for survival.

Mrs. Dobbie: Communism doesn't work. They're tearing down the Berlin Wall.

Mr. Robinson: Instead of moving in that direction of redistribution of wealth and income, what this government is doing is breaking the promise that it made to senior citizens, to the children of this country and to families and clawing back those pensions and those family allowances. We in this party say that that is wrong and that that is a betrayal of the promises that this government has made.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, there are other ways to find the money needed for social programs in Canada. My colleague, the Hon. Member for Yorkton-Melville, pointed out that more than 90,000 companies made $27 billion in profit in 1987 without paying a cent of income tax.

Madam Speaker, instead of asking for money from Canada's seniors, who have already contributed for a long time to their retirement pension, why not collect taxes from these companies that paid nothing?

Madam Speaker, our present tax system is unfair and when businesses do not pay, ordinary citizens pay, and pay dearly.

[*English*]

In fact, that is what this legislation is all about. It is about transferring the burden of taxation to seniors, transferring the burden of taxation on to those who are least able to bear it.

There are other aspects of this legislation as well, but in closing, I want to emphasize what the National Council of Welfare, an advisory committee to the government, has said about the clawback provisions of this legislation. It said that the move away from universal benefits is the most significant change in social policy in a generation, yet it was announced by the Minister of Finance in the budget speech with no prior consultation. A budget is no place to alter the very foundation of Canada's social programs.

That is really what this is all about. It is a fundamental change in the nature of our society. The free trade agreement was part of that. The goods and services tax is very much a part of that. It is a change toward a meaner, harsher Canada, an Americanization of this land. That is what we are seeing in the erosion of our social programs. That is what we are seeing in the erosion of our health care plan in this country. That is what we are seeing in the cut-backs in unemployment insurance and that is what we are seeing today in Bill C-28.

It is for that reason that we as New Democrats reject this clawback proposal to cut back on cost-shared programs and health care and post-secondary education and it is for that reason that in the next federal election the people of Canada will resoundingly reject a government which has betrayed the promises that were made to them and which has broken its faith with the people of this land.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Madam Speaker, I was interested when my colleague from Burnaby—Kingsway was speaking that the hon. member for Winnipeg South had much to say from her seat. For those who may not have been able to hear what she was saying, when the Hon. Member for Burnaby—Kingsway was denouncing the clawback provision and talking about the whole idea of redistributing wealth, the Member for Winnipeg South was saying:, "Communism doesn't work, don't you know that?"

Apart from noticing that she is a worthy successor to the political tradition established on that side of Winnipeg which regards everything slightly to the left of Genghis Khan as communism, I wonder if the seniors of this country would be interested in knowing that the hon. member for Winnipeg South thinks that they are advocating communism because they believe in the redistribution of wealth or because they believe in universality with respect to social programs and in this case with respect to pensions. It seems to me that is something that the pensioners of Manitoba and other places would like to know more about, how the member for Winnipeg South equates these ideas which have been part and parcel of a political consensus for some time, a consen-

sus which the Conservative Party wants to break now with this budget, is communism.

All those Canadians who supported universality and redistribution of wealth have been communists in the eyes of the member for Winnipeg South and they did not even know it, but they will be interested to know that. I am told that the Prime Minister himself said that. We are talking more about a parrot than someone with an independent thought.

What we are talking about tonight is a departure from the principle of social policy. If the Conservative government wants to establish a reason why it ought to be abandoned, it ought to do so with a little more intellectual and philosohical weight than simply branding it as a form of communism. One of the things that has distinguished Canadian social policy over the years has been the element of universality.

We have said as a country and as a society that there are certain things we want to do because we are a certain kind of community. The people receive because they are citizens. Families will receive a certain amount of support per child because they are families, not because they are poor families or rich families or middle-income families but because they are families. People who are over 65 years of age will receive a certain amount of support because they fall into that category, not as an act of charity but because this is something which Canadians as a community have decided to do for all Canadians who fall into a certain category. The same is true of health care and education. All these things are a way of looking at society.

The Member for Winnipeg South is still yapping from her seat. She had an opportunity to get up when the member for Burnaby—Kingsway sat down and no Liberal rose. She did not rise, perhaps because she has been instructed by her caucus or her whip not to speak for fear of embarrassing the government and bringing more shame down upon its head. If she wants to speak, she is welcome to get up after I have finished.

The principle of universality is a principle that we in the New Democratic Party hold very dear. We do that along with a great many other Canadians. What this government is doing through the clawback is establishing, and they know this, though government members are being clandestine about it, a conceptual watershed in social policy. Once this bill goes through they will have effectively, without really having a debate about it, established that it is okay to deuniversalize programs.

They are hoping to take advantage of the natural reaction of a great many people of what could it hurt to take back some money from people who have a net income of over $50,000. They are hoping that most Canadians will not see that this is the thin edge of the wedge.

In fact, most Canadians have seen that. They realize what is going on and they know that if this principle of universality can be breached for people who have a net income of over $50,000, it is only a matter of time before others can be next. I think that is why there is widespread opposition to this particular measure.

• (2030)

Mrs. Dobbie: Do you think people earning $100,000 should get this?

Mr. Blaikie: I think that people earning $100,000 should be taxed fairly and progressively and heavily. I do not see why pensioners who are earning over $50,000 net should be singled out in the way that this budget does and be asked to give back part of their old age security. If the government opposite wants to raise money from people who are making $100,000 then let it tax people who are making $100,000, but let it not tax the old age security which these people receive from the government. There are plenty of ways to get that money back.

We have always said tax it back, but tax it back as part of the progressive income tax system, don't tax it back in a way that violates the very way we think about Canadian society and social programs. That is the agenda here, it is not the money. It is a paltry sum in the big picture that the Conservatives are raising through this clawback. What they want to do is to score a victory with respect to how we think about social programs so that other social programs can follow, particularly medicare. Because, in this same bill—

Mrs. Dobbie: Oh, oh.

Mr. Blaikie: She is still yapping.

Mr. Rodriguez: She hasn't got anything to yap about.

Mr. Blaikie: As a former Conservative leader once said, you can always tell when you throw a stone into a pack of dogs if you have hit something because you can hear them yelping. I can understand why the members opposite are a little sensitive about this because they remember how angry the general public were, and pensioners in particular, when they tried to deindex the old age pension in the early part of their government in 1985. The fact of the matter is—

Mrs. Dobbie: You're going to give this to people earning over $100,000 just because of 1985?

Mr. Blaikie: Madam Speaker, are we going to have some order in the House or is she just going to be able to go on and on like this without ever having the courage to seek the floor?

What I wanted to say is that if the government wants to raise money, as all governments do, there are plenty of ways in which it could raise this money without, at the same time, changing the way in which we think about social policy in this country. The government could tax that money back from old age pensioners who are making more than $50,000 through the progressive income tax system, as I have said. And the same with families who are making $50,000 net. The government could have a minimum corporate tax; it could shut more of the loopholes in the tax system; it could respond to some of the suggestions that have been made recently about devising taxes which would have the parallel effect of encouraging people to do things which are environmentally friendly, the eco-tax or whatever it has been called from time to time. There are many ways in which the government could have been a little creative. The government has been creative, it has been creative according to the Conservative mind. Because, what is the government trying to create?

Since 1984 the government has been trying to create a context in which all the things which it fought against for decades can be dismantled in the course of its two terms of government. All the time it is sort of bouncing from scandal to scandal and scam to scam, step by step it has been dismantling the Canada that was created up to and including 1984. That is what the government got into power to do. Unfortunately, I believe Canadians thought that no one would really contemplate doing these sorts of things. And now Canadians are seeing that this is exactly what the government is about.

Bill C-28 also deals with a reduction in Established Programs Financing. This brings us to the whole question of health care and post-secondary education, but tonight I would particularly like to talk about health care. I remember in the early 1980s there were a lot of debates about EPF and about federal-provincial fiscal arrangements. What has happened since then? Despite all the protests of the Conservatives when they were in opposition about cutbacks in EPF funding, this is the second unilateral cutback in Established Programs Financing that we have seen from the Progressive Conservative Government.

You will remember these are the same people who always talked about the evils of unilateral federal action when it came to federal-provincial relations in the early 1980s. These are the people who made a political career out of denouncing unilateral federal actions when it came to federal-provincial relations and federal-provincial programs. Yet this is the second unilateral cutback in Established Programs Financing that we have seen. Between the federal government and the provinces when medicare was created is being slowly destroyed and more and more of the burden is being put on to the provinces with respect to health care. It is already an onerous burden for even the richer provinces, but particularly the ones that are not rich. It cannot go on like this. Sooner or later something is going to give. We will have a two-tier health care system in the regional sense, that is health care systems in the richer provinces which are far superior to the ones in the poorer provinces. Somewhere down the road, unless the pressure is taken off the health care system, unless more funding is provided in the spirit of the original 50-50 cost sharing arrangement, there will be pressure for a two tier health care system in some of the have-not provinces. of that line, to get to the head of that queue, to get to the head of that waiting list. And do you know what? That is not something the Conservatives will regret because they never liked medicare in the first place.

Then they will say, "You see, there is a need for a private system. There is a need for people who can afford to pay will take the heat off the public system". That will be the beginning of the end of universality in medicare. But it will be easier to do because they will have already established that it is okay to do away with universality in family allowances and old age pensions. So when somebody says, "But this is doing away with universality and that's a sacred principle, is it not, at least the Prime Minister said so", they will say, "Well, it may have been at one point but don't you remember the

budget of 1989 when we did away with universality in family allowances and old age pensions? That principle of universality was done away with a long time ago." If we can establish that it is okay to make a difference between rich Canadians and other Canadians with respect to support for families and old age pensions, then we can establish that principle in other areas.

We hear the protestations coming from the other side in the same way that we heard them during the debate just a year ago in the federal election of 1988. We said that UI would be changed in order to make it more like the American system. They said, "You are being silly", just as the hon. member from Brampton is now saying I am being silly. But what did they do after they said we were silly? They came forward with legislation to make our unemployment insurance system more like the American system. Many other things that we said at that time for which we were accused of being silly have come to pass. Now they accuse us of being silly one more time.

Well, I hope they are right. I hope that we will be able to look back some day and say we were wrong in our anticipation that that was going to be the case. But we have not been wrong. Those things which we have pointed to as part of the general trend, as part of a general over-all agenda on the part of this government are all falling into place and they do not have the courage to admit it. Why? Because if they went to the Canadian people and said what they actually wanted to do to this country, if they said how they actually wanted to change it, they would not have won the election. They would not get the support. The Minister of International Trade said that a couple of years ago.

The only member who recently, as far as I can remember, has been honest about the true meaning of the free trade agreement has been the hon. member from Mississauga South who, as usual, is one of the few Conservatives that you do not have to worry about stabbing you in the back. The hon. member from Mississauga South is always running straight at you with a spear so you know exactly where he is coming from. He has in the past, and during the election, been very forthright.

• (2040)

I cannot quote him without being unparliamentary on what the free trade agreement means for the opponents of the Conservative party. It means, for that those of us who have imagined a Canada in which universal programs would not only be maintained but enhanced, for those of us who have imagined a Canada in which we would have more control over our own economic destiny and the ability to determine the future of our own country, that we are finished. That is the polite way of putting what the hon. member for Mississauga South said to me at one point. The free trade agreement will become the context in which all the things that the Conservatives do not have the courage to do directly they will be able to do indirectly. They know that.

I do not blame them for sitting over there smiling like a bunch of Cheshire cats because they know that, unless the Canadian people wake up and in 1992 throw this group out of office, that will be the last chance for the country. Last chance, 1992, because in the second term they will proceed to complete, as far as they can, the agenda which they had in mind all along. It is only at the end of their second term that Canadians will have one last chance to say that this is not what we intended in 1984 when we were so sick of the Liberals and we wanted to vote the Conservatives in. This is not what they intended.

Mr. Mifflin: You don't really mean that, do you?

Mr. Blaikie: I am asked whether I really mean that. People were sick of the Liberals in 1984, and part of the problem was that they had not got over it by 1988, it was that bad.

The fact of the matter is that it is, if you like, a sort of parliamentary and political crime to have to debate universality in the context of an omnibus budget bill, because this is a major philosophical divide that we are crossing, that Parliament is being asked to cross with the instrument of closure at our heads.

I regret very much that debates on these sorts of things do not get the kind of attention, if you like, that they may have at one point because what we are talking about here

is the very nature of the country. I think it is one of the things that has made our country a better place to live. I think there are a lot of people on the other side of the House who do not know what they are doing. I do not mean that in the sense that they are stupid, although that would apply in some cases, I mean it in the sense that they do not really know what the long-term consequences are of playing and tampering with these values that are held so widely in Canada.

We are the kind of country that we all value—at least I assume they value—because we have had a different notion of community and a different notion of social policy than our neighbours to the south. They are moving us off in this new direction which takes us closer and closer to the way things are organized in the United States of America. It is a regrettable piece of legislation indeed.

Mr. McDermid: What a lot of crap.

Mr. Blaikie: It is not a lot of crap, as the hon. member for Brampton has so profoundly responded to my criticisms. It happens to be a view that is held by the Canadian Council on Social Development, the National Council on Welfare, the Canadian Council of Churches, the Canadian labour movement, you name it.

Mr. McDermid: You name a socialist group and they say it.

Mr. Blaikie: Oh, these are all socialists groups. Some of them are funded by the government, oddly enough.

He is a little more progressive than the hon. member for Winnipeg South. She thinks that everyone who disagrees with her is a communist. The hon. member for Brampton thinks that everyone who disagrees with him is part of the socialist conspiracy. There is a conspiracy of people in this country who care about the way things are done in terms of social programs and who care about the principle of universality and they are the people that this government should be listening to instead of their own paranoid fantasies about their critics.

Mr. Jack Shields (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade): Madam Speaker, I found it very difficult to join this debate because I think the debate has degenerated into a name calling and silly type of argument that we are hearing from the other side.

I would like to remind the House that we are not debating universality today. We are debating a bill, and we are debating efforts by this government to create an economic situation in Canada that will allow us to keep all those social programs that we on this side of the House value as much as do members on the other side of the House. I want to remind the House that when we took office in 1984 the government of that day was borrowing $16 billion to run programs. It was actually borrowing $16 billion to run programs that the government had in place.

The government had to borrow because the revenues it was receiving under the taxing system, revenues to the federal government, were $16 billion short of what it needed to run the programs. Revenues today exceed $9 billion over expenditures. Madam Speaker, add the $16 billion to the $9 billion and you will see that we have turned that around. We have had a $25 billion turnaround, something that the members on the opposite side of the House do not want to recognize and do not want to understand.

They talk about unilateral cutbacks. I heard my hon. friend talk about the unilateral way that this government is moving with cutbacks. I want to remind that member that this government has cut program spending to where the increase is below the level of inflation at 3.6 per cent. That compares with the provincial government program spending increases going up, for some of them as high as 16 per cent, but on an average of 6.5 per cent.

What we are doing—

Mr. Blaikie: You are transferring the burden to them.

Mr. Shields: Madam Speaker, the hon. member does not like to hear these kind of figures so he is going to interject, and I understand that. He spoke about health care. Again I would like to remind everyone in this House and the people of Canada that health care is not universally free to every individual in Canada. Anyone who is drawing a salary is paying their health care premiums. Those who can afford it are paying more, those who cannot afford it do not pay a premium. We all understand that. We still consider that a universal program. We all subscribe to that and we all work very hard. We pride ourselves on having one of the best health care systems in the world. Those that can afford it pay a higher premium for the health care benefits that

they receive and those who cannot afford it do not pay a health care premium. We all understand that.

We all know that we have today an accumulated debt of $350 billion. That is made up of $200 billion of a debt that we inherited, an accumulated debt, and $150 billion in interest. We are attempting, through very difficult times, to create an economic climate in Canada that will allow us to preserve the health care system, the old age pensions, and all of the rest. Let us look at the old age pension for a moment. I have talked to constituents of mine who are receiving the old age pension and when they recognize the difficulty we are in they, above all, the ones who I have talked to who are earning $50,000, $60,000, and $70,000 income in their retirement, are more than happy to return, under the tax system, that portion of their old age security or old age pension that they are receiving now. If we do not take action on the deficit and the debt, if we do not get that under control like we are supposed to be doing, their children and their grandchildren are going to have to carry the burden.

• (2050)

If you really analyse it and if members will honestly look at the situation, they will recognize who the real supporters and the real friends of the social programs that we have in this country are. There are people on this side of the House who are willing to take the very hard decisions that have to be taken, whether it is a goods and services tax or attempted are to bring the economic situation of Canada into line because of the misadministration and the mismanagement of government by the previous administration, by the Liberals, and supported fully, supported 100 per cent, by the NDP sitting on their left. Every time a program was brought into place it was either at the instigation of the NDP or the Liberal government supported by the other party. These were programs that we in Canada could not afford. They are the ones who put us into this debt and we, as financially responsible members of Parliament and government, are attempting to put right what has been so wrong for so many years.

Let me go back to the comment that my friend made. He said that this government fought against unilateralism by the federal government. Yes we did, we certainly did. We fought against the unilateral decision made by this government to impose a national energy program on western Canada. You are darn right we fought against that. We fought against it because we said it was wrong to steal revenue from other provinces, and we righted that. One of the first things we did when we took office was get rid of the National Energy Program and the Petroleum Gas Revenue Tax.

What did we hear from the NDP? What did we hear from the Liberals? Well, I'll tell you, they didn't support it. They supported bringing in a National Energy Program and the NDP even went so far as having their energy critic getting up in this House and saying it did not go far enough. They said what you should be doing is nationalizing the largest one, nationalizing Imperial Oil. That was the statement that was made by the NDP, and they talk about unilateralism. It just boggles my mind to hear the garbage that has been coming from that side of the House.

I am not going to say any more. The only thing I would say in closing is that these initiatives have to be taken because this Government of Canada, the very foundation of this government, is going to crumble if we do not get our deficit under control. We have to do it and our only hope is that my hon. friends from the other side will recognize some of the very difficult times that this country is going through in the financial area and get behind us and help us determine the best way to go about putting this government in a position of financial security so that these social programs can remain in Canada and be the pride of Canadians and so all of us can walk out of here with our heads held high.

Mr. Douglas Young (Gloucester): Madam Speaker, in rising to speak in this debate it is interesting that we are continuing with an approach we have seen now for the last year or so in this House in the way the Government approaches problems in this country. We are discussing a bill that is described as an act to amend the Income Tax Act, the Federal–Provincial Fiscal Arrangements, and Federal Post–Secondary Education and Health Contributions Act, the Old Age Security Act, the Public Utilities Income Tax Transfer Act, the War Veterans Allowance Act and a related act.

In listening to my colleague opposite opening his address to the House I heard him say that we are not debating universality. My point is that government members remain consistent, say one thing and do the other, because in fact we are debating universality. The unfortunate thing is that we are debating it under the guise of income tax and other tax reform. It seems to me that the people of Canada understood the problem of the deficit and certainly now more than ever before in our history

understand the importance of the debt which this government has been able to double in five years from $170 billion to $350 billion. Those are things that Canadians understand, but I would think what they would appreciate from this government is for people to do what they say they are going to do. If we are talking about reforms to the Income Tax Act that are going to result in clawbacks, what we should be saying is that we are talking about changing the social fabric of this country, the social support systems, and be very candid about that.

I was amazed to hear my colleague opposite suggest that the Conservative government has gone through hard times in the last five years and has had to make difficult decisions. Canadians have heard from this government that the last five years have seen unparalleled growth in this country, have seen the economy improve on the basis of good management. So, how can the government say that everything is moving ahead in a very progressive way under Conservative management, and then say at the same time that we are in a position where we have to look very harshly at social programs because we cannot afford to pay for them.

That is the key, and I think that is a very good point. If you want to change social programs you can always trap people by putting them into an embarrassing position. In my view, if there is a group of people in this country who should never be embarrassed it is our senior citizens. The senior citizens that I speak to in this country are embarrassed because, by dint of hard work and through very careful management of their funds, some of them have accumulated some money, some of them have been able to develop a capacity to generate $50,000, $60,000 or $75,000 a year revenue. Some of us in this House may do that over the years.

Mrs. Dobbie: And you are saying that we should still give them old age security?

Mr. Young (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the comments of people who are suggesting that there is something apparently wrong with having people making $75,000 or $100,000 a year and not paying their fair share of taxes. If that is the case what we should do is address the legislation that is particularly relevant. Let us talk to the senior citizens of this country and ask if they are prepared to make all of these contributions and not be concerned about this chipping away of their security, because what is a threshold today that looks very high and perhaps only affects people with relatively high income could, in a very short of time, change significantly. If we want to do this to them I think we should be telling them directly. There is no one better organized in this country than senior citizens through their senior citizens clubs, through the New Horizons Program that this government supports which previous governments instituted.

Let us go and ask them. Let us not embarrass them by forcing people making over $50,000 a year to have to fight this battle. They have fought their battles in this country and they have paid their taxes over the years in this country, they do not deserve to be put in the very awkward position of trying to fight this legislation on the basis that somehow they appear to be trying to hang on to what people would describe as too much money.

I am not going to debate whether or not the government should change its approach to how it takes care of people of 60, 70, 80 and 90 years of age. But if you want to do something, all Canadians expect is to be told what you want to achieve. Do you want senior citizens to pay down the debt? Do you want senior citizens to reduce the deficit? Ask them. Tell them. Do not say it is because you have too much and we want to take some away from you.

• (2100)

Mrs. Dobbie: No, that is not what we are saying.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): What are you saying, then?

Mrs. Dobbie: What is being said is that what has been given to you is only deserved if you have an income that is less than what it takes to live on.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): The point that I am trying to make is that I believe that senior citizens should have the same rights as anyone else in this country. I do not want to in any way appear condescending to senior citizens, but I think that many of them for all kinds of reasons that every member of this House should understand, do not feel that they can fight these big battles any more. They

have spent their time in the trenches. If I am wrong, then senior citizens will tell me and will tell you, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Dobbie: And they do.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): I have been to Alberta and Manitoba and I have not had senior citizens saying: "My goodness I am glad that you have begun the process of eroding our security". I have not even heard people 50 and 55 years of age saying that.

Mr. McDermid: They have said: "We do not need it so tax it back".

Mr. Young (Gloucester): I am sure that what—

Mrs. Dobbie: I know what senior citizens in my riding are saying. I have talked to them.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): Listening to members opposite I am sure that what they are saying is accurate to one extent. Senior citizens are generous. They do understand their commitment to Canada. Some of them would say that they would pay down, that they would pay their share if they had a few extra dollars. However, I opened my comments by saying that you say one thing and you do another. Is there someone, Mr. Speaker, to your right saying that the debt will be reduced next year?

Mr. Shields: The deficit will be, yes.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, is there someone to your right saying that the deficit will be reduced next year?

Mr. Shields: Yes.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): By how much?

Mr. Shields: You will find out. Wait and see.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, one thing is for sure. We have been told by members to your right that the goods and services tax will be a deficit reduction tool, but in the very same document it states that it is revenue neutral.

Mrs. Sparrow: The 23.9 is revenue neutral.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, the 23.9 is revenue neutral. The difficulty for Canadians—

Mrs. Dobbie: You are talking about old age security and whether people who earn over $50,000—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brightwell): I wonder if the member for Gloucester might wish to make a speech rather have a question and answer period.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, I do not like to be rude to members opposite. It appears as though they have a number of things to say about this particular piece of legislation.

The difficulty that I have in listening to these comments—and I am listening to an hon. colleague from Alberta—is that they say that they are listening to people. Again, many of us are listening to what people are saying in Alberta. We do not even have to go out to Alberta to hear them because they are allowed to speak out in the presence of two members from your right, Mr. Speaker, in debate in the west on the goods and services tax, for example. Who are you listening to?

We are told, by members here apparently, that the population of Alberta must support the goods and services tax because members to your right support it, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Dobbie: What does that have to do with old age security?

Mr. Young (Gloucester): It has to do with telling the truth. Who are you listening to? If you do not listen to people who do not like the goods and services tax, why would you be listening to senior citizens who do not like this approach to a clawback of what they have legitimately earned? Who are you going to listen to?

Mr. McDermid: We listen to everybody.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): The point is that they say they listen when in fact they do not. They say it will reduce the debt when in fact it will not. They say it will reduce the deficit when in fact it will not. They say the debt that this country is faced with was created by mismanagement of previous governments.

Mr. Shields: It sure was.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): When this government came to power the people of Canada owed $170 billion.

Mr. McDermid: It was $200 billion.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): Today the people of Canada owe $350 billion.

Mr. Shields: Interest on the debt.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): What we do not accept is that people who will not understand simple arithmetic are talking to people and saying: "We are listening to them". You have not listened to people who say you have to reduce the deficit. The deficit is still over $30 billion a year. You talk about it but you do not do anything about it.

What I do agree with is if you are going to do something, then tell the people exactly what you intend to do. If you are going to tell senior citizens in this country that they have too much money and you want to tax them back, then tell them that, but do not tell them that you are going to reduce the deficit with their money because you have not been able to do that in the last five years.

Mrs. Sparrow: Nonsense.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): I listened to my hon. friend tell us that the income was now $16 billion more than what it was.

Mr. Shields: You were not listening.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): In 1984 they were borrowing $16 billion to pay for programs.

Mrs. Sparrow: That is you.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): That is right, our predecessors.

In 1989 there has been a $25 billion turnaround. That is what was said. The debt in 1984, when this $16 billion was being borrowed, was $170 billion.

Mr. McDermid: It was $200 billion.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): What we will do is give members opposite the benefit of the doubt and we will say $200 billion.

Now, in 1989, after five years of good management, the debt is $350 billion. This is the kind of turnaround this government likes. The Conservatives are managing things so well that they have nearly doubled the national debt even according to their own admission.

To continue on the same line, what has been stated is that we could not afford some of these programs. This was stated by my friend just moments ago in his speech to this House. I quote: "Some of the programs we could not afford".

What we should do when we discuss this bill, Mr. Speaker, is have hon. members to your right get up and tell us which programs they cannot afford. That is what we need to know. It is not a question of whether senior citizens have so much money that you want to claw it back from them. If there are programs we cannot afford, there is one thing the people of Canada would like to be able to have and that is a straight answer on what it is that this government cannot afford.

It was very nice to listen to people opposite and perhaps we will get some answers to some of the things we are discussing tonight.

The element of attitude involved in all this debate on the kinds of directions that Canada is taking is illustrated when we, for example, listen to people in this House say that senior citizens are telling members of the government that they want this kind of a tax measure passed.

Are they speaking for associations of senior citizens? Are they talking about senior citizens' clubs across this country in the provinces of Quebec, British Columbia and Atlantic Canada? Are they getting petitions from senior citizens saying: "Please start this process of eroding the security that we always felt was ours and that was a guarantee in Canadian society"? Who are they listening to?

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that members to your right who have been here for more than six years have security.

Mrs. Dobbie: I have security.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): I listen to my friend say: "I have security". Is the hon. member comparing herself to a senior citizen now? There are different kinds of security. For many years in this country Canadians believed that they had security.

The Prime Minister of this country guaranteed Canadians security by saying that universality was a sacred trust.

Mrs. Dobbie: At $50,000 you are still secure.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): Is it a sacred trust at $50,000, $35,000 or $25,000? Or, did we miss part of that phrase: "It is a sacred trust but there is a threshold to my sacred trust".

• (2110)

Mr. Shields: They are still getting it.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): They are still getting it, but he who giveth also taketh back.

We are going to have all kinds of opportunities to talk about the undertakings we have made to Canadians as legislators. We are going to have to decide when people are going to talk to Canadians—

Mrs. Dobbie: At $50,000 a year you still get $325 or so a month old age security, so let's get the facts straight.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): There is no question that the intervention being made by my colleague is part of the ploy whereby you can say to Canadians: "Come on, can you be serious about questioning people paying back their fair share when they receive over $50,000 or $60,000 or $70,000 a year?" That is the crack in the sacred trust. It is the beginning. Nobody thought that they would simply get rid of old age pensions, or get rid of family allowance, or cut back on post-secondary education. It is: How do you start the process? How do you begin to convince Canadians that you are not going to be able to live in this country under a set of social standards—

Mrs. Sparrow: What we are doing is convincing them that they will be able to live in this country.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): I am looking forward to hearing those convincing arguments. I know the one argument that works in this House: a majority government defeats the opposition. That argument comes up whenever there is a vote.

Some Hon. Members: Right.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): There is no question that my colleagues across the way are right. When you have a vote, you lose. There is no question about that when there is an elected democratic majority.

Perhaps there is another consideration, though. It is how the majority got to be the majority. What was said to get them there? Sacred trust gets you there. Breach of sacred trust can move you out of there.

Mr. Shields: Just like wage and price controls.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): You know something, today—

Mr. Shields: Do you remember that one?

Mr. Young (Gloucester): Yes, I do indeed.

Today, this very day, I heard the words again: "wage and price controls". Several months ago in this House I heard the words: "wage and price moderation".

Mr. Lewis: So it's moderation now.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): The hon. House leader also heard the words: "wage and price moderation". This very day I had someone ask me "what do you think the chances are of the government introducing wage and price controls", all I could say was that I asked the question a couple of months ago—

Mr. Corbeil: You should know. What did you do with them?

Mr. Young (Gloucester): Mr. Trudeau introduced wage and price controls—

Some Hon. Members: After saying that he wouldn't.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): That is right. There is no question that governments have often said one thing and done another.

I want to tell you one thing, Madam Speaker. It is a very easy thing to say that we are going to point a finger at what was done 10 or 15 years ago and to say that because they did it you would do it also. My question tonight to my friends opposite is very simple. Are you going to do it? We know what the Liberals did 10 or 15 years ago. What are you cooking up? Wage and price moderation sounds a lot better.

Mr. McDermid: We are cooking up a country that will be able to operate soundly for decades to come. That is what we are doing.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): Madam Speaker, apparently we have the answer.

I want to say in closing that no matter what government says it or what political party says it, you keep saying one thing and doing another. One thing is going to happen to you is what has happened to governments before you that did the same thing.

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Madam Speaker, I have a little problem here tonight. The member for Winnipeg South has departed the chamber. For the last hour or so she has been carrying on a heckling session with members on this side when they were speaking. One would think that if she had anything useful to say she would go on the record publicly and all the folks watching TV could hear what she is saying because it is forward into the past when she speaks. That is one comment I have. The other one is: I do not know for the life of me what it is that infects politicians once they become the government.

An Hon. Member: And you never will!

Mr. Rodriguez: I suppose that the late I. F. Stone was probably right when he said that government is run by liars and nothing they say should be believed. He was right then, and as I watch it today it is true. I. F. Stone was right.

We saw examples of that. Liberals were running an election in 1974. They ran against Stanfield with wage and price controls. Once they became the government we got wage and price controls.

The Conservatives made a whole list of promises and commitments and as soon as they formed a government they broke every one of them. I do not know what it is. Maybe there are some microbes over there in the desks that crawl up their legs, up their ankles, up their knees, up the main part of their body right into their ears. It invades the brain.

Mr. McDermid: What is your excuse?

Mr. Rodriguez: I have never been in the government so I cannot claim to have any microbes.

I hear the member for Brampton. It is fairly obvious that a cuckoo is resident in his head.

Mr. McDermid: I'd rather have a cuckoo than a woodpecker.

Mr. Rodriguez: A woodpecker would have a heyday with a cuckoo.

On this question of the old age pensions, it is not surprising that they would have in clause 48 this clawback. They were never committed to pensions in the first place. Pensions were first introduced into the House of Commons in 1926.

I want to remind members of this House and the people who are watching that it was first of all $20 a month payable at age 70 and it was means tested. The Conservatives opposed it, Madam Speaker. They opposed a $20 a month old age pension payable at age 70, and it was means tested. What was the argument that the Tories used at the time? Can you guess the argument?

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): That it was not enough?

Mr. Rodriguez: No, of course not. They said that paying 70 year olds $20 a month, not means tested, would make them lazy and would take away the initiative to work. Those are not my words. It is in *Hansard*. It is true. In fact, they should go back and look at the record. It got passed in the House and went to the Senate. The Conservatives in the other place defeated it and an election ensued in the course of things. Then the bill was brought back and eventually passed.

• (2120)

Mr. Blaikie: You mean a Conservative Senate defeated it?

Mr. Rodriguez: That is right. And you know how they are all for work over there. They have a commitment to that ethic of work over in the Senate.

I only use that example to sort of remind us as we are discussing this whole question of universality and the clawback that these are people who really have no role to play. Conservatives were opposed to any social program. They are. The record is clear.

On the other hand, in this particular bill—and I want to raise this question very, very seriously—it seems to me that there is a fundamental change in the direction of this country. The record is clear that this party, the New Democratic Party, and its predecessors, the CCF, really believed that in fact the vision of this country was one of collective responsibility; that in fact the reason we are social democrats was because we asked ourselves the question: "Are we our brothers and sisters keeper?"

The answer came back, yes, so it developed that we supported every move and oftentimes initiated moves to establish social justice. With social justice came in its practical application old age pensions, family allowances, unemployment insurance, health care and a whole host of other social programs.

Now what am I hearing today? I am hearing from the other side that that is no longer the case, that it is the triumphant individual. That is the philosophy that I hear from across the way. No longer is the question of collective responsibility what motivates our actions in this House, but rather it is the triumphant individual; it is me. We see that in this worship of the market-place. We see it in this whole question of their worshipping at the

altar of the market-place. They have liberated greed. It is in fact: "You have no limitations. You can do anything you want. As long as I am all right, Mac, I do not give a damn about anybody else." That is what it is.

I am not only suggesting but I am declaring; I am saying very clearly.

Mr. Blaikie: She is back.

Mr. Rodriguez: I see the member from Winnipeg South is back. I will say to her face what I said while she was away. I wish she would take the opportunity to get up and put her thoughts on the record so that all Canadians can not only hear her but can see her in the flesh to really realize that there is a body, an entity who is actually saying these things.

What I want to say is that this government is fundamentally changing the pattern of Canada, the face of Canada, the vision of Canada. That was never placed before the people of this country. As a matter of fact, a year ago, on October 17, 1988, the Prime Minister said: "As long as I am Prime Minister of Canada social benefits, especially those for the elderly, will be improved, not diminished by the government which is committed to social justice and fairness for all Canadians."

I remember in the campaign the Prime Minister had his poor mother up on the platform. He had his mother, his sister, everybody. There was his mother, and he said: "Would I do this to my mother?" Well, he just did. I want to say: "Hey, Mama, he just did it to you in clause 48 in Bill C-28. He did it."

Mr. Shields: She does not earn $50,000.

Mr. Rodriguez: I do not know what the Prime Minister's mother earns. I have no idea, but he did it. In fact, not only did he do it in setting these ceilings of $50,000. That is only for starters, because we are down the road. As a matter of fact, the seniors citizens' network of this country puts out a paper called *One Voice*, and I want to quote what it said:

> In the meantime, once we have accepted the principle of the clawback as part of our system, governments of the day are free to set the threshold as they wish—$30,000, $20,000, etc.
>
> There are widespread fears that the clawback is the "thin edge of the wedge", a wedge which will destroy Canada's much envied universal social benefits program.

Those are the words of the senior citizens of this country, the united senior citizens of this country; not an isolated group in any one province. This is a national organization.

The Vanier Institute said that this destroys families, that it does nothing for family life. I wish all those people on the Tory benches who claim to be for life would only stop to ask themselves: "How do I practise my pro-life positions on the government side?" How do they practise it? Is it by cutting back all the social benefits that help the family, that support the family, that strengthen the family? Is it by chipping away at benefits for children? Is that how we show we love life? Is that how we show we are for children?

Michael Wilson said it, and we should never forget it. I am saying that social justice is not going to be meted out by the community. Michael Wilson said it is going to be meted out by the bloodless verdict of the market. That is what Michael Wilson said.

Mr. Shields: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I know my hon. friend does not mean to do this in the heat of the argument, but he should not, as we all know, refer to an hon. member in this House by his name. He should either refer to him by his constituency or his portfolio if he is in cabinet. I think that hon. member knows that.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I am sure the hon. member for Nickel Belt is quite aware of that. The hon. member has the floor.

Mr. Rodriguez: I was just going to say, Santa Clawback said that these decisions are not going to be meted out by the community, but they are going to be meted out by the bloodless verdict of the market, except it is the victims of these cutbacks that are going to shed a lot of blood. There is no bloodlessness about what they have in mind.

I wish that the Tories would just simply be honest to their Tory roots with respect to these social programs. I always said when I was in a campaign against a Liberal and a Tory that I have no respect for Liberals because they have no principles, but I have some respect for Conservatives because at least they have principles. I might not agree with them, but at least they have them. Since they have applauded me, now comes the question: Will they at least be honest? Can you be true to the principle of truthfulness and really say what you are about, which is to destroy universality? Isn't that what you are really after? The Prime Minister denies it, the member for Brampton denies it, the member for Athabasca denies it. Why don't they simply stand up and say:

"Yes, we don't believe in universality and we want to start this process of de-universalitizing the programs".

• (2130)

I say to the Conservatives, be honest! Be true to your principles. You believe in the triumphant individual. Why don't you simply say every person is responsible for his or her own pension program. Why don't you just say it? Why don't you say that there is no responsibility for a system that creates votes to redistribute that vote? Why don't you just say it?

Because, Madam Speaker, it is the truth. It is the truth and the one person who tells it like it is, is the one person I have any kind of respect for now on the Tory benches and that is—I can't say his name—Blenkie. Everybody knows Blenkie. Now I think he is euphemistically known as the member for Mississauga South.

He wrote to a gentleman who had written to him regarding the tax back for the old age pensions, and this is what he said:

"With respect to your clawback matter I understand your concern," Blenkarn wrote in response to a letter of complaint filed by 61-year old William Daly.

"We have decided to eliminate universality and we do that in a sense by the clawback in both family allowance and the old age pension."

"As you know, it has been a Conservative philosophy for some time that distributions from the state ought to go essentially to those in need. While the clawback may be unfair and sneaky, it is there."

That is the one Conservative who tells the truth. God knows he tells it in a very colourful way.

An Hon. Member: Where is he now?

Mr. Rodriguez: Well, we all know he is cooking up another theft from the taxpayers called the grief and suffering tax. Madam Speaker, notice what has now crept into the lexicon: "that it will essentially go to those in need." As democratic socialists the system we fought for was a system that allowed people to maintain respect, that allowed people in their retiring years to live with some dignity. It wasn't the system that says, well, you have to apply and there will be a needs test and if you are really poor, we are going to give you charity. This is the philosophy of the triumphant individual. We are in an era of triumphalism. Let us not kid ourselves, Madam Speaker. This is what we are in and these are the acolytes of triumphalism. They are the acolytes and here the Prime Minister denies that this is anti-universality.

With Pinocchio it was the nose. With this Prime Minister it is the chin. Somebody said you can always tell when the Prime Minister is not exactly telling the truth—he moves his lips. I wouldn't be so cruel, but the fact of the matter is why would he persist in saying that this is not a taking away of the universality principle when it is admitted at least by one honest Conservative that it is? At least let the Conservatives be honest. We can deal with something when it is out in the open. But to have this sparring over what they really mean is counterproductive.

So I say to members on the other side, let's go back to what we decided when we built this country with respect to social programs. Do not sit there like a bunch of sheep. Come forward, defy your Prime Minister, defy the Neanderthals in the front benches.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau—La Lièvre): Madam Speaker, after listening to the various speakers, I really have the impression we are hearing a dialogue of the deaf. At the same time, it reminds me of a phrase used by the French to define politics. They say that politics is war in peace time, and if we listen to the debate in the House, it is clear this is a war of words.

If we consider what has happened in government during the last ten years, I think Canadians have reason to be disturbed. I repeat, the last ten years, because I am not blaming either party which was responsible for governing this country.

Nevertheless, when we consider the figures, and especially those covering the past five years, we see that in less than 20 years, a deficit that was quite minimal managed to go up to over $340 billion, and there were also the many tax increases we have had since then. Especially in recent years, we have had many new taxes that have put a real burden on taxpayers, especially those with an annual income between $25,000 and $50,000.

Madam Speaker, about two weeks ago, I met a number of businessmen, mostly in the tourism industry, in Vancouver, Calgary and Toronto, and our discussions were remarkably similar. Everywhere, businessmen are saying that the tax burden has become a real problem, and they know there is a problem. Everybody says it is unfair and inequitable, but they cannot say exactly where

the problem lies. But they do realize that the tax system is unfair and inequitable, and they are right.

The last time there was an attempt at tax reform in this country was 25 or 30 years ago. That was when the famous Carter Commission report was tabled here in the House but, unfortunately, it was never published. One of my Montreal colleagues mentioned the Carter Commission's famous turn of phrase: "A buck is a buck is a buck". Whether you get it from your pension fund or from investment, or by any other means, it should all be fairly taxed. If it isn't, obviously the money will have to come from another source.

We have seen the many taxes introduced during the past five years put the main tax burden on the middle class, while our financial elite has enjoyed unprecedented tax benefits. It doesn't take a university degree to realize there is something fundamentally wrong with our tax system.

We now have a government making a decision that is unprecedented in our history since we first had social programs. They tell us that when our annual income reaches $50,000, we no longer deserve to get any benefits from the State. And the fact that people made sacrifices to earn this money and invest it over the years doesn't count. It doesn't make sense! And that is why Canadians are sending petitions from all over the country. There is not a single member in this House who has not received petitions or letters from people who have been seriously affected by the way the Government has decided to tax them. The subject is on everybody lips. What does it take to convince the Government that we need sweeping tax reforms?

• (2140)

It doesn't take a university degree, as I said before. It takes some common sense to realize that things have reached the point that we are asking for a revolt.

The middle class is so busy trying to survive and raise a family that it cannot afford tax experts or tax lawyers to find all those tax loopholes. The only class that can afford these frills is the financial elite. If we look at the legislation passed by the House during the past 20 years, we have to say that the governments in power during that time were legislating for the benefit of the financial elite. And if anyone can prove the contrary, I will resign my seat. It's true, and we all are aware of this. We don't have the political guts to put an end to this situation.

[*English*]

Mr. McDermid: Watch your blood pressure.

Mr. Assad: Blood pressure or not, you are the first people who should realize the financial elite of this country have had the run of the country and you are just making it easier for them.

Mr. McDermid: Oh yeah!

Mr. Assad: Yes. You cannot prove the opposite, you know very well.

An Hon. Member: The way you left the country it's a disgrace.

Mr. Assad: Disgrace. There is no disgrace, the facts are the facts. It is a disgrace the way you have been prolonging your lies and the double-talk you have given in this House.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, I have just been interrupted by a member who doesn't know what he is talking about. He would have us believe that everything is beautiful, when we are looking at unprecedented deficits and very real problems. Do you think I am the only one who shows an interest in this matter and who is mad as hell? All we have to do is travel around the country as I did to realize that people have reached the end of their tether and that the only reason they do not revolt is probably because Canadians have never had a tendency to do so.

However, people do feel the burden, deep inside, and they are concerned. They are concerned when they see their elected representatives, like the Hon. Member who just left the House, who sits in the House as a Minister, turn away as though the problem did not exist. But the problem does exist and we will have to face up to that problem in the House pretty soon. The time will come when Canadians— It is quite true that they are getting petitions from all over the country and from all kinds of organizations that have had enough!

Like most Members here in the House, I represent the middle class, the backbone of our society. I am certainly not exaggerating when I tell you that they have reached

the end of their tether and want some justice in our tax system. They know and we know there are problems. It isn't easy, but we have to accept certain decisions, and the political will must be there. Let them have the courage to say they will introduce tax reform, genuine tax reform. And in fact, we could usefully embrace some of the principles defined by a man who was a hero in our history at the time of the Carter Commission.

It was recognized as a revolutionary document in several fields, one which demonstrated some basic principles, that regardless of income, whether from investments, capital gains, pensions, whatever, everything should be taxed. Even succession duties were removed. But many experts and economists say that such a tax is quite appropriate in a democratic country—it is another way of redistributing wealth. That is one of the principles. This document could be used as the basis for a real reform. But unfortunately neither your government nor the previous one implemented the main recommendations of the Carter Commission report, and that is what we must look at. I believe that my fellow citizens, like those whom I have met, who send letters on all sides of every issue, are telling us that we do indeed need a reform. They are quite interested in seeing a government live within its means.

But when they see the deficits and the taxes piling up, they realize there is a fundamental problem. They do not have to be great economists. How many of my colleagues here saw their parents during the depression years forced to make more sacrifices to avoid debt? They adjusted. And we have a long history which proves this ability to adjust. Now, can we believe for a moment that a national or other government can survive on the brink of bankruptcy, especially when the time comes to take such drastic action as cutting vital public programs? That would almost be admitting failure; it would almost mean bankruptcy. But what we must remember is that in this Chamber, we represent all classes of society and to a large extent the middle class which makes up most of the population. These people are saying that they can no longer bear the tax burden. So, our role is very simple. As all Members of the House know, and I am not the only one to say so, time will come when your own constituents will litterally knock at your door and tell you that changes are necessary, that a reform is imperative. Otherwise, we will all suffer, and that is the fate awaiting us.

To conclude, Madam Speaker, I am sure that if every one of my colleagues here in the House took the time to ask their constituents—they do not have to do so since they receive letters—if every one of them was getting to the heart of the problem, they would see that most of the people are concerned and are counting on us to find at least a partial solution.

[*English*]

Mr. Neil Young (Beaches—Woodbine): Madam Speaker, I only want to say a few words tonight on Bill C-28, which is an act to amend the Income Tax Act, the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Federal Post-Secondary Education and Health Contributions Act at this second reading debate.

I listened to some of the comments made by the last several speakers who had the floor. Quite frankly, many of the arguments, as the Hon. Member for Nickel Belt pointed out, go back to the time when old age pensions were first introduced in Canada, namely, that people should be self-sufficient. One of the arguments that I heard tonight was why should someone making $50,000 a year receive an old age pension?

I remember in 1985 when this government was proposing to deindex old age pensions, one of the arguments given then was why should bank managers and bank presidents receive old age pensions. That question has been answered both in the House in previous debates and by Canadian society generally. The reason why people should receive those universal social benefits is that they paid for them. That is the only basic argument: They paid for them.

• (2150)

If the government believes that because that individual received that social benefit, his or her income is too high, then there is another way to address that, namely, to bring in a fairer taxation system, not to attack a social benefit that is universally supported in this country and, indeed, can only exist if it is received on a universal basis. Unless society broadly supports that kind of program, it will fail. I think everybody is in general agreement with that.

Senior citizens have paid for those pensions. It is not something that governments give to senior citizens through the goodness of their heart that can be taken

away at will. Senior citizens paid for the benefits they received. They paid for them through the income tax system in recent years. It is the same with family allowances. Both programs are already taxed when people receive them. Old age pensions are taxed as a part of income. Family allowances are taxed as a part of income. Why does the government feel it is necessary once again to go after senior citizens?

I remember in the last campaign I received a phone call from a very active senior in my community. I know she will not object to my using her name, Gerry Schwalm. Gerry called me the day after the Prime Minister was seen on national television with his mother assuring seniors in Canada that the opposition parties, the Liberals and the New Democrats were lying to them when we said that the first thing that would be attacked under free trade would be social programs. The Prime Minister pointed to his dear old mother and said: "Would I touch her pension?". Gerry Schwalm said to me: "That guy just scared me half to death. Every time I hear that guy saying that he won't do something to social programs, he is going to do it".

In 1984, this Prime Minister said: "Universal social programs are a sacred trust". It took him five months before he tried to rip them apart. On October 18, 1988, in Summerside, Prince Edward Island, another community that is going to appreciate this, the Prime Minister said: "Let me say a special word to the senior citizens. In the future in Canada we will be doing more not less for all of you. As long as I am the Prime Minister of Canada, social benefits, especially those for the elderly, will be improved not diminished by our government which is committed to social justice and fairness for our Canadians". Some social justice and some commitment!

Seniors in this country trusted this government when they elected it in 1984. By the time 1988 rolled around there were not too many senior citizens in this country who believed the government any more. I would think there would be even less today after seeing what this government is proposing to do to seniors once again in this piece of legislation.

Senior citizens are not stupid. They know that when the government is talking about clawing back pension benefits for those who earn in excess of $50,000 a year today, next year is going to be a different figure, and the year after that is going to be a different figure.

This government has never believed in the pension system. Since I came here in 1980, I could count on two hands the number of times that that government has tried to go after the pension systems in this country. In fact, just prior to the last election, the Minister of Finance tabled a White Paper on pension reform in the private sector prior to the election. There was such an outcry in this country from organized groups that the government withdrew the White Paper, but it is still sitting there. The government withdrew it because it knew it was going to hurt in the election campaign. However, the White Paper is still sitting there and I will put money on the fact that before we get to the next election we are going to see it again. The Tories are not happy, and they are not going to be satisfied with just going after the public sector, they are going to go after the private sector.

I would recommend to every member in this House, especially the ones who were not here between 1984 and 1988, to get a copy of that White Paper and read it because that is the next fight on pensions.

Now, I said that I was not going to speak too long and I do not intend to. However, I do want to read something and I am going to do it very slowly because I want the government to take heed of it. It is a letter written to *The Globe and Mail* in Toronto by a senior who was recalling some of the recent history on pension plans and, in particular, how the Old Age Security Act was funded. This letter states:

> Between 1952 and 1971, all taxpayers paid surtaxes to provide for OAS.

Between 1952 and 1971, Canadians paid a surtax to provide the old age pension. It did not run out.

> Beginning in 1972, the Trudeau government made the surtax invisible and raised the tax rate by some 3 percentage points, with the funds raised going to general accounts—and this remains unchanged. Therefore, all old age security recipients have contributed towards this pension plan; they continue to contribute even during retirement; and, lest it be overlooked, such pension payments are included as taxable income.

And that is what this writer calls "double taxation".

Senior citizens have paid and bought and are still paying for their old age pensions. It is not something that somebody is handing to them out of the goodness of their heart. They paid for them. It is much the same argument we are facing from some members on the other side, not all members, but from some members

who seem to truly believe that somehow or other seniors are getting charity when they receive OAS and that that charity can be given or taken away at will. They paid for it.

It is much the same argument as was used by that government during the last Parliament when it went after civil servants' pensions, civil servants who, numbers of years ago, agreed to have 1 per cent of their income go to pay for indexation of pensions and this government tried to take it away from them. They had paid for it.

It is much the same argument that we faced from this government when we had amendments to the Pension Benefits Standards Act around 1987 when we dealt with surpluses and private plans. Who do surpluses belong to? Do they belong to the employer or do they belong to the employee? My argument is that they belong to the employee. They are deferred wages. They were negotiated in collective agreements. Those pensions were given up as a part of the wage package in order to provide that individual with a decent pension on retirement. Those moneies belong to the individual. It is no less the case with old age pensioners. They paid for the pensions. They bought them. They belong to seniors.

This government has no right to come along with this kind of legislation and try to grab that money from them. Describing what is happening in this bill as a clawback is absolutely right. It is an apt description of what this government is trying to do, if it gets away with it. It is a clawback. It is like sticking a hand in a senior citizen's pocket and taking money right out of it. That is what this government is doing.

• (2200)

I think it is insidious. I feel it is offensive. It is something I will not support. I would hope that by the time we get into a vote on this that members of the government side who recognize that what is happening here is wrong and should not be allowed to happen will join with the opposition to defeat this.

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise and have the opportunity to add my voice to the voice of the opposition against Bill C–28 and to add my voice on behalf of the residents in my riding of Okanagan—Shuswap.

This is a fairly substantial piece of legislation. There are about 59 amendments contained in this omnibus bill and certainly I will not be touching on all amendments. I would like to concentrate on a few of them. To begin with clause 47, which is the increased surtax, I think a lot of Canadians do not even realize that virtually every Canadian who pays taxes in this country also is paying a surtax.

People across this country, particularly those who live a long way from Ottawa, out on the west coast for example, feel that the role of the federal government is almost indistinguishable from the role of the provincial government. They are a little confused with what the responsibilities of each of them are. I tell you, Madam Speaker, that breaks down when it comes to tax matters, particularly income taxes. When it comes to tax matters, everyone knows that it is Ottawa's hand that is in their back pocket.

A surtax is defined as an additional or an excessive load or burden in addition to ordinary income tax. In 1986 a surtax was introduced by this federal government on federal income taxes and the rate at that time was established at 3 per cent. It does not apply only to upper–income Canadians. It is payable by virtually any Canadian who is paying federal income tax. They are also paying a surtax.

The government makes the argument for the fairness of imposing this tax by saying that it will ensure that the burden of deficit reduction falls most heavily on those who are best able to carry it. That statement was made in this House recently by the member for Wild Rose and is recorded in *Hansard*. Obviously since the surtax is payable by virtually anyone who has a taxable income and not just by the top few who can most afford to pay it, the burden does not fall upon only the shoulders of those who can most afford to pay it. The argument of using higher–income Canadians for deficit reduction is a fallacy. It is a sham. It is like this government is a sham in what it is trying to do with this legislation.

The finance minister said that when this surtax was introduced it would be a temporary measure. We have heard of temporary measures before. The income tax I believe was introduced after the First World War as a

temporary measure and we still are dealing with it. Just like the surtax was introduced as a temporary measure in 1986, we are still facing it.

A goods and services tax was introduced in the April budget. The finance minister said that when such a tax would be introduced the surtax would be removed. Instead, the surtax is being increased to 4 per cent for 1989 and to 5 per cent for 1990. There is no removal of this surtax. We are getting hammered once again. More is being applied. The GST has been proposed. Where is the provision to get rid of this surtax? Where is the promise that the Minister of Finance made at that time? I think the government is following the axiom of why spoil a good election promise by actually doing something about it.

Moving on to clause 56, this clause implements changes to our federal transfer payments to the provinces for health costs and post-secondary education costs.

The budget that we saw introduced earlier this year outlined a decrease in these payments over the next four years. In that time period the four western provinces will lose $633 million. What is this going to do to health care and education in those provinces? To British Columbians it is going to mean that all too familiar theme that we experienced after the recession in the early 1980s, during the restraint era of the Bennett government, the years that we are still trying to recover from. The news of decreased federal transfer payments is not good news for British Columbians, is not good news for the residents of Okanagan-Shuswap.

A good education for our children, which is insured by these federal transfer payments when it comes to post-secondary education, is not just an expense, it is an investment. It is an investment in the future of this country. It is certainly an investment in the future of our young people.

Being wealthy is not relative to intelligence. Our best and our brightest will not necessarily be among the ones who can afford the best schools. Adequate funding for post-secondary education today, as we all know, is crucial to the future of all Canadians. Reducing these transfer payments jeopardizes that future, it jeopardizes the future of our young people.

In the past Canada has had an exemplary health system. Today I think we would all agree that that system is deteriorating because of inadequate funding and also a tendency of governments to blame the users. Yet health care in Canada is a right. We do not want the American system in which hospital admittance is determined by one's ability to pay, and certainly not by the degree of illness or injury.

Let us turn to clause 48, which is one that most members have been focusing on over the last little while, and that is on the family allowance and old age security clawback, what the government calls a benefit reduction tax.

In the debate on bill C-28, it has been pointed out a number of times in the House that from the 1950s to 1971 people paid about 4 per cent of their income into the Old Age Security pension. My colleague who spoke just prior to me this evening said they have paid for this benefit. They were investing in their future, in their twilight years when people put money into the Old Age Security program. It was a contributory program and people did not mind paying into it because they trusted the government, and they believed that when they reached retirement age that money would be there for them.

Today, this government proposes to tax back that pension. What was paid for by those contributors then and through the years is now being taken away from them. It is being snatched back. It is being literally ripped from their back pockets. That is why seniors right across this country have lost faith and trust in this government. They have seen once again that it never lives up to the commitments it makes.

The Okanagan-Shuswap in the interior of British Columbia is in large measure a retirement area because of the climate and the geography. We have a large percentage of people who are over the age of 65. The demographics in the riding indicate that more than 15 per cent of the population in my area are seniors. The changes that this government is about to make with these clawback provisions will seriously affect the financial future of seniors in those communities. A lot of these retired folk do not receive over $50,000 a year in income, so they are not going to be affected initially. At the same time they have expressed to me in no uncertain terms their fears of what this process has initiated.

• (2210)

They recognize that today when this government sets the clawback threshold at $50,000, tomorrow that threshold may be lowered. I submit that it will be lowered to $30,000, perhaps even lower. Although many of the seniors will not be impacted by these changes, what about tomorrow? They know from what they have seen that they cannot trust this government and they are worried about their financial security as this government tries to rip away the benefits that these people have paid for, trusting that they will be there when they finally retire.

The Old Age Security clawback is based on the formula of inflation minus 3 per cent. As we saw in 1985, seniors fully understand the consequences of deindexing pensions. They knew what the government was up to when it wanted to deindex the pensions from keeping up with the inflation rate. They caught members across the House in the act of trying to quietly claw back those provisions. They stopped them then and what the government has done in an insidious way is come back at the problem again through the back door. It is trying to claw back these pensions by capping them at a higher level. It is a mean spirited provision and it is no wonder that seniors across this country have lost trust and lost faith in this Prime Minister and this government.

The Minister of Finance says that only 4.3 per cent of senior Canadians currently receiving the Old Age Security benefits will be affected by the clawback. That is in 1990. In 10 years it will be up to 8 per cent. In 20 years it will be up to 25 per cent if nothing else is done and we all know that we cannot trust that nothing else will be done.

A 30 year old in the workforce today earning an annual salary of $30,000 will see part of his or her Old Age Security benefits clawed back by the time they retire. We are part of an aging population in this country and that which is of concern to seniors today will be of concern to all of us tomorrow.

I want to move on to the section on family allowances and the clawback provision affecting this benefit. Whereas seniors would need to have a net income of about $79,000 before they would fully lose their old age security benefits, when you look at the threshold for the family allowances that threshold is much, much lower. We have to remind members on the other side of this House why mothers are paid a family allowance. It is in recognition of the very real costs associated with raising children. Our children are our future. The future of those children, I think, is the collective responsibility of all of us in Canada. Anyone who has children knows the significant costs a family bears in raising those little ones from toddlers to adulthood.

Today the family allowance is only a token payment. It does not begin to cover the real costs. The payments fall far short of what it costs to bring up a child. To tax back this token payment amounts to robbery. It constitutes a total disregard for the families and the children and the future of those children in Canada.

In the initial year of the imposition of this clawback, the first year in which it comes into effect, 14 per cent of Canadian families who now receive family allowances will be affected. In 10 years that figure is expected to double simply because of the inflationary aspect of it. In previous speeches in this debate it has been said many times that the clawback funds from Old Age Security provisions and family allowances will be used.

We have heard the government members talk about it time and time again. The argument they give is that those benefits will be used to help those Canadians who really need it, a noble gesture by all means. When you think about it and analyse it, it is totally illogical.

It has been stated also that the imposition of the clawback is for the purposes of bringing down the debt. How are you going to use it to bring down the deficit while at the same time you are using it to funnel it to those people who really need it? It is a logical consistency. The government is guilty of doublespeak on this.

The money that is refunded by the clawback tax is not going to be used to increase the benefits to those seniors and to those families that really need it. On the other hand the government is saying it is going into deficit reduction. In fact, when you look at it, more money for more people will be collected with this tax over the next few years because these benefits are only partially indexed. More and more people will begin to qualify for that clawback provision.

Seniors in this country want to pay their fair share. They want to try to help in the difficult challenge we have of deficit reduction. Families in this country want to do the same thing, but the emphasis here is on the word "fair". How is it fair when one group is singled out and must pay extra taxes when somebody else who is receiving the same income does not pay those taxes at all? A senior with an income of over $50,000 is now going to be subject to a clawback of those very benefits that he paid for years down the road. Somebody under the age of 65 making exactly the same salary does not have to pay that

tax at all. Is that fair? I suggest to you it is not fair. It is not fair in the least.

Not only is it not fair but I also submit that it smacks of age discrimination. A seniors group has pointed out that the amount that the government is trying to save by not paying these Old Age Security benefits, by clawing them back, could in fact be collected by raising the taxes of high income earners in our country—the well-to-do—by one percentage point. We could collect the same amount without having to touch the Old Age Security provisions.

Much has been said on the violation of the principle of universality with the erosion of these social programs. The Prime Minister and his broken promises and I repeat, his broken promises, have been quoted by almost every member who has attacked this legislation. The quotes are memorable because they are so incredible. Whether it is only 4.3 per cent of seniors as the Minister of Finance contends or whether it is only 14 per cent of families that are going to be subjected to this clawback, any one person treated differently simply means that the concept of universality which the Prime Minister called a sacred trust is gone.

The government argues that the programs are still universal, that everyone still receives a cheque, but a number of the recipients have to return those cheques. The numbers who will fall under this category as I stated before will steadily increase over the years.

There is no question that this is the beginning of the end of the enshrined concept of universality the Prime Minister holds apparently so dear to heart. These programs are no longer universal, but they are by the intent of this legislation now selective.

I want to turn to one final point and I think this is probably one of the most salient issues in my arguments tonight because I think that one of the most telling points that comes out of the debates and the comments that we have heard throughout this evening is that there is something very elementary lacking, and that is the lack of trust in this government as a result of what it has done over its two terms. It is an oft-repeated comment, whether it is on this bill or the goods and services tax, that this is only the beginning. This is only the beginning of the end.

• (2220)

People trusted what was said by the Conservatives and this government. When they promised not to touch the social programs they believed them. People trusted the Prime Minister when he said that social benefits especially to the elderly would be improved. It would not be diminished. Those are not my words, those are the words of the Prime Minister. The Canadian people trusted him when he said that and I submit that that trust has been abused. Its sole purpose was to win votes. That trust is gone. Canadians no longer trust this government. Universality is gone, trust is gone and I hope that soon enough this government will also be gone.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Although it is getting late, Madam Speaker, I should like to deal briefly with this Bill, because we have just had a week off. Most of us, I think, spent it in our respective ridings. Madam Speaker, I am sure you too have constituents who are quite worried about the fact that the government is planning to raise new taxes. Canadians are complaining that they cannot make ends meet. This is the very first day we spend in the House. What are we dealing with? Taxes again. Taxes, whether sale taxes, income taxes, sale taxes on goods and services, all kinds of taxes.

As recently as this afternoon, because I had been unable to return all my calls, I tried to reach some of my callers from Ottawa. For instance, there was a lady who wanted to know if she could collect her child tax credit before filing her income tax return because she could no longer make ends meet.

Madam Speaker, it is easy for the Government, whatever its political stripes, to say that it must raise new taxes. It needs only introduce a new legislation. Can the old pensioner who does not have enough money seek more from the government? Can the worker who cannot balance his budget obtain a raise from his employer? I think the time has come for us to put a stop to this madness and behave responsibly. It is not the way to solve the problem. Madam Speaker, I realize that for the past five years, the government has insisted on the need to raise taxes to cut the deficit. But the deficit has not increased. As of March 31, 1984, according to the official statistics for the last complete fiscal year before this government came to power, the deficit amounted to $32 billion. But if we look at the Minister of Finances'

forecast for next year, we are still at $32 billion. After five years of an extraordinary economic performance, including 32 tax increases, the deficit still amounts to $32 billion, while the national debt will have tripled by the time this Government completes its second term. Tax increases, therefore, are definitely not the solution, and by the time the new tax is implemented in January 1991—

[*English*]

The GST will be imposed, a 9 per cent tax across the board, on everything. The government may try to tell Canadians that yes, you will pay 9 per cent on everything but the federal manufacturers' sales tax of 13.5 per cent will be removed. First of all, how is this going to happen. There is no way the government, if it is looking for control, is going to remove that 13.5 per cent.

Speaking of the 13.5 per cent, in 1984 when this government took office, the tax was only 9 per cent. In five years it increased it to 4.5 per cent. What guarantee do Canadians have that the new GST of 9 per cent will remain 9 per cent. Maybe in a few years it will be 20 per cent. Imagine 20 per cent or 9 per cent plus the provincial sales tax.

The government tells Canadians to look at the over 40 countries around the world that have GST or value-added tax.

But it forgets to tell Canadians that is the only tax, one sales tax. We have 11 sales taxes in this country. When you add all that together, Canadians cannot take it any more. It is very easy.

You do not have to be an economist or a genius to understand that Canadians cannot afford to pay tax any more. And what do we do? We take a week off. The major concern of our electors is stop increasing taxes. The first day that we come back, we have a bill and we have to stay late into the night because the government is in a rush and has to pass the bill because it needs the money. Where will this money come from? It will come from the taxpayers.

The members on the other side might laugh, but I can assure them that in my riding and in many of my colleague's ridings, it is not a laughing matter. It is a very serious matter. Canadians are fed up. I would not be surprised if by the end of 1990 we will not have a tax revolt in this country because Canadians are fed up.

I do not want to take too much time of this House. I think if the Conservative members want to vote, I am sure that when the time comes Canadians will judge them. I want to make sure it is in the record that Canadians are fed up with tax increases and new taxes. I think it is time if the government wants to look seriously at the deficit problem and the debt problem, it should look elsewhere because in the past five years we have seen over 30 tax increases. After five good years of economic performance the annual deficit is at the same level as it was five years ago and the national debt is going to be tripled by the end of this term of the government.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Madam Speaker, I rise to participate in the second reading debate on Bill C-28, an act which has the effect of implementing the April budget of the government and in particular the provisions which will claw back, as the expression has come to be used, old age pensions and family allowances and which will cut back a number of important federal funding programs including the Federal Provincial Fiscal Arrangements, Federal Post-Secondary Education and Health Contributions Act.

We have heard a lot of anger in the House tonight. I share that anger and I know many of my constituents in Victoria share the anger at the government's approach on this particular bill and, more generally, the approach it is now clear it has been taking over the last year on a range of public policies for this country. This bill fits in the over-all program and agenda which the Conservative party is now foisting upon the people of Canada. That agenda started in December with the free trade legislation.

Mrs. Campbell: (Vancouver Centre): Hurray.

Mr. Brewin: We hear "hurray" from the member for Vancouver Centre. I am pleased to see the member for Vancouver Centre here tonight. I am looking forward to

her rising in her place and challenging this legislation which is punitive to seniors, punitive to the poor, punitive to families in Canada, punitive to those who are trying to get an education in this country. So far we have heard silence from the Conservative members from British Columbia. I look forward to her intervention in this debate.

The clawback provisions of this bill are the Conservative's rebound from the political failure they met in 1984–85 when they tried more directly to end universality in old age pensions and in family allowances. They retained a small portion, even then, of their attack on universality because they allowed a certain amount of deindexing through the work of inflation. Now they have come upon a formula which has permitted them to destroy the principle of universality with relatively small outcry from the country as a whole. I believe the lack of response in the public is in part due to a defeatism brought on by the sense of loss that comes with the free trade agreement, a loss of the direction of this country, but also the sense that the Conservatives, with their majority, are driving through a reactionary and regressive agenda which is going to change the nature of this country over the next few years.

• (2230)

It took years, a fight led by parliamentarians such as J.S. Woodsworth and Stanley Knowles, to finally push the Government of Canada into introducing old age pensions in this country. Back in 1926, Mr. Woodsworth and his colleagues used the minority government situation to force a Liberal government to introduce old age pensions, but the old age pensions were then introduced with a means test. It then took over 20 years to finally persuade the Government of Canada to change that, and then it was not an act of generosity on the part of the Government and Parliament of Canada but because of the political threat from the CCF, as it then was, which had been pounding away at the issue on behalf of seniors that the means test was unfair and ungenerous.

Finally, the principle was established that as a right, Canadians were entitled to an old age pension. Rich, poor or middle income, irrespective of income, Canadians as Canadians were entitled to family allowances. These universal programs meant that we had a distinctive social network. They formed the base of our distinctive social network in this country which distinguished us from the country to the south.

Conservatives never did like universality. In fact, the member for Mississauga South who is the chairman of the Standing Committee on Finance and has this fall been regaling Canadians with a series of quotes, said in a letter to a Mr. Daley from Edmonton: "With respect to your clawback matter, I understand your concern. We have decided to eliminate universality". He went on: "As you know, it has been a Conservative philosophy for some time that distributions from the state ought to go essentially to those in need. While the clawback may be unfair and sneaky, it is there".

The Conservatives tried in an awkward and messy way in 1984 and 1985 to put their agenda into effect. Now they are doing it again with three full years before the election, greeting an electorate that is tired and worn down by the hypocrisy and reactionism of this government.

We are not going to allow this bill to pass without speaking out. The people of Victoria, and particularly the seniors of Victoria, have had it up to here with the broken promises of the government. This was the government, during the election last year in its attempt to defend free trade, which was forced to say, "This will not erode our social programs. Universality is a sacred trust". It did not take the government four months before it had broken that commitment to the seniors of this country and to the people of this country.

The Conservatives are, by this provision, changing the income tax law so that at a certain point, 100 per cent of income earned from old age pensions or family allowances will be taxed back. If you earn your money through dividends, salaries, capital gains or gifts, those are taxed, if at all, at a different rate. At a certain level, old age pensions are taxed 100 per cent.

This breaks faith with election commitments. The cynicism of the Canadian people continues to grow at the speed with which this government breaks its election commitments, but it breaks a long-standing commitment from this Parliament to the people of Canada who have tried to plan their futures as seniors on certain commitments coming from the Parliament of Canada. This government, instead of what we would say in the labour context of grandfathering the clause are in effect making a retroactive change. They are changing today the basic pensions which frugal, prudent Canadians over the years

have used as a base for planning their retirement income. I say that this change must not occur.

Let me deal with a couple of other aspects of this bill. The government has said that in this new free trade era, education is one of its major priorities. Yet this bill will have the effect of cutting back even further on federal support for basic education and for post-secondary education. This bill will permit the government to cut back on health care and on social assistance across Canada. It does so in the name of deficit cutting.

The seniors of Victoria, the people of Victoria, the people across this country, know that we cannot permit the deficit to continue, a deficit which has grown to mammoth proportions under this government. What we say should be the priorities in deficit cutting are not to be placed on the backs of the seniors or families or students or those involved in health care, the poor in this country, but instead we must attack the deficit in this way.

We must cut government waste. We must take a hard look at the $1 billion we are spending on maintaining troops in an outdated commitment in Europe. We must look at reducing interest rates. We must look at an eco-tax, at a wealth tax. We have to change the corporate tax rates in this country and we have to change the tax rates at the upper level.

This government has cut the tax rates at the upper levels. A simple increase to 34 per cent would add nearly $2 billion to the coffers of the government. That is what should be done instead of the kind of changes which are contemplated in this bill.

With the GST, with these clawback provisions, this government continues its agenda of eroding social programs, of creating two nations, a rich and a poor, of bringing us further into the same programs as our colleagues to the south of us have. We are now beginning to look more and more like the United States because of the agenda which this government is foisting on the Canadian people. I ask this House of Commons to defeat this bill when it comes to a vote later this evening.

Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak on Bill C-28, an act to amend the Income Tax Act. Specifically, I would like to speak to the clawback clauses in the bill.

If I may, Madam Speaker, I would like to go back a little to what is going on. As a member of Parliament from an opposition party, I have had a chance to watch the implementation of the Tory agenda. At times I have been at a loss to explain what the government is trying to accomplish.

During the past four months, the government has introduced the UI bill which will place the entire burden on working Canadians and small businesses. We have also seen cuts to regional development funding to econmically depressed areas of Canada. We have seen the government support the Bank of Canada's high interest rate policies which again hurts small business and working people, while at the same time making Canadian exports more expensive. Now we have the goods and services tax which takes income out of the hands of Canadians and increases the cost of goods and services to consumers and the operating cost to small business.

• (2240)

When the election was in full swing, there were some comments made by the Minister of Finance, who at that time called the Leader of the Liberal Party and the Leader of the New Democratic Party liars, and I would like to refer back to that if I may.

Mr. McDermid: The Prime Minister never said that.

Mr. Parker: I said the Minister of Finance. In *The Globe and Mail* of October 31, he was quoted as saying, "Programs which are generally available such as medicare, pensions, old age security, aren't trade-distorting subsidies, and are not subject to trade laws".

The Leader of the Liberal Party in the debate Tuesday night said that he, the Prime Minister, has agreed to let the Americans have a say in the future of our social programs such as unemployment insurance and medicare. The Minister of Finance said, "I say to Mr. Turner, that is a lie". That is a quote from *The Globe and Mail*.

The comment was made by the Leader of the Liberal Party that our unemployment insurance programs were in jeopardy. The government has backed out of that

program and has now put it solely in the hands of the workers and the employers. The government does not contribute five cents so there is no subsidy and the Tories can say to their American friends that they are fulfilling our free trade agreement.

The New Democratic Party Leader said in the House of Commons that senior citizens want health and social programs maintained and enhanced for future generations. The trade agreement jeopardizes these programs, threatens to cut them as those in the United States, and the Minister of Finance said that is a lie too.

Here we have a piece of legislation that is going to for them over the years and are entitled to them. I want to say it is a sad day for me as the member of Parliament for Kootenay East to have to stand up here in this House and say to pensioners that this is what the government is doing to you.

I want to ask this question on behalf of the seniors in my riding who have come to me and asked what has this government got against the senior citizens. In the last Parliament the Tories brought in a drug patent law that changed the patent laws for drug distribution in Canada, and it has increased the cost of prescription drugs drastically. They tried to deindex old age pensions and through a strong fight by seniors' associations, we were able to stop them. Now they want to claw back our pension rights.

Another thing that they have done with regard to pensioners, and this has never been addressed, and it is another outright steal, is the changes to VIA Rail policy. Many of those seniors worked for the railways throughout the years, some 40 to 50 years service and have a pass on the railway. This government is going to take that away and those people who have paid for those passes through their working agreements are not even going to be able to travel on those trains.

What have you got against our seniors? That is what they are asking. I am proud to be a New Democrat and to look back at the history of Tommy Douglas and Stanley Knowles and many other people who have stood in this House, yes in opposition, and yes fighting for social democracy to bring about the kind of universal programs such as medicare, adequate pensions and universal education programs. I think it is a sad day when we have to stand in this House and see our universal programs being torn away and deteriorated to this extent.

I say to the Conservative government, think about what you are doing. Listen to what the public is saying. Seniors are fed up, business people are fed up with your goods and services tax, the Chambers of Commerce are fed up. Every group across Canada is saying to you, "Listen to what we are saying because we are fed up. We are fed up with the tax grabs. We are fed up with what is going on and we want some people to start to listen to what we are saying and watch what we are doing".

I want to say that in any riding in British Columbia and in the neighbouring ridings in Alberta, the goods and services tax is one of the biggest items that the people are complaining about. It is a tax grab of the worst kind. When you start taking back from seniors and from young children through their family allowances—

Mrs. Dobbie: Seniors making $50,000 a year.

Mr. Parker: The member who is from a riding in Winnipeg speaks of seniors with an income of $50,000. When you pay for something, you expect a return. When those people paid into those pension programs over the years, they expected a pension and if we want to look at a fair and equitable way, let us look at a fair taxation policy, a progressive taxation policy that will bring about some fairness.

The government has let us down. Whether it be pensions, drug prices, prescriptions, post-secondary education, whatever the programs are, the Conservative government has let us down. It cannot be trusted by the Canadian people and we as opposition members have to fight to let the public know exactly what is going on to ensure that we can keep these universal programs, and let us keep some social democracy in this country so that when the people are saying no to something, the government will start to listen.

Mrs. Dobbie: You don't represent the people. If you did, you would be in government and not in opposition.

Mr. Parker: We have a debate going on. I must have hit a nerve over there. Or maybe some of the members are beginning to realize that they have a responsibility to the seniors and to the family allowance recipients in their

ridings who are saying that they want to retain these universal programs.

When the Minister of Finance calls the leaders of the opposition parties liars during an election campaign when they tried to bring out our concerns, I object to that. I object very strongly to it. I do not think there is room in our society for that kind of comment or that kind of remark.

I do not want to speak too much longer, but I do want to say on behalf of our seniors, for goodness sake, roll it back, turn it back, vote against this legislation, give our seniors what is rightfully theirs and do not claw back their pensions.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): All those in favour will please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five Members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Call in the Members.

The House divided on the motion Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre), which was agreed to on the following division:

(*Division No. 130*)

YEAS

Members

Anderson
Andre
Atkinson
Belsher
Bernier
Bertrand
Bird
Bjornson
Blais
Bouchard (Roberval)
Bourgault
Brightwell
Browes
Cadieux
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Cardiff
Casey
Chadwick
Champagne (Champlain)
Chartrand
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cole
Collins
Cook
Corbeil
Corbett
Côté
Couture
Crosby (Halifax West)
Darling
DeBlois
Desjardins
Dobbie
Dorin
Edwards
Fee
Feltham
Ferland
Fontaine
Fretz
Gérin
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Greene
Guilbault
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hawkes
Hogue
Horner
Horning
Hudon
Hughes
Jacques
James
Joncas
Jourdenais
Kempling
Koury
Landry
Larrivée
Layton
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lewis
Littlechild
Loiselle
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Malone
Marin
Martin (Lincoln)
Mazankowski
McDermid
McKnight
Monteith
Oberle
O'Kurley
Plamondon
Plourde
Porter
Pronovost
Redway
Reid
Reimer
Ricard
Roy-Arcelin
St-Julien
Shields
Sobeski
Soetens
Sparrow
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Tremblay (Quebec-Est)
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Vankoughnet
Vien
Vincent
Weiner
White
Wilbee
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)
Worthy—106

NAYS

Members

Anawak
Angus
Arseneault
Assad
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bélair
Bellemare
Benjamin
Blaikie
Boudria
Brewin
Butland
Callbeck
Catterall
Dingwall
Dionne
Duhamel
Ferguson
Finestone
Fulton
Gagliano
Gray (Windsor West)
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Hunter
Karpoff
Kristiansen
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
Lee
MacWilliam
Manley
Marleau
McGuire
Mifflin
Milliken
Mitchell
Nault
Nystrom
Pagtakhan
Parker
Riis
Robinson
Rodriguez
Samson
Simmons
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Stewart
Stupich
Taylor
Vanclief
Walker
Young (Gloucester)
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—54

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): It being 11.30 p.m., this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to order made earlier this day.

The House adjourned at 11.30 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, November 21, 1989

The House met at 10.00 a.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

DRUG AWARENESS WEEK

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, November 19 to 25 is Drug Awareness Week. To this end the Government of Prince Edward Island is working with schools, churches and other community organizations to promote the theme "Keep your dreams alive".

Through the media, classroom presentations, church bulletins and even through a one-act play people in my province are discussing a problem that affects many of its citizens.

We are all aware of the effects that alcohol and drug abuse have on the user, the user's family and the community as a whole. I hope and expect that the sincere and determined efforts being made in my province this week will increase the awareness of the dangers of drug abuse and contribute to an improved quality of life for all Islanders.

* * *

[*Translation*]

COLLEGE WEEK

Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Québec-Est): Mr. Speaker, since this is Colleges Week, 1989, I invite all my colleagues in the House to join me in paying tribute to those who work in college education, throughout Canada.

Courses given at the college level prepare our youth for university education and help them better choose the field of studies and the career that interest them.

CEGEPs and other college-level institutions also train our skilled labour, an essential element of our country's human resources.

Across Canada, more and more adults are registered for college courses. Colleges therefore play a key role in continuing education, especially in labour force retraining and the ongoing adjustment of workers to new technologies.

In short, colleges and vocational training institutes are an essential link in our education systems and a vital asset for a strong and dynamic economy.

* * *

[*English*]

SPORTS

Mr. Dave Worthy (Cariboo—Chilcotin): Mr. Speaker, it is not that frequent that we in Canada can proudly announce world champions. It is even less frequent that I can do it for the Cariboo—Chilcotin.

Today, it gives me great pleasure to announce that the Canadian arm wrestling team consisting of both men and women have returned victorious with the over-all title from the world arm wrestling championships in Athens, Greece.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

• (1010)

Mr. Worthy: It gives me even greater pleasure to announce that for the second year in a row Mike Kadar, a resident of Nimpo Lake in my constituency, has been crowned world champion in the heavyweight class. Last year, Mr. Kadar proved he had the world's strongest right arm when he went undefeated in the world championships in Sweden. This year, in competition with the world's most powerful men, he reconfirmed his supremacy.

Arm wrestling is not a fancy or expensive sport. It has, however, ancient roots and world-wide popularity. I think the residents of Nimpo Lake as well as all of Canada should be proud of Mr. Mike Kadar.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: The only thing I can add to that is that I know Nimpo Lake very well.

* * *

EL SALVADOR

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I am sure I speak for all members of the House when I express relief that Karen Ridd from Winnipeg, someone who is working in El Salvador with Peace Brigades International, was released yesterday by the Treasury Police who had taken her into custody.

True to the spirit of the work of Peace Brigades International, e noticed that Karen refused to be released unless the Colombian woman who had been arrested with her was also released.

The work of people like Karen and Peace Brigades International, people who go to Central America to provide an escort service which is designed to protect Salvadorans who may be under threat of death or kidnapping, is truly in the spirit of Canada's peacekeeping role. These are people who are real peacekeepers, who put themselves, their bodies, between the victimized and the oppressors, in this case the Cristianni government.

I think it is about time the Canadian Government showed the courage of some of its citizens like Karen Ridd in El Salvador and put itself, diplomatically, politically and economically between the United States, its puppet regime in El Salvador, and the people of El Salvador.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TRIBUTE TO JEAN-CLAUDE MALÉPART

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, today I wish to pay a final tribute to our colleague and friend, Jean-Claude Malépart, whose death is a grievous loss for us all.

An outstanding Member of Parliament, Jean-Claude Malépart not only made his mark on Canadian politics but also left us with memories of a sensitive, fiery and determined man. With his sense of duty and justice and his courage to fight to the end for the causes he cared about for the good of his fellow citizens, he leaves an example of a model parliamentarian for all those who seek to excel.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to respectfully salute Jean-Claude, who lives on in my heart, with admiration and affection. Thank you, Jean-Claude!

* * *

[*English*]

EL SALVADOR

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, while the death squads continue to roam the streets of El Salvador with the blessing of the right wing military government, Canada continues to deport people to that country. In effect, this government is upholding the U.S. policy of aggression in El Salvador. Thirteen El Salvadorans have been removed from Canada since January 1.

I call on the government to stop immediately this removal of Salvadoran citizens from Canada, to increase our embassy staff in that region, to speed up the processing of family class and other visas for those who wish to leave, and to use minister's permits to bring people out who are in danger of their lives, perhaps because their husbands or spouses are here in Canada as refugee claimants.

I call on the Minister of Employment and Immigration to use every effort she can to bring the endangered people out of El Salvador and not to send people back to El Salvador.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE OF CANADA

Mr. Joe McGuire (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, a strike by 2,200 crew members on federal government ships started in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia on November 11.

These union members work for the Coast Guard, Fisheries and Oceans, Public Works and National Defence. They have been without a contract for two years.

Treasury Board has been dragging its feet in negotiations, and now talks are not even taking place. There are a number of issues involved in this strike, but the most appalling is the wage disparity between east coast crews and west coast crews.

The federal government is supposed to have a policy of equal pay for equal work. RCMP and the Armed Forces are paid equally across the country according to rank. However, in this case, east coast workers receive an average of $2,500 less per year than their west coast counterparts. This is blatant discrimination against At-

lantic Canadian workers. These people are being penalized financially for working on the east coast.

In addition, foreign fishing is rampant, the lobster season is opening in South West Nova without any patrols for enforcement, navigational aids are not being set, and if a freeze-up occurs many harbours will not be able to operate.

When will this government assume its responsibilities, give these eastern workers a fair settlement, and stop its policy of discriminating against Atlantic Canada?

* * *

[*Translation*]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. François Gérin (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead): Mr. Speaker, today, thousands of farm producers from Quebec and the rest of Canada travelled many miles and bravely withstood the cold to express their concerns about the future of agriculture in this country.

I will be out there with them, demonstrating in the presence of a number of Quebec Members.

They want a clear commitment from their federal representatives that we will stand firm during multilateral talks, especially at the next GATT round.

I have made an unqualified commitment, Mr. Speaker, in this respect.

Quebec producers demand adequate representation of Quebec on all Canadian teams at the multilateral talks. I could not agree more.

Today, on the anniversary of the day this Government was elected a second time, we must ensure that everything we do always reflects what we said in our election speeches and with our public commitments, and that is why, Mr. Speaker, I have made a solemn commitment, and I know the Quebec Caucus is solidly behind me.

[*English*]

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, for a number of weeks now I have received calls and correspondence from a number of health care professionals who are really concerned about the goods and services tax and the impact it will have upon health care services in Canada.

For example, with respect to psychologists and their psychological services, they provide not only needed therapeutic services but useful and essential preventive health care. They are also a very cost-effective alternative to over-burdened psychiatric services. I am really concerned, as are they, that the imposition of the goods and services tax will affect our health services negatively.

There are also others, such as occupational therapists, who are in the same boat.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, in addition to this tax there are also the billions of dollars cut as a result of reduced transfer payments to the provinces, which will have a negative impact on health services in this country.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

FEDERAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BANK

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the minister responsible for the Federal Business Development Bank. It concerns loans made by the bank to the Lido strip joint in Hull.

Yesterday, the minister repeated in the House in response to a question that I asked that the Federal Business Development Bank conducted itself, since the Tories came to power, in a manner that was "irreproachable".

Given that less than four hours later Radio-Canada confirmed that the Federal Business Development Bank

had made two loans to the Lido strip joint in Hull owned and operated by a friend of a former cabinet minister and totalling $1.3 million, does the minister still think that this conduct is irreproachable? Or does he not agree with me that government dollars should not be used to fund strip joints?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, of course it would not be appropriate for FBDB to have a policy of funding strip joints, and it does not. In fact, it has a policy that forbids the funding of such establishments.

• (1020)

A loan of $400,000 was made in 1986 to a company owning the land and buildings in which were operated, FBDB was told, a bar–disco. That loan was paid down to $250,000. In 1989, a request from one of the partners for an additional $650,000 was agreed to so that he could buy out his partners in this land and building.

There was an error made by the local officer in Hull not to investigate to determine that the land and building was home for a strip joint. There was an error made in the headquarters in approving the loan. Procedures are being looked at to remedy this situation to ensure that does not happen again.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, five years ago a minister was turfed out of cabinet for even going into a strip joint. Now the Government of Canada is building them.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Boudria: Have we not had enough of this nonsense?

I want to ask the minister across the way the following question.

[*Translation*]

Yesterday, a representative of the Federal Business Development Bank said, in referring to the strip joint loan: "It is not FBDB policy to finance this kind of establishment". If isn't bank policy, why did the bank make loans of this kind on two occasions? Especially in the case of the second loan, the bank should have know it was a strip joint. That should be pretty obvious, I would think!

[*English*]

Mr. Andre: I guess the hon. member had his feigned indignation written out in advance, as well as his supplementary. He did not listen to my answer to his first question.

As I explained, a loan was made to a company which owned land and buildings in which FDBD believed operated a pub–disco. That loan was paid down to $250,000. Then there was another loan of $650,000, which brought it to $900,000, on a building in which headquarters believed was operating a pub–disco. It was a loan which had performed well, had been repaid, and it was renewed.

As I indicated in my answer to the first question, the officers in Hull ought to have informed headquarters as to the type of business it was. Had they done that, the loan would not have been approved. Procedures are being amended to ensure that does not happen again.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, that answer is not good enough for Canadians. Canadians want to know—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the hon. member could put his question.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask a supplementary question to the acting minister responsible for the status of women. If such a minister is not available, then I direct it to the Deputy Prime Minister.

Ten days ago we found out that the best friend of the Prime Minister was sending legal bills to the Federal Business Development Bank. Now we discover that—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: It is not the place of the Speaker to in any way direct the selection of questions, but I am having some difficulty knowing how that question is supplementary to the questions that have been asked. Perhaps the hon. member could at least put his question.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary question is to the Deputy Prime Minister, in the absence of the minister responsible for the status of women.

Does the Deputy Prime Minister approve of this kind of loan? Does the government's representative for the status of women approve of this kind of loan to strip joints? Does this meet the criteria of improving the status of women in the country? Why does the government not clean up its act once and for all?

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, for the third time, this type of loan is contrary to the policy of FBDB. It is clearly contrary to the policy of this government.

For the third time, an error was made.

That is three questions with the same answer.

Mr. Speaker, I will write it out and send it over. He can read it as well as hear it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, this morning, the Minister responsible for the Federal Business Developent Bank would have us believe that a mistake was made. Either he doesn't not know how the FBDB functions or he doesn't know what he is talking about. Mr. Speaker, the FBDB annually turns down thousands of loans because project proposals do not meet modern technological standards. Does this government see strip joints as the technology of the future? How can you say there was a mistake when the bank turns down any number of loans every year? Is there more to this?

[*English*]

Mr. Andre: I guess for the fifth time—

Some Hon. Members: Fourth!

Mr. Andre: For the fourth time, Mr. Speaker, the loan should not have been recommended by the Hull office of FBDB. It should not have been approved by headquarters. An error was made.

It is contrary to the policy of FBDB for these types of loans.

Procedures are being investigated to see if changes can be made to help prevent this type of thing in the future.

Mr. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, the minister for the fourth time is saying that he is giving us the same answer.

Some Hon. Members: It is the same question.

Mr. Gagliano: Is the minister willing to say that he will start a full investigation to find out exactly what happened? This was not the first loan. What about the second loan? Every year the FBDB demands financial statements on any loans it gives. That means one officer could make a mistake. The second one made another mistake. Every year since 1985 mistakes have been made. We are almost in 1990. That makes five mistakes because every year they have to submit a financial statement.

Would you tell us exactly what happened and report to the House?

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, for the fifth time, a loan was applied for by a company owning land and buildings in which FBDB believed a pub-disco was operating.

That loan was paid down and in 1989 an additional amount of $650,000 was added to it. Again, headquarters believed a pub-disco was operating in a building owned by the company to which the loan was made.

An error was made by the office in Hull in recommending the loan. An error was made in headquarters in approving the loan.

Procedures are being looked into to see what amendments would be appropriate to be sure that this does not happen in the future.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General.

I have just come from the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General at which the Commissioner of the RCMP was a witness. The Commissioner advised the committee that contrary to what he had said in May or June when he had appeared before the committee in respect of the Grisé affair that the RCMP in fact made a decision last year during the election campaign to hold off the search warrants against Mr. Grisé until two days after the election.

My question for the Solicitor General is this. When was he advised by the RCMP that in fact the decision had been to withhold the search warrants? If and when he received that information, why did he not come to this House immediately to advise this House of that information?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Solicitor General of Canada and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, I was informed of the statement made by the RCMP Commissioner. First of all, I want to say that this morning, the RCMP Commissioner emphasized that he had never been subject to political interference by anyone.

Mr. Robichaud: Answer the question!

Mr. Blais: If it had happened, he would have condemned such interference in public, something he did not have to do because he was never subject to political interference.

As for the point raised by the hon. member, the Commissioner said he had been informed yesterday that the Chief Superintendent in Montreal had decided to delay the issuing of warrants in the case to which the hon. member is referring, and the Commissioner has promised to obtain all information in connection with this case. That is the only information I have for the time being, and I will let the RCMP, as is customary, clear up this case, and I think it is quite clear this was an administrative decision on the part of the RCMP and not a decision influenced in any way by politicians.

• (1030)

[*English*]

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Speaker, it is in fact a matter of national importance as to the role of the RCMP in these political investigations. This issue has been before the country for a year now.

Again, to keep his record perfect, the Solicitor General failed to answer the question. The question was: when did he hear this information from the RCMP, and when he heard why did he not come to this House? If he is saying he simply heard this morning, then I suggest that the Minister has completely failed in his duty. This was an issue.

Will the Deputy Prime Minister say to this House whether or not there were any calls from the Prime Minister's office to the criminal investigation division in Montreal? I may say, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member has put his question. The minister may want to respond.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Solicitor General of Canada and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, I think I made myself sufficiently clear in my first answer. I said that the RCMP Commissioner mentioned this morning, in the hon. member's presence, that he had been given the information last night and that he immediately informed the House committee this morning. So how could I have informed the House six months ago? The question makes no sense at all, Mr. Speaker. If I had any prior information, I would have informed the House accordingly, but the Commissioner himself was given the information last night, and he informed the people who were there that he would if the Hon. Member would care to listen, this may be of interest, and if you want your answer, here it is he informed the committee that he would explain. and that his information was that of the RCMP's employees in Montreal had made this decision, without any interference whatsoever. So I fail to see why this question should be raised. The Commissioner gave a very clear answer, and I think he repeatedly said, Mr. Speaker, and I think this is very important, that he had never been subject to any political interference whatsoever. He repeated this several times this morning.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, this morning we heard that a political decision was made to delay issuing search warrants in the Grisé case. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Solicitor General. Last April, the RCMP Commissioner confirmed that it was a coincidence that very serious allegations by Phil Edmundston had been set aside until November 22, the day after the election. This morning, we heard that the superintendent of the Montreal section made the decision to delay issuing search warrants because of the election. My question is as follows: Could the Solicitor General confirm to the House today that there were no calls, from his office or from the Prime Minister's office in this case, because the Commissioner told us that he did not know whether Bernard Roy was involved or not, and he was going to ask.

Hon. Pierre Blais (Solicitor General of Canada and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, perhaps we should get back to the facts. What was brought to my attention only a few minutes ago is that the Commissioner mentioned that he had been informed of these facts last night and that he would go one step further and personally meet the RCMP officer who made this

decision in Montreal last November or October, I am not sure when, but in any event, he would make enquiries. He mentioned there was a possibility that the election may have played a part, but he did not say so categorically. That is what was said, and the text can be checked as well as the recording of this morning's testimony. In any event, those are the facts that were reported to me. And I think that, especially in the House of Commons, we should avoid making accusations of any kind against anyone. And to get back to the very emphatic statement made by the Commissioner, he said that he never, ever had been subject to political interference, and if that had been the case, he would immediately have taken steps to publicly condemn such interference something he had never had to do because there had never been any political interference whatsoever. That is what the Commissioner said this morning, and I think we can trust him.

* * *

[*English*]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. Today, thousands and thousands of farmers from the UPA in Quebec and the OFA in Ontario are marching on Parliament Hill to protest the government's agricultural policy. They feel that they have been sold out in the free trade deal because their marketing boards have not been protected from imports. They feel that they were sold out because their incomes were capped at the GATT decision last spring. They feel that the government promised them open access to the U.S. market and they got a countervail on hogs.

I want to ask the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Agriculture when is the government going to start keeping the promises it made a year ago today in the last election and stop selling out Canadian farmers?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, other members of the House and I are always concerned about the welfare of agriculture. No one is more concerned than the members on this side of the House in the government and we have certainly demonstrated that.

The plain fact of the matter is that the hon. member is wrong on all three counts. He says the marketing boards have been undermined and dismantled and he is wrong in that regard. They have been protected under the Free Trade Agreement and they are being protected under the Free Trade Agreement. He says that we capped the incomes. That is wrong again, because as he knows the industrial price of milk rose by 39 cents per hectoliter. The hon. member says that we do not have market access to the United States. He is wrong again, because many, many agri-food industries are penetrating that market, are doing very well, are creating jobs in Canada and providing security to the agriculture community here in Canada.

Mr. Foster: Mr. Speaker, if the minister is all right and the farmers are all wrong, why are 12,000 of them marching on Parliament Hill today?

These thousands of farmers are concerned that the government is going to sell them out at the GATT council meeting on December 4 in Geneva, just as they were sold out in the free trade deal and with the capping of industrial milk. I want to ask the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture what assurance he can give these 12,000 farmers marching on Parliament Hill today that they will not be sold out in the GATT council meeting, and that the government will not accept the ruling of the GATT panel to allow a flow of cheap surplus dairy commodities into Canada from the U.S. What assurance can the minister give, in view of the fact that our chief partners, the Cairns Group and the United States, are both opposing our position with regard to marketing boards and with regard to import controls on dairy products?

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons that there is concern within the agricultural community is that of the fear and the anxiety that is being perpetrated by people like the hon. member and other critics.

Mr. Foster: They are all wrong and you are all right?

• (1040)

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the position of the federal government taken by the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister for International Trade

at the MTN negotiations is to strengthen and to clarify Article 11 so that we will not have the kind of decision that was brought down by GATT with respect to ice cream and yogurt.

That has been the position of the government for a long time, notwithstanding the fact that members opposite were suggesting that we should not tamper with Article 11. We are tampering with it to strengthen and clarify it so that it will preserve the supply managed underpinnings upon which the supply managed systems and the import controls obtain their power.

This government has provided unprecedented support to the agricultural industry. In the grain and oilseed sector alone, between the years 1984–85 and 1988–89, a total of $11.777 billion has been allocated in support of that sector.

Furthermore, in 1984–85, the support for the Canadian agri–food industry was something in the order of $4.6 billion. In 1987–88, that exceeded $8 billion, 75 per cent of which was provided for by the federal government. That is the kind of support this government is giving and that is the kind of support it will continue to give.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Foster: Twelve thousand farmers are wrong and you're right?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Agriculture is right, why did the President of the *Union des producteurs agricoles* say:

> The way Canada is trading away the future of our agriculture in the GATT negotiations in Geneva is unacceptable—

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister how come only he is right and thousands of farmers are wrong.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister why the government is breaking the social contract with farmers.

Hon. Pierre Blais (Solicitor General of Canada and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, barely a month ago, the Prime Minister, the Minister for International Trade, the Minister of Agriculture and I met with the leaders of the *Union des producteurs agricoles*.

Mr. Robichaud: Why are they coming back today?

Mr. Blais: The president himself said that he was very pleased with that meeting and that we could build on it.

Mr. Robichaud: You are making fun of them!

Mr. Blais: These people have concerns and have come to voice them here. We met with them and we are prepared, Mr. Speaker, as we said, to continue to support them. To do that, we have to go to GATT, because that is where it is being discussed—there are 95 countries there—and where we must strongly and vigorously defend Section 11. In the past, we realized that this section was not clear enough.

So the decision made by this government is to defend the Canadian position, which is quite original, involving marketing boards, and to strengthen and clarify Section 11 so that Canadian agriculture will be protected internationally, Mr. Speaker. Never has a government done so much for its farmers and we will continue to do so, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, the minister says that never has a government done so much for farmers, but never have we seen such a large demonstration by farmers here on Parliament Hill. That is the farmers' response to the minister after that meeting.

I ask the Minister once more: Will the Government answer Canada's farmers today that it will respect the social contract, take an unequivocal position in favour of agriculture and offer farmers formal guarantees for the future?

On behalf of Canadian farmers, I ask for a clear answer and not for the patter which the minister has given farmers in the past and again today.

Mr. Blais: Mr. Speaker, my colleague has a short memory. He does not remember what happened in 1976,when he was in government. I will remind my colleague that when we arrived in 1984, Canada's dairy farmers had been waiting for over four years for a long–term dairy policy, which his government did not want to renew. Our government put in place a five–year dairy policy worth hundreds of millions of dollars and we made a commitment to renew this dairy policy with the farmers when they sat down with us and to eimplement it in 1991. On the other hand, for years, you did not want to

respond to Canadian dairy farmers, you never wanted to defend them. We were the first government to do so, Mr. Speaker. We have nothing to learn from those people about defending Canadian farmers.

* * *

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, I also have a question for the Solicitor General.

The minister now knows that the Commissioner of the RCMP before a committee this morning said that the superintendent of the Montreal region for the RCMP delayed issuing search warrants in the Grisé case "because of the election". He said that in the committee this morning.

The member for Burnaby, earlier on November 7, asked the minister questions about the delay at that time. The minister, instead of saying he would look into it, came back with, to put it bluntly, his usual bluster and went on to attack the member who asked the question and said: "The commissioner is not just anyone. He is in charge of RCMP operations", et cetera, instead of pursuing the matter at hand.

Considering that this issue was raised November 7—indeed we raised this issue last May—and that the Commissioner of the RCMP admitted today there was a delay because of the election, why did the minister not do his job a week ago, a month ago, last spring, instead of just finding out this morning what was being said about this issue?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Solicitor General of Canada and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, I am taken aback by the import of my colleague's query. Should I question the integrity of the Commissioner of the RCMP every time he makes a statement?

I had no reason to doubt the word of the commissioner. As I recall, last June the commissioner answered questions before the committee, and this morning he told the same committee that he had been mistaken and that he would make inquiries to find out why the decision was delayed.

I would suggest we can rely on the integrity of the Commissioner of the RCMP. He was very frank and honest, I did not have any reason to doubt his word, and I have no intention of asking for an inquiry every time an RCMP officer makes a statement.

I think we should let the RCMP shed light on this matter, as it has done and as it knows how to do. Mr. Speaker, it is very important to this House and to all Canadians that no questions be raised concerning the integrity of the RCMP and the commissioner.

[*English*]

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, I say to the minister that it is his responsibility as Solicitor General of Canada to ensure that the RCMP is doing its job. He cannot pass the buck. The buck stops with the minister and he knows that. Considering that it was Mr. Inkster, not someone on this side of the House, who said in committee this morning that the course of action that ultimately led to a conviction was not taken "because of the election", will the minister now do his job and immediately find out why there was a delay and why there was hesitancy to prosecute, to look at evidence to see if court proceedings should be taken? Was it for political reasons or not? Is the minister now prepared to exercise his responsibility, or does he just want this thing to be buried? That is no way to conduct his responsibilities, and the minister knows it.

• (1050)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Blais: Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat surprised at the question, but since I was quoted, I suggest we go back to what I said on November 7 this year, and I will quote exactly what I said:

[*English*]

"The RCMP is an honourable police force that acts without political interference. I would like to refer to what the RCMP Commissioner said himself in June before a committee of this House. He was very emphatic about this, and I believe that in order to protect the integrity of this police force we must let them do their job and conduct their investigation as they see fit with the utmost integrity".

Mr. Broadbent: He changed that testimony this morning.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Blais: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should realize that this morning, the Commissioner was most emphatic about the fact that he had never been subject to any political interference, and that if such had been the case, he would have been the first to say so publicly. This proves the integrity of this police force, which we must respect, and as solicitor general I do not intend to interfere in any way with the work of a police officer. I

must let them do their job, and that is what we should all do as members of this Parliament, Mr. Speaker.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. For many months, Canadians have worried about the 9 per cent GST that will be implemented on January 1, 1991, while they have practically no reservations about the hidden 13.5 per cent tax now in effect, which applies, for instance, to milk taken from the farm. My question is this: There are only 13 and a half months between now and January 1991. Could the government and the Minister of Finance explain the 13.5 per cent tax to Canadians, which would help minimize the damage done by the GST as a result of lack of information? Sir, I want action on the 13.5 per cent tax. Let's stop playing games!

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, what the hon. member points out is quite right. There are a lot of people who do not understand that there is a 13.5 per cent tax. There is a federal sales tax on everything that we buy today, directly or indirectly.

My colleagues across the way say that that is wrong. There is a tax. The federal sales tax is in the price of everything we buy, directly or indirectly.

An Hon. Member: Not 13.5 per cent.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): The hon. member says not 13.5 per cent. The 13.5 per cent is applied at the manufacturing level. It is on everything we buy, but it is impossible for anybody to tell the precise rate that the tax applies at the retail level. The tax is applied deep in the manufacturing process so that by its nature it is very invisible.

What we are trying to do with the new tax, under the goods and services tax proposal,is make the federal sales tax much more visible and also make it level across the board; not the very distorted, indirect and hidden tax that it is today.

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JUSTICE

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, the opposition has been charging for some time that the RCMP is being politically interfered with by this government and our charges have been supported—

Mr. Speaker: I would ask the hon. member to put his question in the usual way. The preamble is in order to launch the question. It is not to initiate a debate which may or may not be a good thing or a bad thing, but it is not for me to control. I would ask the hon. member to put his question succinctly with a preamble that leads to the question.

Mr. Kaplan: Mr. Speaker, the charges include not just allegations by Glen Kealey but sworn evidence by RCMP officers—

Mr. Speaker: I have to ask the hon. member, who is a very experienced member in this House, not to put a charge by way of preamble. It puts the Speaker in an almost impossible position.

The hon. member has the floor. The hon. member will be given every right to ask the question. However, I would ask the hon. member to put the preamble, that is the facts upon which the question is based, not charges. If there are charges they have to be taken in another place.

Mr. Kaplan: Mr. Speaker, given the indication by the commissioner this morning at the justice committee meeting that he had been misinformed and would proceed to correct the record about the possibility of political interference, I want to ask the Solicitor General to assure—

Mr. Mazankowski: He didn't say that and you know it.

Mr. Kaplan: He did say that. I was there, and he did say that.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the hon. member could put his question.

Mr. Kaplan: Will the Solicitor General assure that the Commissioner of the RCMP pursues not only the

possibility of political interference into the matter which was discussed this morning in the justice committee, but into all the matters of political interference which have been put forward in relation to the work of the RCMP?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Solicitor General of Canada and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, we have repeated many times that it was not our intention to interfere in any way with the RCMP's job, and if you were there this morning, you probably heard the Commissioner say several times that he had never, ever been subject to political interference, and that if he had been, he would have said so publicly.

Mrs. Bourgault: This is repetitious. You don't have any new questions.

Mr. Blais: I am really surprised to see, with the hon. member's experience—but Mr. Speaker, in this connection, I would like—

Mrs. Bourgault: This is repetitious. This is the seventh time he repeated the same question.

Mr. Blais: —to quote what my colleague said a few weeks ago.

[*English*]

"It is the nature of the Canadian Opposition's tradition to be irresponsible or non-responsible and I mean that in the highest sense of the word".

[*Translation*]

I think the intent of the hon. member's questions in this House is fairly obvious, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

Mr. Kaplan: It is certainly the duty of the Solicitor General to protect the political independence of the RCMP.

My supplementary question is to ask the Solicitor General whether he will undertake to report to this House on the work which is being done in the way of an investigation by the Commissioner of the RCMP, given that the commissioner himself will be away for almost three weeks?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Blais: Mr. Speaker, I can only refer to what the Commissioner said this morning. Yesterday, he was informed that the information he gave the committee a few months ago was incomplete, that a member of the RCMP in Montreal had made a decision and that he promised to look at the entire case and check the facts. However, he had not been advised of any interference and he himself had never been subject to interference and had never witnessed any instances of interference, and if he had, he would have condemned these actions publicly. I think we must trust the integrity of the RCMP Commissioner, which seems entirely normal to me. This morning, however, I am being asked to interfere in the RCMP's process, and that I refuse to do, Mr. Speaker. I will let the RCMP do its job.

* * *

[*English*]

EL SALVADOR

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. He will know, I hope, that a Canadian from Winnipeg, Karen Ridd, was released yesterday after having been taken into custody by the Treasury Police in El Salvador. He will also know, I hope, that Karen is one of many who have gone down to El Salvador to help protect potential victims of death squads by accompanying them in their life and their various tasks in that country.

I wonder whether the government is now prepared to show the same courage that many individual Canadians have shown by putting itself between the people of El Salvador and the death squad known as American policy in Central America by urging the Pentagon, Washington, and Mr. Bush who seems not to have caught on to what is going on down there, to stop military aid to El Salvador immediately. When will the Canadian government call on the American government to do that and cut off the aid?

• (1100)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Monique Landry (Minister for External Relations): As my colleague just said, Mr. Speaker, we were glad to learn last night that Canadian Karen Ridd had been set free by the Salvadorian authorities. I should point out to my colleague that the personal intervention of senior officials there proved to be a key element of the release of Karen Kidd. We are proud to note that Canada does have a certain influence.

I would suggest that Canada's position concerning conflicts has always been the same. We are now urging

the parties involved to put an immediate end to armed aggressions, sit down for talks and negotiate a permanent cease fire. As we see it, the conflict will not be resolved unless the parties begin to negotiate. Such has been our position all along and we will continue to defend it until peace has been restored in El Salvador.

[*English*]

Mr. Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, the Canadian people on the ground in El Salvador—and there are not enough of them—were instrumental in obtaining Karen's release and we are all grateful for that.

The minister says that the Canadian government position has always been the same. I agree. The Canadian position with respect to Central America has always been to refuse to speak the truth about what is going on in Central America. What we are asking the government to do is to finally speak the truth about American military aid to El Salvador. If it will not do that, the very least it can do is not be complicit itself and cut off government-to-government aid to El Salvador.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Landry: Mr. Speaker, of course my colleague has a different position, but still I want to say that the Central American countries are very thankful for the role played by Canada to restore lasting peace in that region of the world, and we will continue our efforts to that end.

Mr. Speaker, we have always urged foreign powers not to intervene in a conflict but to put pressure on the parties with a view to negotiating lasting peace. We believe that is the only way to find a solution.

As to assistance, I must say that in view of the precarious situation in El Salvador and to ensure the security of Canadians, the implementation of the assistance project has been deferred. I might point out to my colleague that assistance has been provided through Canadian and Salvadoran NGOs to help displaced people who are now victims of the armed conflicts.

[*English*]

FISHERIES

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and concerns the Emergency Response Job Development Program recently announced by the government that is designed to help bona fide fishing industry workers in Atlantic Canada adversely affected by circumstances beyond their control.

The criteria for qualification states that repeat claimants must have acquired a minimum of six weeks of work this year or three weeks this year and have qualified solely in the fishing industry last year. For those who had a bad year and worked under a similar program last year, by the strict application of the criteria, they would be ineligible this year because in fact they did not work solely in the fishing industry last year.

This is a Catch-22 situation. In the press release the department indicated that the criteria were intended really as a rough guideline and it stated that individuals unable to receive these special benefits but with proven long-term attachment to the fishing industry would be able to request review of their cases.

Can the minister assure the House that those bona fide fishermen and plant workers who have had two bad years in a row, but have been employed in the fishing industry essentially their working lives will be shown some flexibility and compassion in the application of these criteria, and that the bureaucrats would be advised and instructed to do so?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I know this is a very important question to the hon. member and many of the plant workers and communities of Newfoundland in particular that have been impacted by adverse conditions in the fishery this year.

My colleague the Minister of Employment and Immigration did announce a program of special measures two weeks ago and I do not think I am in any position today to interpret the rules for delivery of that program. But I can assure the hon. member that his question will be

brought to the attention of the minister, and appropriate latitude will be sought in the application of the rules to the benefit of the affected communities.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I have the honour to table several petitions.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the parliamentary secretary could clarify the record.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to table responses to several petitions.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

* * *

PETITIONS

BILL OF RIGHTS FOR CHILDREN

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, it is my pleasure to present three petitions on different issues.

The first petition is from western Canadians and points out that one-sixth of Canadian children live in poverty and the percentage of children finding themselves living in poverty is increasing each year. The petitioners are calling upon Parliament to support private members' motion 254 which calls upon the Government of Canada to negotiate with the provinces to provide a comprehensive bill of rights for children.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I have another petition from a number of people in western Canada concerning the government's cut-backs to VIA Rail passenger service. They are calling upon the government to not only maintain its existing VIA Rail network but to invest in its upgrading with new equipment. This will give VIA Rail the opportunity to develop a national passenger rail service like other western industrialized nations.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from a number of people in western Canada who point out a whole set of concerns they have regarding the government's goods and services tax, stating how unfair it is to people living in rural areas and how unfair it is to certain sectors of the economy. They are simply asking the government to go back to the drawing board, in other words stop proceeding with this goods and services tax.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Gilbert Parent (Welland—St. Catharines—Thorold): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today to present two petitions. One is from a number of people in my riding which deals with the abortion bill that is going to be before this House this evening and tomorrow. The people who have signed this petition are asking that the government protect the rights of the unborn. I think that in the bill presented now the rights of the unborn are not protected.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Gilbert Parent (Welland—St. Catharines—Thorald): Mr. Speaker, I have another petition which was collected by one of my constituents. It is part of the 12,000 names she collected against the goods and services tax. My constituent, Mrs. Idris O'Neil, made this presentation to me last Monday. I think it encompasses the great dislike which some 12,000 people in my riding have for the goods and services tax. Once again we are asking that this government reconsider this heinous proposal which makes money on the backs of the poor and the lower middle class.

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiaq):

[*Editor's Note: Member spoke in Inuktitut.*]

Mr. Anawak: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the honour to present a petition from my home community of Rankin Inlet. This petition objects to the proposed goods and services tax.

• (1110)

RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present a petition from a number of petitioners from British Columbia. The petitioners are concerned about children's rights. They state that one-sixth of all Canadian children live in poverty. The drastic lowering of incomes between 1980 and 1986 has increased this number of children by 13.4 per cent. They

call on Parliament to support Private Members' Motion M-254 calling on the government to negotiate with the provinces to provide a comprehensive bill of rights for children.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege to present a petition on behalf of a number of citizens of Canada, all the way from Inuvik to Montreal, asking the government to not do what it is going to do to VIA Rail, and to ensure that VIA Rail has enough equipment and funding to remain a viable operation.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Mr. Speaker, I also wish to present a petition, signed by residents of my constituency of Saskatoon-Humboldt, who call upon the government to reject the current proposal for a goods and services tax and to provide other means of taxation which is fair to Canadians.

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition signed by 350 residents of my constituency in support of the CBC in Victoria. Victoria is the only provincial capital in Canada which lacks both CBC Radio and television facilities. The lower island is the third largest metropolitan area in Canada without a CBC facility. The petitioners pray that the government will reverse its cuts to CBC and include Victoria in its mandate to provide CBC service.

RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, I also have a petition to present signed by residents of Whitehorse, Moncton, New Westminster, New Brunswick, Saskatoon, Brantford, Nelson and Powell River, B.C., all across Canada. The petitioners are appalled with the statistics regarding child poverty. The over-all child population has fallen by almost 4 per cent between 1980 and 1986, the number of children living in poverty has increased by 13.4 per cent in the same period.

The petitioners call upon parliament to negotiate with the provinces to provide a comprehensive bill of rights for children.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to present on behalf of a number of residents from Davenport and neighbouring ridings, expressing their deep felt disagreement and opposition to the proposed general sales tax.

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition on behalf of a number of Canadians concerned with the increased taxes, 31 new taxes and tax increases since 1984; including the federal sales tax from 9 per cent to 13.5 per cent. Last evening we debated a tax bill with some 59 clauses.

The petitioners are concerned about the heavy burden of taxation and they humbly pray and call upon parliament to reject the proposed goods and services tax.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition signed by a number of Canadians who are opposed to cuts to VIA Rail services. This petition was signed in July last year, and I can only imagine how appalled these Canadians are at the cuts to VIA Rail recently announced by the government.

NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, I would like to deposit a petition with 150 names from the National Arts Centre who continue to be concerned about the state of the National Arts Centre orchestra. The present concern is over the management which has proved, according to these petitioners, to be incompetent and inadequate in artistic matters. They call upon this House to maintain the National Arts Centre, and ensure its sound cultural credentials to be the main criteria for any new appointments to their board.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, I would deposit for your information petitions from the people of Ikaluit, where I had the privilege of visiting earlier this year, who find that they are particularly hard hit and are carrying an already heavy burden of taxation and find that the goods and services tax will be an ongoing and further hard burden for them to bear.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I have a number of petitions I would like to table today. All have been certified correct as to form and content by the Clerk of Petitions pursuant to Standing Order 36.

The first is signed by 33 residents of Kincardine, Ontario and it is regarding VIA Rail. The petitioners point out that railway passenger service, as carried on by VIA Rail, is an essential means of transportation for many Canadians and has been part of basic Canadian infrastructure for over 100 years. They go on to call upon Parliament to maintain VIA Rail, Canada's present national network, to upgrade VIA Rail with new equipment and to give VIA Rail a sufficient budget to maintain its national mandate for passenger service.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): I also have a number of petitions that deal with the whole question of the goods and services tax. I have first to present petitions signed by 575 residents of Thunder Bay who stopped by the NDP booth at the Westport Days Fair in my riding.

They call upon the government to reject the current proposal for a goods and services tax and reform the taxation system so that there is an effective minimum tax on wealthy individuals and corporations.

I also have a number of other petitions that have been circulated in my riding by local business concerns. I have, first, a petition signed by 35 customers of the Thunder Bay Harley Davidson outlet on Roslyn Road. As well, there are thirty-seven customers of Riverdale Store on highway 61, 43 employees and students at Lakehead University and 60 customers of Creative Croissants in West Fort and finally 35 customers of the Royal Barbershop on North Brodie Street.

All of these petitions reject the current proposal for a goods and services tax. They want an effective minimum tax on wealthy individuals and corporations and if there is to be a reform, that it not be a massive tax grab such as the goods and services tax.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): Mr. Speaker, over the past six months hundreds of thousands of Canadians including municipal leaders and premiers across this country have pleaded to this government to restore VIA to its rightful place in our history as a viable transportation mode.

I stand today, pursuant to Standing Order 36, to submit another 1,200 names from people in southwestern Ontario again pleading with this government to restore VIA to all of its full service so that they are not pushed to use the airlines and the roadways that are already congested and unsafe.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Gus Mitges (Bruce—Grey): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to present to the House today more petitions from people all across the province of Ontario on behalf of all unborn children.

These petitioners, all 1,804 of them from such diverse communities as St. Catharines, Hamilton, North Bay, Espanola, London, Woodstock, Kirkland Lake, Thunder Bay, Sturgeon Falls, Stoney Creek, Massey, New Liskeard and Toronto call upon Parliament to pass legislation that will protect life from conception with a law that will seek to save the life of both mother and child. I am in full support of these petitions.

Mr. John Reimer (Kitchener): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of presenting a petition pursuant to Standing Order 36 which has been certified correct by the Clerk of Petitions.

• (1120)

This petition, along with another petition already on file with the Clerk of the House, has been signed by over 195,000 Canadians from across the country calling on Parliament to enact legislation that would effectively protect the life of the pre-born child from conception without distinction as to stages of development.

These petitions were brought to Ottawa by Evelyn Wyrzykowski and Doreen Ferraton of the Catholic Women's League of Canada who are here today as part of their nation-wide "women—sign-for-life campaign".

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I too have the duty and honour to table a petition of behalf of the residents of Parkdale—High Park who object very strongly to the imposition of this government's new general 9 per cent tax on goods and services. The petitioners strongly oppose this new goods and services tax which according to them is an unprecedented tax grab from the pockets of Canadians and will hit them not only with higher taxes

but with higher inflation, higher interest rates and higher unemployment.

The petitioners call upon this Parliament to reject the proposed goods and services tax and I know that you are taking note, Mr. Speaker, that even today we have had such petitions coast to coast and north to the Arctic.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to Standing Order 36 to present two more in a long series of petitions on the subject of VIA Rail. These petitions are signed by a significant number of citizens of Revelstoke, British Columbia and other communities throughout the west Kootenay protesting the closure in particular of the Canadian line of the VIA system.

Many of these petitioners are now increasingly outraged and incensed that despite repeated assurances from the Department of Transport that there would be a representative at a meeting of some 30 people representing five federal ridings in B.C. and Alberta last Thursday, there was no representative of the Department of Transport there and their anger as expressed in this petition is even more compounded by that fact.

* * *

QUESTION PASSED AS ORDER FOR RETURN

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, if Question No. 62 could be made an Order for Return, the return would be tabled immediately.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that Question No. 62 be deemed to have been made an Order for Return?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

[*Text*]

DEVELOPMENT OF ENERGY RESOURCES

Question No. 62—**Mr. Plamondon:**

1. Since 1945, has the government taken any measures to develop energy resources and, if so, by province and, for each province, by energy sector (a) what were they (b) what was their cost?

2. Since 1945, has the government made any investments in order to develop energy resources and, if so, by province and, for each province, by energy sector (a) what were they (b) in what amounts?

Return tabled.

[*English*]

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

Mr. Speaker: Shall the remaining questions be allowed to stand?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker: Pursuant to order made Monday, November 20, 1989, the sitting is suspended until 6 p.m.

At 11.23 a.m., the sitting of the House was suspended.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 6 p.m.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed from Wednesday, November 8, consideration of the motion of Mr. Lewis that Bill C–43, an Act respecting abortion, be read for the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Debate. The Hon. Minister of State for Employment and Immigration and Minister of State for Seniors (Mrs. Vézina).

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): Mr. Speaker, fellow members of the House of Commons, I intend to treat the debate on Bill C–43 with all the seriousness it deserves, all the attention, the good will,

even unselfishness that various individuals and groups in my riding have for this great social issue.

For example, last Friday, my riding office received a petition with 10,000 names. It contained the names of 10,000 people in Rimouski and Témiscouata who said: "We are against abortion in any form for a normal pregnancy, that is one with no risk, and we are against it from the moment of conception."

Others representing a completely different school of thought told me quite clearly that only the woman concerned should decide whether or not to interrupt her pregnancy. One of them told me clearly that she never regretted having interrupted an unwanted pregnancy when she was 20.

I received the testimony of a father who said that he supports our bill, but who told his 13-year-old daughter who asked him what he would do if she came home pregnant: "If you wanted to terminate this pregnancy, we would take the necessary action. If you wanted to keep the child, we would want you to have a normal happy life and we would help you bring up this child as if it were our own."

Mr. Speaker, with these examples, I just want to show the interest all of society has in this most serious issue and the many points of view that we must consider as legislators, our main duty as elected representatives.

As far as I am concerned, I wish to state at the outset that I would certainly prefer to be somewhere else and not to have to participate in such a poignant, troubling discussion.

No one will say that abortion is an easy issue. No one will say that we can debate it light-heartedly, for the simple reason that no bill can ever faithfully reflect all shades of individual opinion on this agonizing question. In this regard, this House reflects Canadian society and the right to freedom of conscience which is one of its values.

No age or social group can escape the dilemma now facing society.

The decision to give birth is one of the most important, personal and private choices that can be made by a human being. But personal rights, health and life protection are also fundamental values that concern society as a whole. The balance we, as legislators, must maintain between a woman's right to choose whether or not to interrupt her pregnancy and the state's responsibility to protect the foetus is extremely hard to find. Whether from a religious, moral, social, legal, medical or political standpoint, our conscience must inevitably grapple with this issue.

Mr. Speaker, over the last few months, like every other member of this House, I have been concerned with the abortion debate mobilizing Canadian men and women. I felt all the more concerned since I knew that a moment like today would come when, after thinking about it as parliamentarians, we would have to give this country a bill addressing the issue. Today I would like to share with you the various thoughts that come to my mind.

First, I would like to deal with our responsibility as legislators. I think it is important to properly define the realities we are talking about. At the risk of shocking some of my colleagues, I would suggest that the worst threat to the proceedings of this House would be to become idealistic. Finally, I would like to speak to the bill introduced by the government.

Mr. Speaker, I will deal first with our work as legislators. I want to stress how the debate that has just started is personally demanding. Seldom will our work be so challenging and require so much self-denial on the part of honorable members.

There is something extremely personal about the abortion issue. It challenges our most basic values and most private experiences. Yet, today I wish to emphasize the need for all of us, each and every one to somewhat distance ourselves from our own personal experience and opinions.

On this issue, the Right Hon. Prime Minister insisted on a free vote. He deserves to be praised for respecting our freedom of conscience. I appreciate the respect he is showing to Parliamentarians. But I see also in the Prime Minister's decision an invitation to reach out to others.

This new debate has nothing to do with what we personally think about the abortion issue. What is involved here is not what we would do in our heart of heart if we had to decide whether or not to terminate a pregnancy. No matter how free we are as members of the House, our debate must deal with the legislation which, as legislators, we must develop in Canada in the area of abortion.

Although I would not wish to show disrespect to any member of this House, I know that most Canadians men and women are not interested in our moods. They want us, as their elected representatives, to do our job.

Having sat in this House for nearly five years now, I trust that most of my colleagues will share my views. Mr. Speaker, I do not take part in this debate so much as Monique Vézina, the mother of four children, as the Hon. Member for the Rimouski—Témiscouata riding, duly elected by her constituents to provide our country with the legislation it needs.

Now to come to my second point. As a rule, I have always felt that, both as Parliamentarians and legislators, we had to show idealism, look toward a better world and strive to achieve it.

Today, however, in view of the very nature of the problem we are dealing with, I wish to state emphatically, without renouncing these ideals, that the principle of reality must prevail completely and totally in this forthcoming debate.

• (1810)

In 1988, there were between 73,000 and 74,000 therapeutic abortions in Canada. When reviewing the available data for previous years, it will be found the number has remained relatively unchanged. From 70,000 in 1982, it fell to some 65,000 in 1983–86. I conclude from those figures that abortion is a fact of life in Canada, a reality in our society. I also conclude that the women involved in those 74,000 therapeutic abortions wanted people to respect their personal decision. None of them claimed to have taken that course of action without some reluctance. They submit however that in all conscience that was the solution they chose.

Mr. Speaker, each and everyone in this House is hoping for that ideal world in which all those women could have all the financial means and the psychological and emotional strenght that would have let them bring their pregnancies to completion.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I am refering to the real world. Without sacrificing our dreams and our hopes, we must face up to the realities of human life where there will always be tragedies, where society will always be perfectible. I am asking that we as legislators recognize social reality in this country and the experience of Canadian women.

Let me turn to a third aspect, Bill C–43 as such. This government's challenge was to develop legislation that would fit with the Canadian reality. Yes, we looked for the area of widest possible social consensus. In any other area, we might be accused of being political opportunists. But in this matter this is the only tenable position.

What about the proposal? The Government states in the first place that abortion is a crime, and in the second place that it is not where it is induced in consultation with a who is of the opinion that if the abortion were not induced, the health or life of the female person would be likely to be threatened. There again, I suggest that we get away from any philosophical debate.

Personally, and along with large number of a very Canadian women, I also would have preferred that the legislation do not re–criminalize abortion. As legislator, I have found this to be impractical. This enactment is the only possible way to allow Parliament to regulate abortion nationally.

The legislation's first goal is not in my view to re–criminalize abortion nor, as claimed in some quarters, to return to situations where the lives of human beings, individuals, women are jeopardized in conditions that are worse than before.

Our first objective, therefore, under the circumstances, in the present Canadian context, is to take another step forward, another step to the future, taking account of our evolution as a society over the centuries, another step towards the equality of men and women: an equality which can only enrich both sexes with their complementarity, another step towards the fundamental freedom that we all seek. More and more men understand—and I know several among my colleagues who do—that subordination is not liberating for a couple, it is not liberating for a family, it is simply not liberating for the whole of a democratic country like ours. The same goes for our abortion bill.

Nevertheless, our government must be cautious and moderate, it must avoid venturing into uncharted waters, when many Canadians are telling us that we do not know how deep they are. The Government is instead choosing to bridge the two sides, the two extremes, so as to serve the most Canadians who want to use it. This bridge is our new legislation.

You will agree that we are taking a step forward, after the legal vacuum left by the Supreme Court judgment, when our government is eliminating the anomalies of the old law such as life imprisonment for women, among others. Also, as the Leader of the Opposition explained it so well in this House, we will no longer say that abortion is allowed if the mother's health is in danger, but if the mother's health is threatened.

Mr. Speaker, as a woman elected to this House, as a woman who has fought for recognition of women's rights, I urge all women who are still hesitant to cross this legislative bridge. I urge them to look back to the past, to look at history and remember how women have contributed to the development of this society. But they did so only when they could express themselves freely, as equals.

It is my profound belief that women must never give up their equality and their freedom. They should take advantage of this opportunity to perfect this very fundamental legislation and jump at the chance to increase their independence by having more control over their own bodies. That is what the new legislation will give them.

Men will also benefit because they will have friends, advisers, wives and doctors who are increasingly free, responsible and worthy of their trust.

There are critics in some groups who object that despite this national standard, there will be differences in treatment from one region to another, from one province to another. That is true, Mr. Speaker. However, I belong to a political party that has never been ashamed to recognize regional realities. As far as abortion is concerned, it is only natural that every region in Canada should be able to proceed at its own pace. On what basis do they want to reduce Canada to a one-dimensional society? Here again, the government has made a genuine sociological reading of the abortion phenomenon and has drawn the appropriate conclusions.

Mr. Speaker, I do not claim that Bill C-43 is perfect. Far from it. I do say, however, that the greatness of our Canadian society and its ability to be a pluralistic society will be reflected in the ability of this House to vote.

These legal concerns will never reflect all the nuances that our hearts and minds want to express.

Mr. Speaker, we must therefore rise above that which might divide us irreparably and seek a common ground that is acceptable to the majority. Our most dependable guide posts in this respect are tolerance, understanding and maturity.

Mr. Speaker, we all realize that men and women benefit by change, even if change comes very gradually. That is why, speaking in this public and democratic forum, I urge women to support this bill, and I urge men to realize that when women change, so do they.

Together, let us cross the bridge the government has built for us. As a woman and a Member of Parliament, I say that we are going in the right direction.

[*English*]

Ms. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, I rise with respect to the Hon. Secretary of State's speech. The tone of her speech had a great deal of dignity and I appreciate that. I appreciate also the difficulty with which she has explored her soul in this whole discussion about this very difficult question. I think she has set a tone tonight that is worthy of respect and I credit her for that.

I too have spoken with many people of different views in my own riding and I respect their views. However, when it comes to the responsibility of legislators, she and I have to part company. She said that we must give a bill to this House. I see no reason to give a bill to this House. I think it is only increasing the kind of pain that exists in our country now. This very debate is increasing that pain and encouraging the kind of lobby that is going on outside the House of Commons which is also increasing that pain.

• (1820)

We all dream of our ideal world, as the minister has said. My question to the hon. member really relates to the reasoning behind this bill. The minister said it was the only vehicle which would set down regulations on a national scale. The Criminal Code is not going to ensure access to abortion in the regions of our country where poor women are the ones who are having to turn to back street abortionists or having to terminate their pregnancies themselves.

How is Bill C-43 going to solve those problems?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Vézina: Once again, Madam Speaker, I will refer to the principle of reality. When I look at the statistics as a woman and as a legislator I can readily see that last year 65,000 women had to undergo an abortion for whatever reason. There is a legal void. It is up to the provinces to guarantee access to health care, and as a woman and as a legislator I want to make sure that any woman seeking abortion services can do so with dignity, if I may put it that way, because it will be recognized as a medical act performed by a qualified medical practitioner in a recognized institution.

I used to be involved in development motivation. I met women and teenage girls. I saw how abortions were carried out in many cases. I deplore the fact that the legislative measure we are proposing involves the Criminal Code, but as we said on so many occasions, this is the only way to proceed at the national level if we want to enable Canadian women in any province to use this emergency service, this emergency measure, but with a medical approach, through a medical act which will take into account the quality of life.

That being so—the principle of reality—we must build a bridge which will reach both pro-life and pro-choice advocates, but within the context of Canadian reality. As legislators we must also implement measures to achieve this ideal project which will make it possible for women to protect the unborn child, practice family planning, and provide information.

And I maintain that with respect to this legislative measure, as a legislator I will support the government position because it enables us as a group of men and women to take a small step ahead, yet I would urge all women to continue to enjoy their freedom.

[*English*]

Mrs. Catterall: Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. minister a question, again with appreciation of the great thought that she has obviously given to this issue.

Given the minister's statement about the importance of women having access to good and proper medical care, can she explain to me why the bill in its present form provides an equal penalty for the totally unqualified person who preys on vulnerable women and provides abortions without any training to do so and for a doctor exercising his best medical judgment who, for one reason or another, does not perhaps completely meet the intentions or the wording of the law?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Vézina: The answer that comes readily to mind is that I have faith in the medical profession. Our government considers abortion as a medical act that must be performed by a qualified physician. Doctors are men and women who also live by a professional code of ethics. Health will be defined by the medical body, which reassures me, as a woman, that women's health will be kept safe and private, since the woman will see a doctor with whom she will share responsibility for the decision. Having said that, I call on women, with whom I have worked for many years, to demand their right to quality services.

But the bill under consideration gives me the assurance that Canadian women throughout the country will be respected whatever the habits and customs of their province, because indeed habits vary from one province to the next, but that the decision to perform the medical act will be made with a clear conscience with the physician in appropriate quality surroundings. We are taking a step towards the acknowledgement of the freedom of the woman, of her sense of responsibility, of the right of the foetus. As a society we must acknowledge that women should have freedom as well as responsibilities—for responsibilities come with freedom—but we must also acknowledge the evolution of life. I would suggest that the bill enables us to reach both objectives.

[*English*]

Mr. Karpoff: Madam Speaker, I also appreciate the tone with which the minister speaks. I too am a social worker. I have practised in the field and have seen women die from illegal abortions.

I think women make the decision to terminate a pregnancy after a great deal of deliberation. They do so based on sound judgment, a knowledge of their own circumstances, and in consultation with their doctors.

For nearly two years now in Canada, we have had no criminal law on abortion. I think the women of Canada have demonstrated that they have acted responsibly during this time. They have shown Canadians that there is no need for any legislation, particularly criminal legislation, concerning abortion.

Is the minister aware of some particular circumstances in the last two years that would prompt her to feel that this House is more capable or more able to make a judgment than the woman herself in consultation with her doctor?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Vézina: I repeat that the central government has to make sure that health care is of first quality and readily accessible to all Canadian men and women. This is why we must have this legal measure in place. Personally, as a legislator, I would rather not go through the kind of situation we were in last July. It is imperative that every Canadian woman—wherever she resides, I repeat—be entitled to that service. There exists a legal void which needs to be filled. This is a medical act which has to be recognized as such and performed by a physician. As a legislator I am convinced that the bridge we are proposing under this measure will enable the proponents of both positions to reach a common ground. As legislators we have to rise above personal opinions. What our constituents and Canadians expect of us as law makers in this House is that we take measures to improve the quality of life in this country, and such is the aim of our efforts: a medical approach, and proper balance between the right of the woman and the concern of society with respect to the evolution of the foetus and of human life.

[*English*]

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Madam Speaker, the issue of abortion is a highly charged one for the House and for each of us as individual Members of Parliament, and also for the nation. It is even more so for the woman who finds herself pregnant unexpectedly and faces a situation in which carrying, bearing and raising a child seems an overwhelming impossibility. For her, the choice she faces is agonizing and painful.

For us as legislators, I believe the task is not to determine how, through law, we can impose our own individual consciences on all Canadian women. Rather, it is how we can draft a law that respects the right of a woman to exercise her conscience, that respects the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and its guarantees of the right to life and security of her person, but that also reflects the value society gives to the worth and dignity of human life.

• (1830)

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, whatever our opinion on abortion, the law must apply equally to all Canadians, rich or poor. It is not enough to say, as the Minister of Justice did two weeks ago, that it is a provincial decision as to what medical services are to be provided in their jurisdiction.

[*English*]

If I could return to the question of balance, we do not find this balance of rights and of interest in human life in most of the representations we have been receiving by the thousands. Instead we find two opposing views so strongly held as a matter of conscience that any meeting of the minds seems impossible. On the one hand are those who firmly believe in the existence of human life from the moment of conception and believe that any abortion should be illegal and the perpetrator subject to punishment under the laws of the land. On the other hand are those who believe, as a matter of conscience, that any abortion at any time agreed to by a woman and her doctor should be no concern of society and that society has no interest in the unborn child at any time until the moment after birth.

The people we are not hearing from are the vast majority who hold a view somewhere between those two, who believe that a woman with sound medical advice and support should be able to decide at a certain point, according to her own conscience, whether she is able, physically, mentally and emotionally, to not only give birth to but to provide for the life of a child. They also believe that there comes a time in a pregnancy where another life is involved and must be considered. I am not convinced this bill is even a good starting point from which to develop such a law.

The Canada Health Act guarantees Canadians that health services will be universal, accessible and comprehensive. If the government is bringing forward a bill, and it has, that makes abortion legal under certain conditions and under fairly broad conditions, then it must ensure that women have equal access to safe, quality medical care when they choose to exercise their rights under the law. It is not good enough to say, as the justice minister did, that it is a provincial decision as to what medical services are to be provided in their jurisdiction. When one says that Prince Edward Island, for example, has the right to fund or not fund abortion services, what one is really saying is that if somebody can afford to go

somewhere else is what it comes down to, then they have a right to exercise their legitimate entitlement under the law, and others who cannot afford it cannot exercise that entitlement.

This bill fails to guarantee access to a service that the bill says is perfectly legal under the right conditions. It provides the same punishment for a totally unqualified, perhaps unscrupulous practitioner who will take advantage of vulnerable women as it provides for a fully qualified medical doctor providing the same service and perhaps not quite meeting the requirements of the law. I find that inadequate protection for women from unscrupulous practitioners.

[*Translation*]

While we are trying to decide whether we must limit or prohibit abortion, provincial governments continue to restrict access to contraception to those who can afford it. Indeed, the health insurance plans of these governments do not include contraceptives. How can we, in all good conscience, allow this abuse to continue?

[*English*]

How can we say on the one hand we are criminalizing abortion and yet at the same time allow people across this country not to have access to the contraceptive devices, advice and counselling that would prevent the need for an abortion?

A third point I want to make on the bill specifically is that whatever are a person's rights under the law, they have a right to know what those rights are and to exercise them. They have a right to be absolutely clear about when they are performing an act which is not legal and when they are performing one which is. I think this bill fails to a large measure to provide that clarity. The lack of clarity is evident in the fact that it is presented on some occasions as a bill that gives fairly liberal choice to women in the matter of abortion and on the other hand of clarity can only leave people unsure of their their rights, unsure of their responsibilities and unsure of whether in fact they are obeying the law.

I want to address the balance of my remarks to a serious issue that is not covered in this bill and that I do not expect to be covered in any companion legislation that there is even the remotest hope of this government introducing. I want to address some of the fundamental factors that lead women to the point of feeling desperate when they find themselves pregnant and convinced that abortion is their only remedy. Abortion is the failure of social policy, of health policy and of economic policy. It is the failure of a society to adequately reflect, in its allocation of resources, in its laws and in its programs, a full and abundant respect and love for human life at all stages.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, I see every day in my own riding that the society we live in does not recognize the worth and dignity of every human being.

[*English*]

I see every day in my own community the reasons women seek to abort rather than bear a child. I see a world of work that still punishes women for wanting or needing to be both workers and mothers, that deprives them of earning potential, promotion opportunities and even a decent pension in their old age because they choose to rear and nurture children. A society that truly valued children, that truly valued the women who bear them and the raising of those children, would put its mind to finding solutions so that women can both be mothers and fulfil every other aspect of their life.

[*Translation*]

Some families living in poverty and earning only minimum wages are forced to turn to food banks because they are unable to adequately feed and clothe their children.

[*English*]

I see women brutalized by an abusive partner and a society that provides to them no support and no shelter. I see women left alone with their children on the breakup of a marriage, forced to give up their homes, forced perhaps to give up a job to care for their children, to try to rebuild a secure family environment for them to grow up in. I see a society that does not value their roles as mothers but through its welfare system provides poverty level support and hems them in with rules and regula-

tions that keep them and their children trapped in poverty. I see them deprived of the encouragement and support they need to become self-sufficient, left on long lists, waiting for child care and waiting for training programs.

• (1840)

Just this past week I received a letter that clearly outlines this from a young woman who is finally breaking out of that trap. She is back in school and has parent who is attending school, who has a goal to obtain an education in order to get a worthwhile job. If there are not sufficient subsidized day care spaces, what happens to the others like me who have this same goal?" Yet the budget clearly says that because of the fiscal situation, the government has decided not to proceed with the expenditure of $4 billion over the next seven years to increase significantly the number of good and quality child care spaces across Canada.

That is a plea from a woman, who is making her way in the world, that we provide what is necessary for others like her to do the same.

[*Translation*]

Women are trapped in a social system which deprives them of life's essentials and does not help them become self-sufficient.

[*English*]

The statistics speak for themselves. Families headed by women are four times as likely to be poor than families headed by men. At the same time as these women struggle I see them and their families, their children, shunned and condemned by a society that brands them and their children as leeches on the generosity of society, responsible for all the ills of their communities, responsible through the social programs even for the national debt.

I see women out in the workforce struggling to support themselves and their children but unable to earn a decent living because they are trapped in pink collar ghettos where pay Women still earn only 66 cents for every dollar a man earns.

Most heartbreakingly I see the children of poverty entering our school system with three strikes against them, judged as incapable before they are even five years old because they are not as well nourished, not as well dressed, their hair is not as bright and shiny and they do not speak the same way as children from better off famlies do. Is it any wonder, branded as failures, they drop out of school at a rate double that of the general population? It is vicious cycle as poor incomes lead to dropping out of school which results in poor incomes which leads to the next generation dropping out of school.

In this, one of the wealthiest countries in the world, we have over one million children, one of every six children, living in a family where the income is below the poverty level. And two-thirds of children raised by female single parents are poor.

I see a justice system that punishes theft more severely than it punishes the sexual abuse of a child. I see our children bombarded by a society that uses the sexuality of women to sell products in the marketplace. Yet I see people who do not want to see sexuality and birth control even discussed in our schools. I see young girls who become sexually active while they are still children, seeking some small token of self-worth in a society that tells them that being sexy and glamorous is the way to have value and importance and in many areas they still are told that only men achieve success and value.

I see neighbourhoods where showers are held for 13-year old pregnant girls because when the predominant climate of the community is poverty and hopelessness, the birth of a child is a reason to have some new hope.

The public debate on abortion has been so polarized around the question of birth that it has to a large extent obliterated the question of life. I would love at some point in my stay in this Parliament to have as many phone calls and as many letters addressing the issues of poverty for women and children as I have had on this issue.

The polarization on one end has been focused on giving women the legal and theoretical right to choose not to bear a child. I have chosen to address those factors that rob women of choices, that make it impossible for them to choose pregnancy with joy and with hope.

On the other end the debate has focused on the right of a child to be born but not on the right of every child to be nurtured, supported and valued to fully develop its humanity at every stage of life.

There are many things that have been said and will be said about this bill, and I do not need to repeat them all. Whether by placing the onus on doctors for meeting some nebulous criteria we ensure that more and more doctors in fact choose not to risk their careers and their practice by making a decision that is somewhat ill-defined; whether doctors are subject to private actions that call into question their judgment as medical practitioners; whether pregnant women can still be dragged publicly through the courts, every detail of their private

lives flashed on the television, radio and the newspapers; whether the bill fails to adequately respect the developing human life; whether it forces women to lie and deceive to achieve a right which the law at least on the surface gives them; whether it gives a choice to women of economic means and not to women who do not have the same economic advantages; whether the issue could not be dealt with more thoroughly in the Health Act where it could be combined with measures on contraception, on counselling, on options and on various other related matters; whether this bill describes with sufficient clarity the rights and responsibilities of women and their doctors; whether in fact the bill is any more than a duplicitous attempt to please both sides, without really addressing the issues, society at large feels the need to be addressed.

It is difficult but necessary, I think, not to be guided by our private moral values, by the conscience that we would apply in our own lives to choices that we might personally have to make but to act as legislators with respect for the belief of others who perhaps have different standards and different moral values. We must act with compassion for those who find themselves in a situation in which certainly most of us in this House would never find ourselves, and with a commitment to do that which respects the pluralism of our society and the democratic principle that the laws will not force the moral beliefs of one segment of society on all of society except where society itself is directly threatened. It is clear that we do not know what the predominant moral value in society is on this.

I started out by saying it is a difficult question. It is a difficult question. I urge us all to act with that respect, that compassion and that commitment to a law which respects the diversity of views that Canadians have on this subject.

Ms. Mitchell: Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to the member and I am still not sure what her position is on this bill. I guess that probably goes for her party as well. I wanted to ask this question of the minister who has left the House. The minister said a little earlier that each Canadian woman will be entitled to a medical abortion and will be able to have it with dignity as a result of this legislation. I wonder if she agrees with that, if that is her interpretation of the limits? Well, really this bill has no limits as far as access is concerned which is what the minister, I think, was saying.

• (1850)

The member mentioned some examples in the form of questions. I wondered about the example of women, for various reasons, seeking abortions which doctors do not judge to be for health reasons. She was indicating that doctors may be feeling that they have to have a very strict interpretation of "health" under this act. The member mentioned young people whose health is not in danger but who simply cannot care for a child and who have many reasons for not wanting to continue with the pregnancy. She mentioned single women who are healthy but become pregnant and do not want to bear a child for various reasons. She mentioned as well low-income women who may have several children and simply cannot cope financially with an abortion. All these examples would probably be women who are not seeking abortions strictly for health reasons and therefore, I assume, would be not eligible for a legal abortion under this bill and doctors indeed might be fearful of giving too liberal an interpretation of the question of health. I would like the member's views on this.

Mrs. Catterall: Madam Speaker, the member has raised a myriad of questions which may require another 20-minute speech in which to reply. It is true that the Liberal party does not have a position on abortion. It has done what I think is the right thing and allowed each member to vote according to his or her own conscience. I think that is an appropriate approach on a bill such as this.

If the member detected no firm commitment one way or another on this bill, she is absolutely right. I have a number of reservations with the bill. I have not yet concluded whether, in fact, it is worth allowing a bill like this to proceed through second reading to committee stage where it might be improved and some of the issues she raised addressed. That is why I am paying very close attention to all the debates in the House and to a number of other people whose advice I am seeking.

Obviously I do not believe that this bill gives women equal access everywhere in the country, regardless of their financial circumstances, to what the bill purports to deliver as a legal right and entitlement for them. I do not want to comment on how the law will be interpreted. I suspect that the Minister of Justice knows quite well that under this law there is virtually no possibility of a doctor or a woman being prosecuted and convicted for the carrying out of an abortion.

Mr. Karpoff: Madam Speaker, I have a number of questions I would like to ask the member. I am particularly struck by her last comment because I think people are playing ostrich. They are putting their heads in the sand and passing criminal legislation and then saying, "Let's not worry about it because a doctor is never going to be prosecuted under this act".

The reality is that doctors are going to be prosecuted. People who are anti-choice are going to be trying desperately to have a doctor charged and doctors are going to become fearful. This bill does not allow an abortion for a 14-year-old-girl. It does not allow abortions for deformity of a foetus. It does not allow abortions for incest. It does not allow abortions for family planning or socioeconomic reasons. People said that if a young girl went to a doctor and the doctor said that he would not perform an abortion, she need only go to another doctor. The first doctor has made a decision that the abortion could be subject to criminal sanction because there is not a threat to the woman's health. Now is the second doctor going to perform that abortion? I doubt it. If no doctor is ever going to be charged, why do you think they are putting it in the Criminal Code? Is it not the intent to put it in the Criminal Code so that if people step over the bounds they will be charged?

Mrs. Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I think the member misunderstands. I am not the person proposing this legislation and I think those comments and questions should more appropriately be addressed to the minister who did propose it and I trust that he either has done or will be doing that.

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, when the Supreme Court struck down the existing criminal legislation on abortion almost two years ago Justice Wilson said at the time, and I quote: "The right to reproduce or not to produce—is properly perceived as an integral part of modern woman's struggle to assert her dignity and worth as a human being."

I completely agree with this and I and my Party take this principle as the starting point in any serious discussion about the right to abortion.

The problem today in our country is not that we no longer have criminal legislation respecting abortion, the real problem today is that Canadian women do not have assured access to abortion services. They are denied the dignity that Justice Wilson specifically wrote about.

The bill we have before us does nothing to change that. What it does is confront women with the threat of criminal prosecution. What it does is reduce women's right and ability to make decisions that affect their lives. The New Democratic Party of Canada cannot accept such legislation.

Women have varying philosophical and religious beliefs about abortion. That is obvious. Some are totally opposed for reasons that I respect, if I do not agree with them. Others believe it ought to be their right to decide. We believe as a matter of policy, I believe as a matter of principle, it is not for the state to legislate one answer for everyone. The state must provide a legal framework for all women to choose freely according to their own philosophy or their own religious convictions. This bill does not do this.

Quite the contrary. It makes abortion illegal except for women who fit certain health criteria. It reduces access to abortion by threatening doctors with criminal action. It makes women possible accessories to a crime. It invites third party interventions. It in no way addresses prevention or unwanted pregnancies. For those who believe morality is based on freedom, as do I, this bill must be defeated.

[*Translation*]

Let us be frank! Women faced with an unwanted pregnancy under this legislation might feel compelled to claim they are weak or under trauma in order to qualify for abortion. They would need their physician's judgment. If the physician refused, they would have to seek another one. And where a first physician had refused to induce the abortion, would a second one take the opposing view thereby taking the risk of being charged under the criminal code? Certainly or probably not. The legislation is unfair to medical practitioners. It forces

them to make decisions they would rather not make. But, it is deeply unfair to women.

• (1900)

[*English*]

The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court at the time of the same ruling that I quoted earlier had this to say:

> Forcing a woman, by threat of criminal sanction, to carry a foetus to term unless she meets certain criteria unrelated to her own priorities and aspirations, is a profound interference with a woman's body and thus a violation of security of the person.

Women must have the right to be free in reaching a decision themselves in this domain, obviously, after consultation with loved ones in a particular case, after consultation for medical purposes with their doctors, after consultation with any range of a number of people that they may want to discuss the situation with, if they so desire in terms of moral considerations involved. But the fundamental human right—and I stress human right—ought to reside with a woman to decide. The bill denies Canadian women that right. Therefore it is unacceptable for this reason.

The bill should also be rejected because it does not guarantee access. Those women who have been denied abortions because of the control of hospital therapeutic abortion boards by those opposed to choice may be no better off as a result of this legislation. They can still be denied access to what I regard as a fundamental human right, as does the Supreme Court.

Poor women will suffer. Wealthy and powerful women have always had access to abortion, and always will. Throughout the whole history of civilized existence, when abortion was at one time condoned by the church, after it had ceased to be condoned by the church, when abortion was deemed to be unacceptable for a variety of secular reasons in certain societies, those with wealth and power, women with wealth, have always had access to an effective right to an abortion if they wanted it. The reality is that money has bought freedom. Money has bought choice. I believe that freedom, whether in this domain or any other, should not be dependent on wealth. That ought to be a fundamental concern.

[*Translation*]

The truth is, there is no need for criminal law to regulate the morality of Canadian women on that issue.

Our mothers, sisters, wives and daughters are not criminals. In Canada, there is no need to introduce abortion into the Criminal Code. Since January 1988, abortion no longer comes under the Criminal Code. The number of abortions has not changed. But in Prince Edward Island, women still do not have access to abortion services. In Newfoundland, only one medical practitioner induces abortions in a hospital. Women in northern British Columbia, northern Alberta and northern Ontario must travel great distances to obtain an abortion. In Nova Scotia, where the number of late abortions is higher than the average, with a higher risk of health hazards, the provincial Government recently took measures to restrict still further access to abortion services.

Canadian women have no need for threats of criminal penalties. What they need is that the Canadian Government ensures they have access to abortion services.

[*English*]

The Canada Health Act stipulates that universality, comprehensiveness and accessibility must apply for all medically required services. Through the financial clout of the federal government, it should insist that these principles apply to the issue of abortion. The federal government, as we have made clear for a number of years now, has the legislative mandate to achieve these principles in application to the question of abortion. It is time this government showed leadership by using the Canada Health Act the way it could be used effectively to guarantee access to this important right from one coast to the other.

Despite the best intentions, some 64 per cent of pregnancies occur while partners are using some form of birth control. All methods of birth control have flaws, and any choice involves some kind of compromise, a compromise to a woman's health. Danger by and large tends to increase with the reliability of the birth control device that is used. Women who use IUDs risk pelvic inflammatory disease and sterility. Those on the pill can face two to four times the risk of heart attack and stroke.

When birth control fails—to state the obvious under such circumstances—women are faced with unwanted pregnancies. If the foetus is carried to term, women in today's society overwhelmingly continue to be the primary care givers in the family structure, and frequently for single women, the only source of financial and emotional support for the child. That is what is involved if a woman is forced to have an unwanted child.

I ask members of the House to keep in mind, if we are thinking of single women here, that 56 per cent of single-parent families in this country live at or below the poverty level. Knowing this reality, I repeat, a woman ought to have the right to freely decide for herself in such a situation.

Family planning organizations all over the country have long recognized women's lack of control over their own fertility as a major health risk for themselves and for their families.

Pregnancy in women 15 to 19 years of age is considered to be the number one health problem by many health specialists. Teenage mothers experience a higher rate of mortality and morbidity. Pregnancy in adolescent women can seriously interrupt educational goals and often results, as we all know too well, in lifelong poverty. Young women who become pregnant after discussing all options, again I repeat, must be free to choose.

We have come a long way since 1969 when we threw out laws that made it illegal to disseminate information on birth control. But this bill shows we have not come far enough.

One woman in four is sexually active in our society on this continent and in northern Europe by 15 years of age. It is time we all understood that. Fewer than 10 per cent of North American teenagers use an effective method of birth control when they first become sexually active. In contrast, 90 per cent of adolescents in Scandinavian countries use birth control methods from the start.

Quebec, a province with one of the best birth control services in North America, also happens to have one of the lowest rates of unwanted pregnancy in the country. A child born in the province of Quebec tends to be a wanted child. We believe all children born in Canada ought to be wanted children.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: Madam Speaker, the Family Planning Division of Health and Welfare Canada is composed of one full-time staff person. Surely this must change. Surely the federal government must make a substantial increase in the funding of birth control education and all other aspects of family planning in this country.

I want to conclude this brief but serious speech on this very serious subject by saying that families, as all of us know, can be the source of infinite joy, of boundless love, of security and of kinship. The decision to bring children into this world is quite possibly the most serious decision a man and a woman together—a woman in the ultimate sense here—will ever make. Such a decision, with all its responsibility implied, should be a free decision.

• (1910)

Let us not enact a bill that would make criminals of women who do not look lightly upon the responsibilities in such a choice. Let us do all we can instead to ensure that all children in Canada are wanted children.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kilgour: Madam Speaker, I listened with care to the very serious speech that the member for Oshawa just made. I would ask him if he is telling the House by implication, taking his premise that abortion should be exclusively a matter between a woman and her doctor, that society or the government, if you like, has at no point the right to interfere with that, to regulate that matter. Or, in other words, is he telling the House that at 16, 20, or 22 weeks it is still his view and that of his party that society has not the right to say, at some stage: "You cannot make the decision exclusively between the two of you"?

Mr. Broadbent: I am saying that of course we need regulations in this domain, but they are health regulations. The evidence is overwhelming that we do not need criminal law.

We have criminal law in our society and in others, if there is a mode of behaviour, a kind of behaviour that is deemed to be repulsive or morally unacceptable, and we need the sanction of criminal law to curtail. The evidence is overwhelming in this particular area that we are now debating that criminal law is not required, that Canadian women, as I said in my comments, whether they are our friends, wives, sisters, mothers, or lovers, are responsible, moral human beings. They have so

demonstrated it in the case of the country as a whole since the Supreme Court decision almost two years ago.

Also, in the case of the Province of Quebec, where there has been freedom of choice for many years before that, there has not been irresponsibility—if one chooses a word—to deal with the issue in moral choices made by women.

Overwhelmingly, the decisions made about pregnancies are in the earliest stages. Overwhelmingly, when they occur late in a pregnancy, it is to save the woman's life, or for some other very serious medical reason involving deformities that may occur.

The evidence for us, not only in this party, but for the large majority of Canadian women, I repeat, is that we do not need Criminal Code sanctions, with all the attendant risks that come with such a measure in this domain.

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member for Oshawa. It is a follow-up to the question my friend from Edmonton just asked. I know this is a very serious issue and he and I, as he obviously knows, will disagree strongly, our positions being naturally very different.

I want to get it clear in my mind if the member is telling us that at no point in the pregnancy does he think that society has an interest of such a magnitude that criminal law should apply, that at no point in the pregnancy is there an offence against society if the life of the unborn were terminated. In fact, that is criminal law—it is an offence against society. My colleague is a lawyer, and I am sure he knows that far better than I.

An Hon. Member: He is not a lawyer. He is a professor.

Mr. Boudria: I am sorry, he is not a lawyer. Neither am I.

I want to ask him very seriously if the position that he is taking is that at no point in the pregnancy is that the case. If it is, even for people who do not agree with me on my pro-life position—I happen to think that life begins at conception and that human life should be protected from that point—surely, then, there must be some point at which he would think that society has an interest and that it is society's moral duty to intervene, to protect and to punish behaviour which is contrary to what society thinks is right.

Mr. Broadbent: Madam Speaker, let me begin my clearing the record. I have many faults, but being a member of the legal profession is not among them.

On the substantive matter, as I said earlier, my understanding of the principle of why criminal law is needed is that certain modes of behaviour become not only repulsive but the instrument of the state is needed to ensure that they do not take place. The evidence as we have seen it in our own country is that the kind of outrageous act envisioned by the hon. member—and perhaps he might think of a woman having an abortion at the latest steps, beyond a certain point in the development of the foetus—does not take place. Therefore, if there is no evidence that this practice is taking place, from our point of view you do not need the sanction of a moral code. You do not need to leave the implication, as it would for me, that women are not exercising their moral responsibility seriously when I believe they are.

If there were a situation that is hypothetically possible along the lines that the hon. member alludes to, and he has acknowledged a philosophical conception, a view that fundamentally differs from mine—and I repeat that I respect that difference quite seriously even though I do not share it—if we are evolved in our behaviour as a society, and if we consider the kinds of practices that he alludes to as being hypothetically possible, then perhaps hypothetically at some point you might need that.

Why make that assumption now when there is no evidence to warrant it? The evidence goes very clearly all in the opposite direction that women, like men, are morally responsible human beings and therefore ought to have the right, in my view, to continue to exercise their freedom unfettered by the potential threat of the Criminal Code.

Mr. Harvard: Madam Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member for Oshawa. In my preamble I would like to point out that this debate does offer the opportunity to MPs to differ with their very own colleagues from their very own party.

I would like to say to my hon. friend from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell that in our vocabulary of abortion we should never, ever find the words "punish" or "punishment". We should never be thinking of punishing women. We should be thinking of supporting women. I say to

all members of the House that if you want to protect the unborn, you protect their mothers. That is how you do it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harvard: I have a question for the hon. member for Oshawa because I want him to expand on one particular area of his remarks. He said that the woman should have the right to freely decide this matter of having an abortion.

I would like to ask him this question because there are some people who already feel that under this proposed legislation women would have that unfettered right, they would be able to freely decide in consultation with their doctors whether they are going to have an abortion. They say that because, as some people say, the criteria are so wide that you could drive a Sherman tank through them. I ask the hon. member for Oshawa why he would be concerned about women not having this unfettered right to make this decision once this legislation were passed, if it were to be passed.

• (1920)

Mr. Broadbent: I would be very happy to answer that question. As the member knows, the criteria is essentially medical. It seems to me that it is something that ought to concern us from a point of view of moral responsibility. We are doing precisely what I believe the Supreme Court and this legislation has ultimately tested. There is better than a fifty-fifty chance that it will be declared *ultra vires* because it does deny the basic rights of a woman in terms of free choice, independent of medical criteria, to make a decision.

I will just repeat in my answer the argumentation that I found both moving and logically cogent in the ruling of the Chief Justice. He said: "Forcing a woman by threat of criminal sanction to carry a foetus to term unless she meets certain criteria unrelated to her own priorities and aspirations—" There is no reference to health, physical or psychological. He says: "—unrelated to her own priorities and aspirations is a profound interference with a woman's body and thus a violation of security of the person".

That is a very cogent expression of the view that a woman ought to have the unfettered right to decide. If I were involved, if my wife were pregnant, we would have this discussion. I believe this myself.

Our party's position is a question of a choice here. I am saying as an extension of that principle, if I advised my wife that I did not favour her having an abortion, even as a partner in the act of creating a potential human being, then she should be free ultimately to reject it. I believe that. She ought to have that right. Certainly, she should not, nor should any other person, married or unmarried, have to go to a doctor for other than medical reasons. If a doctor says there are good medical reasons for a woman not to have an abortion, then that opinion should be respected.

The woman should not have to be dependent upon anyone's opinion, medically, psychologically or whatever, if she is to have the respect, as the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada said, to her security as a person, her ultimate freedom. We have to give her that freedom. We ought not to deal with the question again, having legislation that refers to medical criteria basically as the only criteria to be used in reaching such a decision.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, as I rise to take part in this debate it goes without saying that members of all sides of the House face a dilemma. Can we support with our vote a bill that we may find difficult to support in our hearts and in our minds?

At the outset, it is important that the country observing this debate recognize and accept that as legislators we have the duty not only to vote but to speak, to explain our votes. The two go together. So, in my comments today, I ask members and my constituents not only to note that I support this bill, but also to remember why I do.

We must remember where we were in this House on this issue in the summer of 1988. The House faced an obligation imposed on it by the Supreme Court following its decision in Morgentaler to come to a consensus on a new law on abortion, a law that would balance the rights of women desiring an abortion and the rights of the unborn child.

The House faced an opportunity, an opportunity to choose from a variety of approaches to a new law. We failed to achieve a consensus. That process proved what we knew then and we know now. There is no agreement in this country. There is no agreement in this House.

Possibly there is no agreement in any party on what an ideal abortion régime in Canada should be.

Agonizing as it has been, futile as it appeared, the process in my mind was useful. It was useful if only to demonstrate through our imperfect means in this place that no one's ideal law can be achieved in this place.

The government has done what it had to do in the context I have just described. It has introduced for debate, for study, for possible amendment and finally a vote, a bill that attempts to balance the rights to security of the person of the woman seeking an abortion and the right to life of the unborn.

Simply, as I see it, the bill does this by beginning with the premise that an abortion cannot be performed unless it is necessary to preserve the health of the woman. It removes the previous procedural obstacles that the Supreme Court indicated infringed on the security of the person of the woman and which has been part of this debate in earlier speeches.

The bill, in acknowledging that abortion is a medical procedure, places on the medical practitioner the responsibility of determining whether the procedure is medically warranted. I do not shy away from placing that responsibility on those who are trained, those who are professional and those who must make life and death decisions in the course of their work every day.

But in my view the bill does not adequately circumscribe the grounds on which the act of terminating unborn life should be allowed. From my perspective and that of many Canadians of every region, both men and women—and I believe from every walk of life—this is the bill's greatest deficiency. It will be said that the bill allows abortions for too wide a variety of motives and under too many circumstances. I freely admit that such a prospect troubles me deeply.

In response, however, I can only point out the inherent weakness of the law, of any law, not just this law. How does law deal with the motives of the human being? For the law to command respect and to have any effect it must do two things.

First, it must bear some relation to things as they are, and not exclusively as they should be. Second, it must be capable of enforcement.

I have come to the conclusion, though reluctantly, that no abortion law would be capable of preventing abortion on the scale on which it occurs in our society today, and that no law would reverse what has been done in our society for the previous 20 years.

I believe that women seeking an abortion are not going to change their intentions if a law imposes a threat to their health or their freedom. Is a remedy a sanction against the woman? Remember, we are dealing, my colleagues, with criminal law. A sanction can only take place after an act has been committed. For those of us who are pro life it does not address the saving of life.

• (1930)

Physicians are not going to deny abortions to women whose health is affected by the pregnancy as they determine it in their professional code. Regrettably, juries are not going to convict today any more than they have in the past.

I acknowledge that our society does not respect unborn life sufficiently. I acknowledge further that in general our society inadequately supports women who bear children. As a former Minister of National Health and Welfare I struggled with the issue of what type of programs could we come forward with which would strengthen the support for women and with it the support for the family. I agree that in general men have a long way to go in respecting and placing sufficient value on the roles of parenting and caring for children.

This debate is not simply a woman's debate or an issue relating to or affecting women only. It affects women, obviously. It affects men. It affects children. These failings of our society are not going to be solved in this law or any other because the law cannot reform the human heart, and too often we try here to do just that. The law cannot achieve what society is unwilling or incapable of achieving.

We freely admit that the state cannot solve the great issues of human life. Many of us know that genuine reform in society will not come through political reform. Yet I believe that the state has a moral obligation to restrain the actions taken by men.

Chuck Colson in his book *Kingdoms and Conflict* writes the following: "Attitudes are forged by spiritual forces, not by legislation. Values change when spiritual move-

ments stir the hearts of people and when fresh winds of reason stir their minds."

I am also convinced that we need a law because virtually every action, individual or corporate, in society is circumscribed in some manner by law, no matter how minimal the protection or the sanctions within that law. Surely members on both sides of this issue would have to agree that this issue is of sufficient import that if other actions are circumscribed by law, this action of abortion is sufficiently serious to be considered to be circumscribed by law as well.

What I do believe, therefore, is that what this proposed law will do is reinforce the principle that human life has unique value; that unborn life cannot be terminated simply on the basis of one person's choice without recognized grounds. Therefore I support this bill, albeit after much struggle and soul searching for two more fundamental reasons.

The first alternative was to have a law that rests on the principle that unborn life somehow attains greater value with the passage of time. The cabinet, and I say this even though we are all restricted by cabinet confidences, struggled with that issue. This House struggles with that issue. I am absolutely convinced that if we ever accept the principle that life somehow gains value as it matures, we are then subject to that great danger of asking ourselves the question: Does life lose value as it ages?

The second reason for supporting this law is that the alternative is no law. That, to me, is unacceptable because underlying such a course of action is the principle that unborn life has no value at all. It needs to be said in this place that the kind of solution for a middle ground proposed by the Law Refrom Commission, namely a gestational principle, is arbitrary in moral and scientific terms. Arbitrariness is precisely what the law is supposed to prevent. That was one option open to the government. I am pleased and frankly relieved that that course of action has not been taken.

This bill maintains that there are no stages in the value of life. If there were, then any other stage of life would be subject to arbitrary evaluation. If we introduce the idea of relativism in this matter, it will be difficult to exclude it in other matters. The whole concept of human rights rests on the principle of excluding arbitrariness and relativism.

A bill based on the gestational principle could have been one alternative, but the House would have faced the same dilemma it faces now, a membership comprised of those who believe that the law is not even necessary, of those who believe a law must prevent abortions under any circumstances except for a threat to the mother's life, and of those who favour a law that allows abortions in some cases. No bill, I am convinced, would be capable of covering that spectrum. The point, therefore, is that we have this bill and we have to decide what to do with it.

The alternative to this bill, the result of a negative vote, would be a complete absence of any signal by society or to society that abortion is a serious matter involving human life.

The proposal has been called a compromise bill and I suppose it is. I think of it rather as an incomplete bill. It is incomplete because it rests on what is outside the law for its force and its effectiveness, namely, the values that thousands of Canadians bring each year to the decision of abortion. It is incomplete because it does not contain all the protection for human life, for unborn life, that I would like personally to see contained in abortion law. It is incomplete because perhaps society will ever yet move to a greater respect for human life in every dimension.

Possibly in the not distant future, in a more perfect and caring world, public attitudes and the public institutions by which we govern ourselves will respect the most innocent and vulnerable of human life. It will be a society which celebrates the fact that we have been given the joy not only the obligation of experiencing divine creation and giving support to that divine life in all its stages. Regrettably that day is not today.

• (1940)

Therefore I have not been persuaded by the arguments of my colleagues on the other side of this issue and I, in turn, have failed to persuade them with my arguments. However here we are with the best that the government could do, the best that the House could do, and I think the best that society could do on this issue in law at this time.

All of us have been influenced by certain forces. We all are influenced by what we have experienced and what we have been taught. On this issue I have been influenced by the British parliamentarian Wilberforce

who, as my colleagues will know, was instrumental in having the slave trade abolished in the United Kingdom in the early 1800s. Wilberforce struggled with the need to compromise in public life as well as the obligation to be faithful to his faith. In that struggle his clergyman, a minister by the name of Newton, a member of the Church of England, gave Wilberforce some advice. Wilberforce was saying: "I have to compromise too much in public life and I might as well leave public life and do something else."

Wilberforce, after he had spoken to Newton, took the counsel of Newton, who said very simply: "You follow your own faith, your own convictions, but you do not abandon public office." Wilberforce followed that advice, Madam Speaker, and I intend to do the same.

And so it takes me to my last point. What can we do tonight? I am convinced that the law will not change the hearts of men and women. I am convinced as well that the law will not change the fact that 65,000 young Canadians die each year. I have to recognize that. I also have to recognize that sanctions are not the answer.

Therefore, I challenge the churches, I challenge the men and women in society to put faith to action: Adopt an unborn child. Let us take away the stigma that just because a child is unwanted that that child should therefore have no future. I have seen churches adopt children. I have seen them take under their care unwed mothers, give them care, give them support, give them a future. I have come to the conclusion that it is men and women in that setting who will have to become the answer to helping those who are most vulnerable and, in so doing, be that leaven, that catalyst in society that society can pride itself in preserving life.

It is with those conditions that I support this bill.

Mr. Blaikie: I have a comment and a question for the hon. member for Provencher who I know has struggled authentically with the various responsibilities that come in public life—tension between one's own individual conscience, the view of one's particular religious community, the view of one's political party, the view of one's constituents, and all those things that go together to make being in this place sometimes a very difficult place to be, particularly when it comes to an issue like this one.

Without entering into debate about the member's reasons for indicating his support for this bill, I was only moved to rise at the end when, if I remember him correctly, he threw out a challenge to the church and presumably to all those in the Christian community who out of their Christian belief have taken a pro-life position and who have advocated either a position similar to the one that this legislation which we have before us represents, or a position which is even more restrictive with respect to abortion, and I expect something like the member for Provencher might have advocated in another context.

When I heard the word "challenge", what I was hoping for—and I do not say this in any polemical way—was not that the challenge would only be to individual families or churches to adopt, but that the challenge would be to society to create the social and economic conditions in which women could choose life, choose pregnancy, without as it is the case in so many cases choosing poverty. If we want to send signals about the value that we place on children, we do that every time we make law with respect to family allowances, we do that every time we make law or we don't with respect to child care, and we do that every time we make law with respect to unemployment insurance and make a distinction between the benefits that adoptive parents get and natural parents.

There are a host of ways in which the concern that the member for Provencher raised could be more comprehensively articulated. I think that is the challenge which ought to be issued to those churches that find themselves at odds with this law or that advocate a stricter law.

In that respect I have to say to the member that many times when certain churches have been involved in advocating certain social and economic policies they have been told by successive governments that it is not any of their business, that these are matters for economists.

I hope we could at least agree that it is not just a question of individual action with respect to adoption. It is also a question of social and economic policies, both sending signals to potential parents as to how supportive society is going to be of their choice to be parents in whatever context that choice is exercised and to society in general. It seems to me that that is where the challenge should go out to the churches and to the Christian community or, for that matter, to any other religious community. They ought to teach not by the

force of law in this case but by the power of example, by the power of love exercised not just individually but through the civil community, and by the other laws that might be passed.

• (1950)

Mr. Epp: Madam Speaker, to answer that question would take a lot of time, and in the issues of human life there is never one answer.

I know the member asked the question in the spirit that I have seen him address this question at other times. There is no doubt in my mind that social or economic circumstances have an effect on the decisions we take, but I would caution him, if I might, in the same spirit that it is not necessarily those in the lower economic groups who seek abortions today in Canada. I think we should be careful with that.

Perhaps I could use a personal example. I do it with a great amount of hesitation, but I do it perhaps to make the point. As I said earlier we come from our own experiences. I am a member of a family of four and I am the only one who is not adopted. My father and his first wife adopted two children who are brother and sister naturally and who escaped the Soviet Union. One was four and the other five. That family was very poor. The children were advertised in a church newspaper. It had very little to do with economics. It had everything to do with attitude.

My mother and her first husband adopted a girl. My mother's first husband for their entire married life was ill. They adopted a girl. All I am saying is that we should be careful when we give to this question that easy economic answer.

When I take a look at our native people, if I may speak about them for a moment, their attitudes to life and the reality of their poverty, I find very different attitudes in that society than I find in the general mainstream of Canadian society.

I do not want to deflect from the member's comments and his question, so I come back to the question. I say to him that I believe that not only the Christian churches but society in general should not ascribe to society the powers that it does not have. I believe that society only sets frameworks through law. People then work within that framework to do good or to do evil. I have tried to challenge them to do one of the greatest goods, and that is take from their own resources both financial, physical, emotional, spiritual and help someone rather than simply condemn because either the law is not good enough or that society does not understand or want to understand.

I appreciate what the gentleman says when he talks about economic factors. I am sure they play into that from time to time with certain circumstances, but I would suggest they do not affect every case or every decision relating to abortion.

Mr. Blaikie: I did not mean to suggest—and I think the record will show it—that every case is affected only by economic factors. I tried to go beyond that. For instance, with respect to child care, in many cases the need or the prospective lack of child care is something which affects decisions about parenthood, decisions made not only by the poor but by middle income and upper income Canadian women who have to make decisions about whether or not they would have to leave their job in order to provide the kind of care that they may think is unavailable because of the current child care system or may be unavailable to them depending on where they live or for a variety of circumstances.

I certainly was not meaning to suggest that it is only poor women who seek abortions, although in many cases economics are a very strong element in why people make the decisions that they make, and we know that to be a fact.

All I am saying is that when it is a question of pure economics and choosing poverty by choosing pregnancy, or when it is a question of other things that may come into the factors in the decision-making process by women who we would not consider poor, all these things are related to social policy decisions that we make on other days in this House of Commons.

The challenge that the member issued at the end of his speech to the church should be a challenge not only to do the individual moral thing of being available to adopt children who may be unwanted, but the social, moral thing of being involved in the political process in building up the kind of support networks that would enable all women, regardless of their circumstances, to make the kind of choices that the hon. member wants them to make.

Mr. Epp: There is a lot of truth in what the hon. member says. The only points that I would repeat in this complex issue of abortion are these factors which play on decisions that are taken by individuals. That is why I come back to the main thesis of my point tonight, and that is, yes, let us strive to get a society that is more equitable, but let us never ascribe to society the ability to change the moral factors which I believe are personal

and spiritual and come from a basis other than from laws passed in this House.

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of State (Indian Affairs and Northern Development)): Madam Speaker, it is with some pleasure and very serious intent that I rise this evening to join in this debate on Bill C–43.

Perhaps I might just comment on the speech of my colleague, the hon. Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, because nothing shows more clearly the difficulties faced by members in this House. The hon. member is a colleague whom I love and admire very much and whom I am proud to stand beside and on most days sit behind as a colleague of this House. Yet, he and I take very different views on the issue which is the subject of the bill being debated this evening.

I think we can understand that when trusted and loyal colleagues take very different views on an issue such as this one—and it is truly a divisive issue indeed—not only does it not lend itself to the kinds of usual partisan organization that we find in this House, but it is a profound challenge to our understanding of our role as parliamentarians to find some common ground to meet the expectations of Canadians that we will make some kind of sense out of one of the most divisive issues in society today.

Like my colleague, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, my position on the issue of abortion itself is well known in my community where I am well known as an advocate of those who are pro–choice. Like the hon. minister, I face the challenge of going into my community and trying to reconcile views that are basically irreconcilable on this fundamental issue.

My particular perspective on this issue of abortion arises from my own experience and my own intellectual and spiritual development. As a philosophical Conservative, I have a great distaste for dealing with human problems in the abstract. I am often reminded of the statement of Edmund Burke, perhaps one of the great founders of philosophical conservatism, in his commentary on the French Revolution written in 1790 that the French revolutionaries saw men as abstractions and in seeing them as abstractions they forget that they were human. It has been one of the guiding principles of my life to try never to lose sight of the human dimension of an issue.

• (2000)

In the issue of abortion there are a number of human dimensions but, in particular, it is an issue that lends itself very poorly to attempts to generalize or to understand in the abstract. I am reminded also of the opening lines of Tolstoy's great novel *Anna Karenina*, where he says words to the effect that all happy families are alike; unhappy families are each unhappy in their own way. I think similarly one could say that all welcome pregnancies are in a sense alike; but each unwanted pregnancy is unwanted in its own way. The existence of an unwanted pregnancy is a circumstance that is unique to the woman involved.

I am among those Canadians who are very comfortable without a law because from my perspective I feared a law which would attempt to generalize about what is basically an experience that cannot be generalized. I feared that we would not be able to come up with a law that would respect the uniqueness of the decision to terminate or continue a pregnancy.

Bill C–43 has been described as a compromise law. Certainly for those who are on the pro–choice side of the issue the fundamental compromise is whether to have a law or not. As I say, I dreaded the prospect of a law in this area because I feared very deeply the notion of trying to create a legal framework that would lose sight of the unique circumstances that are involved in each decision with respect to pregnancy. But I can say quite sincerely and with quite a clear heart that I believe that this bill is actually better than no law. I realize that this is a position which will come as a surprise to many people who share my position on the fundamental issue of abortion. I want to address myself this evening to the reasons why I, as a very committed and passionate pro–choicer, can support Bill C–43.

I believe that in order to have a law there has to be some quid pro quo and the law itself has to respect the privacy, and, as I say, the uniqueness of the decision that has to be made about a pregnancy. I believe this bill does

both. It certainly describes abortion as fundamentally a decision made by a woman with her doctor.

Unlike many people on the pro-choice side of the issue, I am not at all uncomfortable with the role of the doctor in that decision because I believe that what the bill describes as the legal framework within which abortion is performed is fundamentally good medical practice. The definition of "health" is very broad and I believe takes into account all of the circumstances in which a woman would seek an abortion.

But I would be very disturbed by a regime which did not require of medical practitioners that an opinion be formed before the procedure be carried out because just as I am deeply opposed to the notion of a woman not being able to obtain an abortion when she wants it, I think it is equally tragic for a woman to have an abortion which she later regrets. Now, that is part of human life and we all do things which we may later regret, but I think it is extremely important that when a woman goes to a doctor with a request for something as serious as a termination of a pregnancy that there at least be an inquiry as to whether that decision is an informed decision, whether it is based on a realistic evaluation of her circumstance.

I give as an example an older woman who is pregnant who may go to a doctor and may otherwise not be averse to having a child but may be convinced that at her age she will undoubtedly produce a deformed child. Some reassurance from a doctor about the diagnostic techniques of amniocentesis, for example, may be very helpful there. A woman who is in an emotional state because she fears she will be left by her partner because she is pregnant may want to reconsider that decision in light of broader options that are available to her.

So I think what is described in the bill, the requirement that a doctor form an opinion based on standard medical practice is simply good medical practice and it is something that all women are entitled to. I do not find that a problem at all.

What I think is extremely useful about the bill and what for me tips the balance in terms of this bill as opposed to no law is that I believe that in so far as it is possible for the federal government to take steps to ensure access to abortion, this bill does so by clarifying abortion as a medical procedure performed for health reasons.

It has been stated by many people in the House during this debate, including my colleagues the Minister of National Health and Welfare and the Minister of Justice, that the federal government has no jurisdiction to regulate health practice in Canada.

Contrary to the understanding of many Canadians, the Canada Health Act is not a statute regulating health, it is a funding statute by which the federal government basically intrudes into the area of provincial jurisdiction with its spending power. So the notion that somehow one could put a provision into the Canada Health Act that would assure access to abortion is a mistaken notion, relying on a failure to understand the realities of Canadian constitutional law.

I believe that this law accomplishes perhaps the one good thing that was accomplished by the law that was struck down in the Morgentaler decision. Under the previous provisions of the Criminal Code, by definition, every abortion performed in Canada was a medical procedure performed for a health rationale. For that reason funding was assured under the Canada Health Act.

I can remember that in my own province there were those who wished to pressure the provincial government not to fund abortion. They found that they could not because it was, by definition, a medical procedure under the Canada Health Act.

I believe that Bill C-43 accomplishes the same thing by its very clear definition of abortion being performed for a health rationale. Although that may disturb some people who are very much against abortion, I think they would agree that whatever the status of abortion in Canadian society, it ought to be a status that is uniform across the country. If it is to be a legal procedure, it ought to be equally accessible across the country, and I believe that Bill C-43, to the extent that the federal government has the jurisdiction to do so, accomplishes this.

Bill C-43 ensures that abortions will be carried out by or under the supervision of a qualified medical practitioner. Bill C-43 creates no barriers to access in the way of procedural requirements or the requirements that abortions must be performed in any specific facility, for example. Whether abortions performed in clinics will be funded under provincial medical plans is something that

is beyond the federal government to ensure, but abortions may be performed in a doctor's office or in a clinic without any legal penalty. The question of whether they will be funded under provincial plans is something that will have to be worked out with provincial governments. But, in so far as the federal government has jurisdiction, it has removed barriers to access that I think were very troublesome in the last bill.

I believe that Bill C–43 goes as far as federal jurisdiction can to ensure a national standard of access to safe, legal, funded abortions.

I would like to address some of the criticisms of Bill C–43 that have come from those who share my own position on the basic issue, criticisms from the pro–choice side of the issue. Perhaps the most important criticism is with respect to this bill as an amendment to the Criminal Code and a distaste for what is described as the "recriminalization" of abortion.

I think there are two aspects of this. One is the concern that somehow women or doctors will be subject to arbitrary penalties for providing a medical service which many feel is a right that women should have in Canadian society. I think it is important to examine what is meant by recriminalization because what has been criminalized in this bill is, first, abortions performed by non–medical practitioners or not under the supervision of a medical practitioner; abortions performed without forming an opinion as to the health rationale which, as I said before, I believe is quite simply bad medical practice; and the sale of abortifacients, toxic devices or equipment to induce abortions or for women to induce abortions in themselves. Abortion is criminalized only in a very narrow sense.

What also offends many pro choice people with the notion of abortion being in the Criminal Code is that somehow they feel that having abortion mentioned in the Criminal Code implies a moral judgment even upon those who avail themselves of legal abortions. I think that is very much a misunderstanding of the way criminal law functions in our society. If you look through the Criminal Code at the subjects of things that are regulated under the Criminal Code you would find that many perfectly acceptable kinds of activities in our society have been criminalized in certain contexts.

• (2010)

Those would include sexual intercourse, sexual touching, lighting a fire, gambling, being near a dwelling house at night, driving a car, possessing a narcotic, taking possession of property. Under certain circumstances those activities are all criminal and incur criminal penalties under the Criminal Code. But under other circumstances they are perfectly natural and acceptable activities in human society.

What this law does is draw a line around the legal practice of abortion and, beyond that line, certain practices relating to abortion will incur criminal penalties. But within that line activity is perfectly legal and there is no implied judgment upon those who avail themselves of the service, according to the law.

It is important to emphasize, as have my colleagues, that there is no other constitutional jurisdiction under which the federal government can act in this area. We do not have the constitutional jurisdiction to regulate health care. The residual jurisdiction of peace, order and good government is a very weak ground and unless we were to regard things happening about abortion as a national emergency, it is simply not a usable constitutional head of authority. So the only way the federal government can act at all to create some kind of national standard is to use its criminal law power. I think it is very important for people to understand that. The only way we can establish the legality of abortion in a positive legal statement is to define the boundaries beyond which it is illegal.

The question of access is the other aspect that is raised with respect to this bill. As I have said, there are limits to federal jurisdiction. I believe that the defined status of abortion as a medical procedure in this bill accomplishes a great deal toward ensuring equality of access across Canada. None of the barriers that existed under the old law, the committees, the need to perform abortions in accredited hospitals, exist in this legislation. I believe that this should ensure access for women in all parts of Canada.

The issue of abortion is, of course, something very fundamental to value systems in current Canadian society. It is impossible for us to have a legal framework

which will satisfy all. The Minister of Justice has said: "We are not asking Canadians to change their views as to what they think is right, we are asking Canadians to respect the views of others and to respect this new law."

That is a harder challenge than it first seems because I know how passionately I feel about my side of the issue, and I know that many of my colleagues feel equally passionate about their side of the issue. To give ground on that kind of a fundamental commitment is the most difficult thing you can ask of anyone. Tolerance is the hardest virtue to practice in a democratic society. For those of us who make laws, moving from highly principled positions is very difficult indeed.

What is interesting about this law is that it represents agreement on some aspects of the issue among people from both sides of the issue, although, interestingly enough, for different reasons. For example, my colleagues who are strongly anti- abortion are adamant, as my colleague, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources has said, that abortion only be available for a health rationale. I can accept that because first, only a very broad definition of health will pass the House and will pass, I believe, court review. But also, from my perspective, a health rationale clarifies the status of abortion with respect to the Canada Health Act.

So, for very different reasons, we can agree on putting a health rationale into the bill. My colleagues who are strongly anti-abortion do not wish to see gestation limits in legislation. I agree with them on that but for different reasons. For them gestation limits suggest a varying value of human life at different times of pregnancy which is anathema to them. For me, gestation limits simply feed the myth in society that women seek abortions late in pregnancy when over 99 per cent of abortions are, in fact, sought in the first trimester of pregnancy.

You will remember that Chantal Daigle could not get an abortion in Quebec after 20 weeks. There was no law. There was no criminal law against abortion and there was no law in Quebec setting out gestational limits, but the ethics of the medical profession apply here. We sometimes forget that that is a very important force. That is a force recognized in this bill where decisions about abortions are made according to standard medical practice. There are substantive limitations within the Canadian Medical Association about the performance of abortion. I and my colleagues who are on the other side of the issue can agree that it is not necessary or appropriate to have gestational limits in this bill. We have never had them in Canada. There are *de facto* gestational limits and they are gestational limits determined according to medical ethics in Canadian society.

The use of the criminal law is not only our only jurisdictional choice constitutionally, but I believe it also is a reflection on the seriousness of the issue. I had a letter recently from a very good friend of mine, a leader in the civil liberties field in Vancouver. He wrote to me congratulating the government on the bill. He is a person I admire very much because although he is deeply committed to civil liberties he is also a pragmatist who understands the difficulty of translating values into public policy. He says: " By retaining the criminality of the procedure the government has offered a potent symbol of conciliation to those very many Canadians who feel that this can never be seen or treated as just another moral issue. Its deep significance must, they insist, raise it to the level of the criminal law".

I think that recognition is appropriate. Strongly pro-choice though I am, I recognize that abortion is not just another issue. It is a deeply important issue, it is a deeply important issue to me as a woman and all my understanding of what fertility means to a woman.

I would say in conclusion that I am among those Canadians who are comfortable with no law regulating abortion. I have confidence in the judgment of women and the ethics of the medical profession, and both of these views, I believe, are reflected in Bill C-43.

If this were all it would be a helpful declaration but not perhaps necessary. I do believe that Bill C-43 goes farther and, in clarifying the status of abortion as a medical procedure, it improves access. It also considerably narrows the range of possible legal challenges. I believe this law reflects the views of people on all sides of the issue although it does not reflect all the views of people on all sides of the issue.

The nature of the compromise that is required in this bill has been shown by the supporters of this bill. In reading some of the debate that has taken place so far and listening this evening, I am struck by the kind of maturity that is being shown in dealing with this very sensitive issue.

I believe that Canadians are looking to us to be pragmatic and to understand where the broad range of Canadians are. They are not asking us to give up our personal views or to cease our struggles in other arenas to convince others of our views. I believe that this bill is the best we can do and that it is an opportunity for us to show that we recognize the true role of parliamentarians in this House. For that reason, Madam Speaker, I am pleased to support the bill.

Ms. Mitchell: Madam Speaker, I was very interested to hear the rationale presented by the Minister who shares a pro-choice point of view. I want to raise two or three points that to me did not seem quite logical in her presentation. For one thing the Minister spoke about the medical aspect of the bill and felt this was a positive aspect of the bill. I wonder why she feels that it needs to be under the Criminal Code again when in fact abortion currently is a medical procedure and is regulated as a health matter.

She mentioned also in the Chantal Daigle case that the ethics of the medical profession applied in Quebec as far as the 20-week limit on abortions was concerned. Yet she was using the rationale that we need the Criminal Code in order to apply this at this time.

I would ask her why we need it when there was no need during that period when this was occurring in Quebec? I agree with her that there are health regulations in that the medical profession certainly has a code of ethics which is pretty general across Canada.

• (2020)

I am worried about the member's statement and the statement of a number of other government members on the question of equality of access. I cannot see how this bill provides for equality of access, including geographic access. I cannot see how it will help women in P.E.I. and Newfoundland who have no access to abortion now.

I certainly cannot see how it will encourage access in the future. I do not see how it will help those women who want an abortion, have made a decision, and do not have a valid health rationale. I think we have to agree with the difficulty this presents for many doctors who undoubtedly will feel that they have to interpret health with a fairly narrow rationale. These are women who do not, in honesty, have a health reason to seek an abortion, but who find it very difficult to be honest because they are desperate and this is their decision. I would ask her to respond to those points. I find it very difficult to find them in her remarks.

Ms. Campbell (Vancouver Center): Let me respond first of all to the member's comment about gestational limits in the Criminal Code. I do not think the member understood what I said, or perhaps I did not express myself very well.

There are no gestational limits in this bill. We have never had legislated gestational limits for abortion in Canada. The point I was making is that I do not believe they are necessary. I believe that their existence in legislation reinforces a myth that I think is injurious to women and, therefore, I do not believe they should be in the legislation. In fact, they are not in the legislation. My colleagues on the other side of the issue from me also do not wish to have gestational limits.

In this bill there are some principles that we can agree on, although for different reasons. That is the point I was trying to make. My reason for not favouring gestational limits is different from the reasons that my colleague, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, would give. But the fact that we can agree on the substance of what should go in the bill is a step in the right direction. Therefore we have some consensus. The reasons are very different.

With respect to the member's question of access, her first and third questions, let me just draw on my own experience in British Columbia when the Morgantaler decision came out striking down provisions of the Criminal Code when there was no law. The government of British Columbia moved to restrict money for abortion, except in cases of rape and incest. That regulation was struck down, but it was struck down for a largely technical reason, that there was no statutory basis for it. But that could have been corrected by the legislature.

Where attempts to limit funding for abortion can be impugned as being veiled attempts to prevent abortion, I believe will not survive legal challenge. They will be seen as an attempt to invade the division of powers and invade the criminal field which is the sole jurisdiction of the federal government. I believe that without any law, it does leave the door open for the provinces, quite legitimately, to draw a distinction between abortions which are medically necessary and those which are not, and to fund only those which are medically necessary, drawing their own criteria. I believe this bill solves that problem by making it clear that every legal abortion in

Canada is a medical procedure performed for reasons of health.

When we get to the question of the valid health rationale and the breadth of it, we already have a fair amount of dicta in the jurisprudence of the Supreme Court of Canada, which indicates how health should be interpreted, which is why psychological health is included in this bill. A narrower definition, we believe, would not survive a constitutional challenge. I believe that health is a very broad concept. Chief Justice Dickson used the terminology, I believe, "the aspirations of a woman." There is other commentary. One thinks of the World Health Organization definition of health.

Under the previous legislation, the legislation that was struck down, there was strong pressure from pro-choice groups in Canada, that somewhere, somehow a definition of health, for the purposes of that provision of the Criminal Code, be defined as the World Health Organization definition. It was recognized that a broad definition of health would open up access to abortion.

I am the first to agree that putting that definition in the bill is the compromise, that having a health rationale is a compromise for somebody coming from my perspective. It is the provision that concerns strong pro-choice women. I believe that the definition is broad enough, and the trade-off in terms of securing the status of abortion, which I believe puts it firmly under the Canada Health Act, is a reasonable trade-off to make. I do not believe that that health rationale will be an impediment for any woman. I believe that it is important to see health in terms of the whole human being. The definition of this bill includes health as physical, mental or psychological which, it seems to me, those of us on the pro-choice side of the issue have been fighting for for years and fought for when we had to deal with the old law. We said there has to be a broad definition of health because otherwise the old law was not fair. The old law was struck down, but we are now faced with defining health in a helpful way.

So to answer the member's question about equality of access geographically, once again, I believe that in firmly putting abortion within the purview of the Canada Health Act, by removing the previous barriers, for example, the need to perform abortions in an accredited hospital which existed under the old legislation, the hurdle of therapeutic abortion committees without the requirement to form them, that the federal government has done as far as is possible for it to do under its jurisdiction all it can to ensure access.

There is no legal penalty under this bill for a doctor to perform an abortion in Prince Edward Island. I believe that if provinces are not prepared to make those services available, that as with many other services that are not available in all jurisdictions in Canada, they will be obliged to provide funding for those services in other parts where they are available. There are many services for which this applies in Canadian health care.

Mr. Wenman: Mr. Speaker, in the minister's speech she spoke about the role of the medical practitioner. It seemed to me she suggested that the medical practitioner's only role certainly was not the physical act of performing the abortion, but rather that it had to do with revolving around consent and that that consent should be based on information. The minister used the word "informed" consent.

Would the minister be willing to give a full and fair consideration to a potential amendment relating to informed consent? Second, might she consider an amendment that related to perhaps a period of time for reasoned judgment? In fact, after the first consultation with the medical practitioner there might be a 48-hour period whereupon further reflection and reasoned judgment could be brought to bear for that person to consider the information that the doctor, in fact, might give that woman. Third, would the minister define an abortion itself as the termination of life? Does the minister accept that definition, the termination of life is what an abortion is in fact?

Ms. Campbell (Vancouver Centre): Mr. Speaker, on the question of informed consent, no, I would not support that kind of amendment. First, there are already civil remedies against physicians for performing procedures where informed consent is absent. It is part of the law in Canada now with respect to medical procedure.

What I was speaking about was simply good medical practice—time for reasoned judgment. Once again, we are talking about this question of dealing with things in abstractions and trying to generalize about what are unique circumstances. One woman may come to a doctor and say, "I have been thinking about this now for two weeks, and I have talked to my clergyman, and I have talked to my partner, and I have talked to my parents, and I have been all around this issue and I have made

this decision and I just feel that I cannot go ahead with this pregnancy" for all these various reasons.

Another woman may come to her doctor in tears or simply may advise the doctor of her pregnancy and at that time begin the process of coming to a decision. I do not think it is the business of Parliament to dictate to practitioners how they deal with that. That is precisely the thing I fear, this desire to create a general regime for what is basically a unique situation for each person. I think we have to have some confidence in the medical profession. As I say, what I like about the way the health rationale is put in this bill is that it demands good medical practice for women in Canada.

Finally, the member asked me the question about whether abortion is the termination of life. That is a philosophical question. I do not accept the notion that a foetus has the same rights as a born human being. Maybe I am too much of a product of the common law, but I think that is an opinion and a discussion which is philosophical. We are trying to legislate in the real world and I do not think it is helpful to get into that discussion at this time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Fee): The time for questions and comments has expired. On debate, the hon. member for Ottawa South.

• (2030)

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, I must say the Chair becomes you very well. I welcome this opportunity to participate in the debate on this bill and to put my views on the record with respect to the complex and difficult issue of abortion.

I wish to say that I have very carefully considered the views of the hundreds of my constituents who have taken the trouble to contact me either in person or by mail. I have also considered the many written materials sent to me by groups and organizations concerning this issue. I have told those who have contacted me that I take my responsibility in this matter very seriously.

I endeavour to approach this issue from what I would call a non-doctrinaire point of view. I seek to apply my judgment as a legislator trying to find a framework in law for the benefit of all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Each and every one of us, as members of this House, must use his or her own judgment on this issue. As a group we bring a unique combiration mix of life experiences and of political and sometimes personal philosophies.

[*English*]

My own experience has been profoundly touched by the reality of life and death. I have witnessed the birth of each of my three children and these are three of the most precious moments of my life. At each of them and at the memory of them, I was and am moved by the miracle of human life.

My wife and I have also experienced the grief of a miscarriage and we have shared in difficult decisions relating to the use of artificial life support for both of my parents.

The need to reflect on matters of birth, life and death can escape none of us for these are the common denominators of the human experience. Consideration of matters of life and death is not limited to abortion. Modern technology presents us with a host of questions about life and death that never before needed to be answered by humankind. Some of these questions, *in vitro* fertilization, surrogate parenthood, voluntary euthanasia, create difficulties that are as profound as those presented by abortion.

I believe the principle that life is special is self-evident and even that it is not in dispute, including in this debate. Some refer to this principle as the sanctity of life. Human life should represent in a civilized society a very special value, a higher value. Human life itself should be preserved and protected as the highest possible priority of human endeavour and ingenuity.

Life, however, is much broader than the issue before us. Human life itself cannot exist independent of other life forms on this planet. What we must be learning from the environmental crises that surround us is surely this:

While human life may be sanctified, it will only be preserved on this planet if we show concern and respect for our world, its plant and animal life forms as well.

[*Translation*]

Have we not finally understood that all life forms are interdependent? Respect for life involves a lot more than just preventing abortions.

[*English*]

That being said, it also seems to me to be self-evident that human life begins before birth. Nature in its own course provides for the human child to be carried by its mother well beyond the point at which modern technology has rendered it viable outside the mother.

I also believe in the principle that in our society, the maximum possible scope for individual freedom or choice should be permitted. I do believe, however, that freedom to choose brings with it the obligation to accept the consequences of one's choices. We take pride, and rightly so, in our Charter of Rights and Freedoms but sometimes I believe that we should have a charter of rights and obligations because obligations flow necessarily from rights.

I am not unaware of, nor do I disregard, the views of those who believe that a woman should have the right to control her own body. I am not one who favours a pervasive government interference in the private lives of individuals and I believe that matters of private morality should not be within the purview of the state.

I have heard the plea from some women that the life within a pregnant woman, especially in the early stages of pregnancy, is not independent life but really part and parcel of her own body. To enact a criminal law to interfere with a woman's control over this aspect of her person is viewed as a profound interference in a woman's private, personal matters.

I understand this viewpoint and I am responsive to it, especially to the extent that I believe that the state should have less rather than more control over the personal lives of individuals. But I find enormous difficulty with the view that the unborn child, especially after the point of viability, has no right to protection by the state.

Having outlined my view of the meaning of respect for life and the need to accept responsibility for one's choices, I would like to comment on the proper role of the criminal law in this matter.

First of all, as a lawyer, I agree that the sole head of federal jurisdiction in this matter is the criminal law power, whether exercised through the Criminal Code or otherwise. This requires us to define an offence and to prescribe a penalty.

I also believe that the rule of law is fundamental to our system of government. Without the rule of law, that is, the acceptance that the law is paramount and of equal application to all, the integrity of our system of government will be undermined. The acceptance of the rule of law depends upon respect for the laws we enact in this place, fortunately, far more than it depends upon respect for us as legislators. The importance of this principle should give legislators great pause in deciding to enact a criminal law.

What is required for us to enact a criminal law to prohibit behaviour in our society? I believe that a very broad consensus within our society is required, a consensus which encompasses the following elements: First of all, the behaviour which is prohibited is such that it should be punished. The behaviour must offend against society's view of acceptable behaviour. Second, the person to be punished for committing the offence must be deserving of punishment. Third, the punishment must be fair and reasonable in the circumstances.

I have been told by some of those who support a law prohibiting abortion that it does not matter if the law cannot be enforced or if it is commonly disobeyed. It is enough for them that the law be in place to demonstrate society's values even if enforcement is impossible, impracticable or even undesirable. On the latter point, some have told me that they favour an abortion law but would not like to see women punished for disobeying it. These statements undermine for me the argument for legal intervention.

[*Translation*]

I suggest that if the law is not enforced or is full of loopholes or if juries refuse to convict those who disobey it, there will be us respect for the law and this will thus undermine the Canadian legal system.

[*English*]

There are doubtless many times that citizens consider the law to be an ass, as Mr. Bumble said in *Oliver Twist*, but when this is said of the criminal law in respect of a matter which touches people broadly in the country, the danger to respect for law is intensified.

• (2040)

The values implicitly or explicitly contained in the submissions I have received, both in favour of and opposed to a law, are not reconcilable, premised as they are on a fundamentally different view of the time at which human life begins and is worthy of protection.

I must say that some of the extreme presentations of these points of view have been rather offensive to me. This debate, more than most, has resulted in the characterization of opposing views in provocative and extreme epithets reflecting to the disgrace of those who make them.

I too am a product of my upbringing, my experience of life, my legal training and, perhaps most important, my faith and the understanding it gives me of life and the meaning of the universe. The views that I hold of matters of life and death are the ones that I will teach my children and that I will seek to apply in my personal life. But as a legislator, I am responsible for shaping laws that will affect the rights of other people in matters of life and death. In our pluralistic society, I cannot expect that everyone will agree with my views or accept my values. But a society must have values which it owns and which unite it. It is to these values that I now appeal.

The first, as I have explained, is the principle that the laws we enact must be worthy of and receive the respect of the population. But further, I believe that we share values in Canada that will provide us with the affirmation of human life that is sought by caring people. It is upon these values that we have built a system of social programs that is envied by other nations.

As Governor Mario Cuomo of New York has said:

> We should understand that whether abortion is outlawed or not, our work has barely begun: the work of creating a society where the right to life doesn't end at the moment of birth; where an infant isn't helped into a world that doesn't care if it's fed properly, housed decently, educated adequately; where the blind or retarded child isn't condemned to exist rather than empowered to live.

The unfortunate truth is that in Canada, abortion is often motivated by economic considerations. If we condemn some of our people to live in poverty, whether through lack of jobs, lack of adequate child care or an unfair tax system, can we rightly criticize these same people when they seek to mitigate their responsibilities? If we keep our young people in ignorance, if we deny them the moral guidance and the physical means to avoid unwanted pregnancy, is it fair to condemn them when they seek the means to continue their adolescence without the interruption and responsibility that childbirth provides?

If I have never experienced rape or incest, how can I judge whether a woman impregnated in these circumstances is wrong to want to remove from within her the consequences of these violations of her person and her dignity? Again, quoting Governor Cuomo:

> If we want to prove our regard for life in the womb, for the helpless infant—if we care about women having real choices in their lives and not being driven to abortions by a sense of helplessness and despair about the future of their child—then there is work enough for all of us. Lifetimes of it.

We must see that justice is done, not only for the unborn, but also for their parents. Any abortion law should be accompanied by a very positive pro-active agenda that will endeavour to prevent unwanted pregnancy, to support mothers during pregnancy, to enable families to live without hardship and to ensure that women have readily available to them counselling services and advice concerning the adoption alternative and to ensure that no woman obtains an abortion who might have been willing and able to bear a living child.

As Canadians, let us find common ground for policies and programs based on these values, values which affirm the dignity of human life, values that promote caring and compassion.

Before I conclude, I wish to comment specifically on Bill C-43. During the election campaign and since, I have maintained that I would support a law that would protect the unborn and that would be consistent with the Charter of Rights. I believe that Bill C-43 meets or appears to meet the minimum requirements of this test.

I have carefully reviewed once more the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in *Morgentaler* and I believe as a lawyer that the proposed bill is constitution-

al. However, I do not disagree with the suggestion that the bill be tested by reference to the court after enactment but before proclamation.

However, I believe this bill to be fundamentally dishonest. It appears to protect the unborn from the time of conception, and yet it is hard to see how even one abortion would be prevented under this law. It appears to leave the matter to a woman and her doctor to decide and yet it criminalizes the act of abortion and I believe exposes doctors to real peril of prosecution.

In short, I fail to see how this bill can do other than to lead to disrespect for law. Would Canada have an abortion law? Yes. But that law would be worse than a bad law or no law. That law would be a joke.

Because of the critical importance of respect for law to the rule of law and of the rule of law for the preservation of freedom, I cannot support this bill. I will not vote for a law that will fuel cynicism and contribute to a sense that the laws we enact here, much like the talk we often engage in, are irrelevant to contemporary society.

I will vote for the bill on second reading, however, not because I support it in principle, but because I think the matter should be studied by a committee of this House and amendments considered. I will vote against this bill in its present form at third reading.

For the record, I will say that I absolutely support the use of criminal law to prohibit abortion after the foetus is viable as an independent human life. It is to me totally unacceptable for an abortion to take place after the point of viability which I understand may be as early as 21 weeks. How can we countenance an abortion in one hospital room of a foetus at the same stage of development as that of a premature baby whose life we are seeking to save in a room just down the corridor? Only if it is a matter of saving the mother's life should the life of a viable foetus be sacrificed. I believe most Canadians agree with this, and would support such a law.

In the earlier stages of pregnancy, I am not any more content that abortions occur, but I draw back from the prohibition of elective abortion at an early stage, not because I think the unborn has any less value at 12 weeks than at 20 or 30 weeks, but because I perceive that such a prohibition would not be enforceable.

I am offended by the reality that abortion is being used in Canada as a means of birth control in 1989. There can be no other explanation for the number of abortions that occur in Canada each year. It is evident that in many of these cases, choice is exercised irresponsibly before conception and abortion is the means of avoiding the consequences of one's choice.

However, I believe society does not accept that the state should intervene in the life of an individual woman at this stage of pregnancy. I also believe that if the state attempts to do so, the result will be legal chaos, with confrontations between police and groups, refusals by juries to convict accused, and also, unfortunately, many illegal abortions and the gruesome possibility of back alley and self–inflicted abortions.

Whatever my own opinion about whether abortion is right or wrong, I cannot as a legislator support the enactment of such a law, one which will not be effective and could cause hardship and suffering for those whose act is viewed by society as essentially private and unworthy of attention by the state.

• (2050)

I feel the burden of this legislative responsibility to be very heavy. I know that many will criticize me for the conclusion I have reached since, like Bill C–43 itself, it satisfies neither extreme in this debate.

In response, I say two things: First, I do not believe that we are here to debate whether abortion is good or bad, right or wrong. Rather, we must debate and decide what is the best legislative response within the constitutional powers of the Parliament of Canada to the issue resulting from the demand from women to obtain abortions. Second, my response is to remember the advice given by Polonius to his son in *Hamlet*:

> This above all, to thine own self be true.
>
> And it must follow as the night the day
>
> thou canst not then be false to any man.

Mr. John Reimer (Kitchener): Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by briefly outlining my position in support of the protection of the life of the foetus or the unborn child. First, it is well known that all of the components necessary for the development of a unique individual human being are contained in the genetic code

that is present from the moment of conception, the hue of our eyes, the colour of our hair, the size of our feet, as well as the capacity of our brains, have all been established in that instant. Nothing needs to be added, other than food, shelter and care.

Second, the indicators of life and its development are manifested early and dramatically. The unborn child produces its own blood at 17 to 20 days after conception. Its heart begins beating from 20 to 24 days after conception. Between the sixth and seventh weeks, the electrical activity of the brain is discernible and at the eighth week, all essential organs are present.

Canada has accepted in medical practice that the cessation of brain wave activity is the irreversible indicator of death. Well then, should it not be reasoned that the first readable signs of brain wave activity confirm the presence of life? Nevertheless, our behaviour as a society deliberately and in a premeditated manner destroys that life. From Statistics Canada's figures for 1986 and 1987, it can be readily seen that approximately 75 per cent of all abortions occur after the beginning of brain wave activity.

I think it is highly instructive to read how, in 1975, after an exhaustive examination of the available biological and physiological evidence by 133 world-renowned scientists, geneticists and gynaecologists, the West German Federal Constitutional Court responded to the question as to when life begins. It is also important to note that the court was acutely conscious of the historical events which took place between 1933 and 1945, and was therefore especially anxious to ground its judgment in scientific objectivity. Its conclusion was:

> Life, in the sense of historical existence of a human individual, exists according to definite biological-physiological knowledge, in any case, from the 14th day after conception—

Or the period of nidation or individuation.

> The process of development which has begun at that point is a continuing process which exhibits no sharp demarcation and does not allow a precise division of the various steps of development of the human life.

In view of this concrete evidence, it is a sad commentary on our society that one's position on abortion can then be construed, and thereby dismissed by some, as being simply a matter of personal opinion or belief. No, it is not a matter of personal opinion; the medical evidence of life is concrete, it is objective, it is compelling. To anyone with an open, enquiring and honest mind, life then must be accepted as an uninterrupted continuum which begins at conception and ends at death. Without doubt, abortion brings about the death of a living human individual during the process of its development along that continuum.

I fail to see why anyone including our Supreme Court Justices, do not see this logic, for surely a human foetus will never result in a cat, dog or a horse but only in a human being which it became at conception and will remain so until death. Only shelter, food and normal development and protection is required throughout pregnancy or up to age two, or five, or fifteen, or twenty, or fifty, or seventy years of age.

Dr. Jerome Lejeune, one of the world's foremost human geneticists, stated the following to the United States Senate Committee in 1983:

> —if a fertilized egg is not by itself a full human being, it could never become a man, because something would have to be added to it, and we know that that does not happen.

After I read the tortured reasoning of the Supreme Court Justices which they revealed in their judgment of November 16, 1989, in the Chantal Daigle case, I wished and I prayed that someone could get our judges to contemplate the simple yet profound common sense of what Dr. Lejeune said.

Indeed, according to Sir William Lilley of New Zealand, knighted because of his pioneering work in amniocentesis, the unborn child is not a part of the mother's body, as some incorrectly suggest, but rather is a separate person who dictates his or her own growth and when he or she is to be born. Therefore, it is absolutely essential that our laws protect life from conception. That is why it is so important that the government reject any legislative proposal that followed the gestational or highly arbitrary approach of foetal viability.

The bill before us implicitly recognizes that life begins at conception by placing a criminal sanction against the taking of foetal life. Further, the criminal prohibition on abortion is throughout the pregnancy and is not only mandatory to protect the sanctity of life but also this criminal sanction is highly symbolic. Mr. Joseph Maingot, a member of the Law Reform Commission which

issued a paper this past summer entitled "Crimes Against the Foetus", put this very well when he stated:

> The criminal law is our nation's fundamental statement of public policy. It is the instrument by which the community draws a line between the tolerable and the intolerable. Criminal law defines those whose interests are worthy of respect and protection, and in my view this should include all members of the human family. Ultimately the criminal law is a mirror of what we are; it reflects our commitment, or lack of commitment, to human dignity and equality.
>
> The law does not exist for the sole or primary purpose of punishing illicit acts. It exists as an expression, in a broad sense, of the kind of people we are. It does not merely regulate our behaviour, it articulates and symbolizes our values and beliefs.

I am pleased that the government heeded this advice and demonstrated its respect for human life and made the taking of a life by abortion a crime within the Criminal Code except under certain circumstances. This action by the government is in keeping with the invitation of our Supreme Court in its decision on the *Morgentaler* case of January 28, 1988, in which Chief Justice Dickson wrote:

> The precise point in the development of the foetus at which the state's interest in its protection becomes 'compelling' should be left to the informed judgment of the legislature.

In this bill, the government has defined that precise point as conception when the state interest should become compelling since the criminal sanction against taking foetal life applies from conception. The Supreme Court decision of January 28, 1988, also stated in the judgment of Chief Justice Dickson:

> Like Beetz and Wilson, I agree that the protection of foetal interests by Parliament is also a valid governmental objective. It follows that balancing these interests with the lives and health of women a major factor, is clearly an important governmental objective.

This balancing of interests between that of the mother and her unborn child is also a part of the bill before us in that it allows an abortion only when the life or health of the female person is likely to be threatened. If we in this House believe in the sanctity of life, we must ensure that there is an equal concern for the well-being of both mother and child.

• (2100)

Unfortunately, the abortion debate has been interpreted by some as being one of competing interests; the right of the mother to be free to choose versus the right of her unborn child to live. However, it surely defies all that we hold dear about humanity to speak of a mother and her unborn child as being in competition against one another. Only a pathetically distorted sense of what is right, or what is freedom of choice, or what is demanded as control over my own body, or what is a deliberate act of ignoring all medical and scientific evidence could render a mother and her child as antagonists.

In view of the limitations placed upon us by the Charter of Rights, I would like to state the following: I believe an abortion should be performed only on the grounds of self defence in those very limited number of circumstances where the mother's life and narrowly defined health is, in the opinion of a medical doctor, in demonstrable danger, and where there is no other accepted medical procedure to treat that danger according to the opinion formed using, as this bill says: "the generally accepted standards of the medical profession."

I would submit that this bill is sound in principle. Life from conception must be protected within our Criminal Code. It is also on the right track in that it permits an abortion only when there is a threat to the mother. But the bill goes far beyond that by permitting an abortion, not only for the rare legitimate reasons of the life of the mother but for health broadly defined as physical, mental, and psychological.

That definition of health is so broad, so open to abuse, that abortion could be and has been justified by unscrupulous and unprincipled doctors for almost any reason. Anyone who has studied the reasons for abortions from 1969 to January 1988 knows full well that very few abortions were performed, one, to save the mother's life or, two, to save the mother's physical well-being where in the professional opinion of the doctors involved there was no other medical procedure or option to treat that risk. In fact, Madam Speaker, the vast majority of abortions were performed for reasons of convenience and the desire simply not to have the child.

Therefore, this bill is in obvious need of, in fact it cries out for, amendments to circumscribe more definitive boundaries and standards around the word "health" so that we truly are balancing the interests involved.

We need to carefully consider adding words such as "seriously endangering" the pregnant woman's health. Further, we need to clearly state that an abortion should be only undertaken by a doctor if in his professional opinion there is no other medical procedure or option

open to him to treat this serious health risk endangering the pregnant woman.

I also think we must strike out the word "psychological" in the definition of health and retain the words "physical and mental", but only within the constraints I have just mentioned. I think the bill should demand, and I also take it as a given, that every doctor would retain a written documentation of his professional medical judgment justifying the performance of the abortion.

We must carefully consider other amendments such as Mr. Justice Beetz indicated when he wrote:

> Parliament is justified in requiring a reliable, independent and medically sound opinion in order to protect the state interest in the foetus.

Further he stated:

> Parliament requires this independent opinion because it is not only the woman's interest that is at stake in a decision to authorize an abortion".

The penalty against unlawful abortion proposed in this bill is that it is an indictable offence with a possible prison term not exceeding two years. If the principle of the bill is to protect life and to balance both the interests of mother and child, then surely two years is woefully inadequate and an amendment providing a term of up to 15 years or life is far more appropriate. Only then would we be truly protecting life as we do in manslaughter or murder cases.

The purpose of second reading debate is to debate the principle of the bill. I believe that one of the principles of the bill is to protect the life of the foetus or the unborn child from conception. This bill does this by placing a criminal sanction against the taking of that life from conception.

The bill also seeks to balance the vital interests of both the mother's and child's life by permitting an abortion only when the life or health of the mother is likely to be threatened. In this case, the bill is far too weak to achieve any proper balance by not carefully limiting the word "health", by providing only up to a possible two-year prison sentence and not requiring an independent medical opinion.

The way the bill now stands, all of its provisions are on the side of the mother and next to nothing protects the child within her womb. To succinctly summarize the nature of this bill, I would submit that one could characterize this bill as one that is pro-life in form and pro-choice in substance. It is pro-life in that it assumes that life begins at conception and should be protected throughout the pregnancy. But it is pro-choice in that it literally permits a woman to go to any doctor prepared to do abortions simply for cases of anxiety or alleged psychological harm.

Nevertheless, because at least the basic principle of protecting the unborn from conception is the implicit foundation of the bill, I will support it at second reading in spite of its serious inadequacies which I will seek to amend at committee and report stages when amendments are permissible. I do not support this bill with any joy within my heart. I do so only after much soul searching and only in order to make full use of all of the opportunities the process affords us as members of this House to make amendments to improve this bill so that the vast majority of abortions done for none other than the frivolous and shameful reasons of convenience might decrease in number. Then and only then will we begin to do what we in this chamber should always strive toward, to defend the innocent, the weak and the powerless and to stand for the truth and for the protection of the sanctity of life that that truth demands of each of us.

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Madam, Speaker, it is a pleasure to participate in this important debate, a sometimes very moving debate. We have had experiences with that here tonight. A very sincere group of speakers has been addressing the problem with which we are all wrestling with.

• (2110)

I am sure we all bring different perspectives to the debate. The perspectives are as varied as are the people addressing the bill. I personally bring all of my life experiences to what I am about to say. My sense of worth and my sense of values are going to be brought into the discussion as I am sure will those of many who will address the bill. In spite though of all these variances that we find among ourselves, we would all agree on some fundamentals I think, one of these basic fundamentals being that life is worth while, life is a valuable entity, life is worth protecting.

I am sure that to argue otherwise would contradict what we see going on in any hospital in the city of Ottawa tonight. Doctors and nurses are there working to try and

preserve a life. Lifelong sacrifices are being made by some families to preserve a life, a life which some would have thought was not worth preserving. There is something very, very fundamental that touches us all when we talk about preserving life. It does not matter whether it is a big person or a small person, a young person or an old person, a sick person or one who is well. All people are very different. All are lives and in spite of different surroundings, in spite of totally different circumstances, they are worth our protection.

That is what this debate is all about. Sometimes we get off on ramifications of economics and so on and I have heard it mentioned here tonight. It seems to suggest that economics should be the dividing line. We are talking about life, fundamental life.

Our obligation as human beings is to protect the lives of others who are in no position to do so. They have no voice. A tremendous moral responsibility rests upon us to particularly protect those who cannot protect themselves. The inconvenience that one life may cause to another life is not justification for the dominant one to discontinue the life of the innocent one. In no way is that justification to turn somebody else's life around, to discontinue the life of that person because somebody happens to be in a stronger position.

A child on the verge of being born is developmentally indistinguishable from a newborn infant. In a free and democratic society infants have the status of persons. They possess fundamental rights, including the right to life and the right to legal protection.

The mere fact that a baby is inside someone else's body does not imply to me that it is not a person. If it is not a person at this stage, presumably the reason for that is that it is still physically dependent on its mother. But if its personhood is diminished in this way by dependence then the personhood of seriously ill people who are on life support systems would come into question as would the personhood of other seriously dependent or handicapped persons with whom we are surrounded daily.

If intrinsic value of the life were diminished by dependence, some persons would have less intrinsic value than others, and I think that would bring our Charter of Rights with regard to life into play. The problem I have with viability as a determinant is that the level of development at which the foetus becomes viable depends on the stage of medical science and technology. We have made tremendous strides in society in that area of science in recent years. Let us not turn our back on it. I think it would be a disgrace, a reflection on the personhood of people to turn our back on newly developed medical techniques and newly developed awareness such as we have heard spoken of here tonight, things which we did not know 25, 50, 75 years ago. I do not think we should turn our back on new medical evidence that life begins at conception.

Section 15(1) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms says: "Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right of the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination".

Failure to protect the life of the foetus by law would, in my opinion, be permitting the taking of a life. If a law prohibiting infant abuse becomes unenforceable, or very difficult to enforce because of widespread deterioration in values in our society, that would not be sufficient reason to promote the absence of such a law. It is difficult to enforce but surely we do that in society all the time.

If no one's life is valuable enough to protect by law then none of us really have any basic rights. If a foetus has the right to have its life protected by law, such a law is justifiable in a free and democratic society and it is in accordance with our Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

On January 28, 1988, the Supreme Court of Canada declared Canada's abortion law unconstitutional. We need a new law which will be found to be constitutional. Certain women's groups, and I have heard this alluded to here today, oppose any form of protection for the foetus. I want to caution women. The justice women which have achieved, and rightly so, will be seriously undermined in society if it is bought at the price of injustice to persons conceived but not yet born. Women will lose. If they think that gives them the right to impose upon and extinguish the rights of others, what have they gained? There is tremendous risk if women feel that they now have the right to impose their new found rights, justifiably distinguished and determined, for which I give them all sorts of credit, but not pushing it so far that they think

they can now impose rights on others who are in no position to express themselves.

Pregnancy concerns the whole person. It concerns the family, it concerns the community, and I think it concerns all of society. It requires, above all, communities and a society that cares. It is like poverty, which is a concern of all society. Racial inequality is a concern of all society. Institutionalized abortion means to me that the community is opting out, opting out of caring; caring socially, caring economically, caring judicially and caring personally.

To say that a man, the male species, should not comment on abortion because it is something that he will never experience is a simple way of copping out too. I have never witnessed war. I have never been on the front lines of war. I have read much about it and have heard many stories about it, but surely I can have some appreciation for that. I have some appreciation of what war must be like. I feel confident and certain that I can speak out on that issue and try to see that we will never have that to contend with again, although I have not experienced it myself.

• (2120)

If we have legislation to protect the unborn, I think the state then has a responsibility to introduce social programs which will assist people for whom abortion seems to present the only temporary solution to their problems. There is some responsibility for the state here which includes such programs as access to counselling; the full range of adoption options explained to people; housing needs, on which the determination to have an abortion is very often made; the provision of time for parenting and child care; programs in child care; affirmative action for fathering, something which probably was not thought of a few years back but should be addressed in today's changing times. Above all, we need education to prevent unwanted pregnancies.

Calling anything a woman's issue strikes me, personally, as being rather offensive. Spouse beating, day care and abortion are society's issues, they are not strictly and rigidly women's issues. It would be like calling apartheid a South African issue. Apartheid is not a South African issue, it is a universal society issue and society is no one gender, race, colour or religion. Injustices of the past toward women or any other group in society cannot be corrected by perpetuating further injustices and denying life to unborn children.

I am asking my hon. friends who have not thought this through or have not taken a position to consider voting for the life of the unborn. Come down on the side of human dignity, be a promoter of life. What legitimate right requires for the exercise of that right the infliction of pain and death on another innocent human life? I ask that question.

There are two lives here to consider and, therefore, the moral question of abortion is absolutely not a women's rights issue exclusively. It involves the question of whether it is moral to dispose of or to destroy the weaker of the two individuals. When two people enter one of Morgentaler's clinics, only one comes out.

History tells us that in more barbaric times if a woman condemned to die was found to be pregnant, the execution was postponed to allow the innocent party to be born. In pregnancy there are two different heartbeats, two different brain wave patterns, often two different blood types and, in about half the cases, two different sexes. There are two people involved.

The question is not so much should they break the law but rather should they kill babies? That is the question. In a civilized society one does not kill one human being to alleviate the problems of another human being. We would not tolerate that. This bill would allow that to happen.

The foetus is not just a potential human being but rather, in my opinion, a human being with full potential that needs time to develop and to mature. Life is a continuum. It is not measured in weeks, in inches, in pounds or in kilograms, life is a continuum.

I do not think it is good enough to say that the legislation will be okay because most people's rights are respected. We are talking about individual rights. An apology to those whose most basic right, that of life, has been denied does no good whatsoever. As long as just one person's rights are encorached upon with the result that life is denied them, then I think society is in deep trouble.

I heard tonight that every child is a wanted child. That suggests great love, a reaching out for children. It is a common slogan, but let me remind you, Madam Speaker, that this slogan is not quite as loving as it sounds. It reduces children to objects with the right to exist only if

somebody wants them more than some other material thing. I think life is worth more than that.

Abortion is an attempt to solve one's personal problems by eliminating the life of another. Nothing threatens the most basic foundation of human civilization more directly than the widespread assault on the sanctity of life, whether it is by terrorists, plain murderers, or by the advocates of unrestricted abortion and euthanasia. Such cheapening of human life, apart from destroying the highest moral values, cannot but encourage the rise of crime and violence in our society. It is part of the throw-away society. Already crime is inflicting humanity at an alarming scale.

Any solution that I would have to this topic we are discussing would not be without any problems either. I admit that. I concede that. But we solve a problem because it is there and it challenges us. We have a problem confronting the Parliament of Canada now.

How terrible it would be if someone levelled all the mountains in life and, if it were possible, removed all the problems that we will be confronted with over our lifespan. There would not be any opportunity left for human beings to become really human, with the real qualities of a human being, if there were no challenges left.

What better time in the history of this country to show some leadership and be viewed by the rest of the world as the most generous, the most compassionate people in the world and the nation which showed the most human dignity in the world. All of us are here because of the generosity and the sacrifice of someone else. I think we have an obligation to others to return that sacrifice that others made on our behalf.

The gestational approach which has been mentioned tonight is unacceptable in principle because I think it arbitrarily determines that human life is more worthy of respect at some stages than at others and this, it seems to me, lends itself to selective living and selective dying. To offer easy access to abortion shows a callous failure of responsibility to protect life. To outlaw it, on the other hand, without proposing some positive measures to remedy the situations that we have heard mentioned here tonight encountered by pregnant women would also amount to a failure of responsibility.

I am suggesting a coherent and effective family life policy. It would require a co-ordinated effort from all levels of government.

• (2130)

Instead of this proposed legislation, which is just a fancy way of having abortion on demand, I think the government should be proposing a family life plan which could then be supported by all members because it is something positive. It is a positive attitude toward life. Measures would have to be taken in education, labour, revenue, and housing, as has been mentioned.

In closing, what I am asking is a new approach to something that is very old. If you take away life as a basic right, all other rights that you would extend to the foetus are meaningless. Do without that one, you will do without them all.

Why not reject this proposed law in favour of a family life policy that is positive toward life in its outlook, one that would see the family elevated above every other social unit or organization—the ultimate unit, the family, the one that is of prime importance if we are to advance as a society on the world scene.

I think Canada has an opportunity to show leadership. Forget about party differences. What I am proposing is developing an attitude that respects the family and transcends all the petty differences we find when we bring party lines into play.

I think we must commit ourselves to elevating our purposes once and for all. Do something because it is right although it may not be popular. Do it because it is right.

Mr. Kilgour: Madam Speaker, the member who just spoke did so thoughtfully and obviously very sincerely about an issue of importance to all of us.

I take it from his final comment that he is inclined to vote against this bill. Nobody would agree with him more that there are major defects in the bill, in my view as well. I would ask him if he would consider—and he obviously does not have to answer now—what would happen if this measure were voted down on second reading. I am told by a journalist friend that it is very close now as to whether or not it will pass, that nobody will be happier than the people sitting to his left who believe in abortion on demand. Of course they are not all sitting to his left.

I would ask him if he and others in his party, as well as those on this side of the House, might consider what would happen if that does happen. Maybe we would be better to try to get this bill into a committee and to try to make amendments either there or at report or third reading stage which would make this bill more acceptable from the point of view he has been advancing.

I ask him if he and others might consider that before voting this bill down when it comes up for second reading.

Mr. Jordan: Madam Speaker, I will not be supporting this bill. I am torn terribly on it. At the present time I do not think you will ever reach ideals unless you are prepared to pursue those ideals. To break it off and say "I can support it, although I do not quite support it on something as basic as human life" puts me in a bit of a jam.

I am really puzzled at the people who normally would be here at my left, and I do not want to get into great debate with them. These are supposed to be the people who have great compassion for people. They are not showing too much compassion when it comes to this little person who cannot defend himself. That is the thing that bothers me. They may have their own rationale for their opinion on it, as I have my own rationale for what I have said here this evening, but that one puzzles me terribly. I just cannot understand their vein of thought at all.

Ms. Hunter: Madam Speaker, I have listened with great attention to the hon. member. I think that much of this debate tonight has been very thoughtful, and many of his comments fall into that category. I am struggling to give him the kind of respect that I think is accorded to those who participate in this debate.

However, when he makes comments that women choose to have an abortion because it is part of a throw-away society, for some material thing, as a woman I take great umbrage.

This is the kind of attitude that causes women to want to make it very clear that this is a woman's issue. I would like him to comment on that.

Mr. Jordan: It is a woman's issue, but because women are part of society, it is a societal issue. I do not think it is strictly and solely a woman's issue.

My basic premise is that there are two people involved. If you do not agree with that, then of course you disagree with what I have said. If you do not agree with that, that there are two people involved, then I can see where you take the position that you have already taken.

It is a woman's issue. Because women as men and children and everyone else are part of society, it is a societal issue. It is something as fundamental as life. It is a societal issue.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Hogue: Madam Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member opposite, the Member for Leeds—Grenville. Certainly I would not try to influence him, and it is basic in my view that he asks to some extent that the House not play politics on such a basic and important matter. For quite some time I have been working on the pro-life side of the question, and I am proud of it. What I do not understand is the position taken by the hon. member opposite. As it seems to me after examining and pondering the legislation, it protects the fetus to a much larger extent more than I have heard him state. So much so Madam Speaker, that it recognizes it not as an extension but rather as a part of the human being, because it introduces the concept of criminal act into the thought process and the legislation. Again, I would not try to influence the hon. member, but it seems to me he could reflect a moment on that double dimension and his personal position, which I share indeed.

[*English*]

Mr. Jordan: I have difficulty agreeing with you if, as I understood you to say, this bill protects the foetus. This bill allows open season on the foetus. All you have to do is convince a doctor that you have some physical ailment—it could be a scratchy throat or a headache that you did not used to have that—and attribute it then to your pregnancy.

I am thinking of certain doctors, and I will not mention names, who do not have much guiding them, it seems to me, morally. They would have no trouble accepting your word for that and perhaps getting a signature or whatever is required of them to give to you so that you could have your pregnancy terminated. I do not see much in

the bill that would prevent that from happening. Indeed, I think it will become commonplace.

The next thing that follows of course in a country that gets too liberal on abortion policy is to permit euthanasia. I think China is a good example of that. I was reading in the newspaper the other day that China has a very liberal abortion policy. Right now in China euthanasia can be performed in hospitals. The state does not interfere. Somebody in the hospital decides that somebody's life should be snuffed out. It is permitted in China today without question.

I think you will be finding yourselves with this kind of legislation which is so weak in terms of protection of the foetus.

• (2140)

To me, it permits abortion on demand. If it is not on demand immediately the legislation passes, then the tendency with any legislation like this, though, is to become more and more liberal as society becomes more and more accepting of it. If it is not abortion on demand immediately, it soon will be. I am going back to what has happened in China where they went with a very liberal abortion policy and now they have euthanasia wholesale.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Gabrielle Bertrand (Brome—Missisquoi): Madam Speaker, never in the Canadian parliamentary history have elected representatives been confronted with such an agonizing issue as that of legislating abortion.

During this last year especially, so much has been said and repeated on the subject, so many arguments have been put forward in support of legalizing or prohibiting it; so many extreme, intolerant, not to say disquieting reactions have come from legal, health and other professionals, people in responsible positions; there has been such an escalation in the media sometimes bordering on indecency, that I wonder if there is any point today to preach one way or the other.

Maximum exploitation of the victims of situations that arose last year has helped radicalize the already irreconcilable positions of both sides of the question. What with publicity, the temperature kept rising, and verbal violence even erupted at times. Is it any surprise that our fellow citizens differ in their views when the interpretation of government actions varies from one newspaper to the other? Indeed, after our legislation was tabled, we could read on November 4 in the *Edmonton Journal*: "This Bill makes sense"; in the *Ottawa Citizen*, "Abortion compromise pleases no one"; in the *Gazette*: "MPs on both sides unhappy with"; in *Le Devoir*: "Ottawa recriminalise l'avortement"; finally, in *La* Presse*: "La femme et son médecin décideront de l'avortement".*

Madam Speaker, first of all, I want to make quite clear that I am neither a lawyer, a doctor nor a social worker. I am a citizen of this country, a mother and a grandmother, and my hair is white. However, I am very much aware of the debate that is going on today, in and outside Parliament and before our highest courts. I am also very aware of the many comments I have read and heard, of often hasty judgments that would benefit from a more critical view, and the many personal statements that at times I found chilling. And here I am again, in the same situation we had during the debate in 1988, torn between my personal convictions as a woman, as a Christian and a Catholic. I also have my responsibilities as a legislator, and I am a member of a government that is seeking legislation that is in line with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, while it is also seeking the best solution, and does so in the best interests of the society it has been asked to lead. The government and Parliament cannot and must not claim to dictate to women what they can think and do.

The government's role is to help these women opt for life, for having a child and a family. It is not the State's role to act as their conscience and to make for them a choice that is so difficult and problematic.

Last summer, journalist Jean-Luc Mongrain wrote the following in the heat of the debate, and I quote:

> We don't need full-page ads of guilt messages. When we have to make decisions as important, as intimate, as disturbing and as profoundly existential as these, we certainly do not want to be hustled by people defending the ideololgies of pro-life or pro-choice!
>
> We need people who listen and understand, who reach out and are tolerant, and we need love and understanding. No court and no Parliament will ever be able to satisfy us and provide the right answer.

Experience has taught me the following: Coercive laws will not change people's attitudes. To try to understand the human drama going on today, we need tolerance and

an open mind. In most cases, the problem we are discussing today is a disturbing reality for those who are directly involved.

Following a judgment by the Supreme Court on abortion, some people shouted and screamed that the so-called legal vacuum had to be filled as soon as possible.

The opposition in Parliament, many editorial writers, those whose only defence and opinion is to pass the buck—all these people have been clamoring for federal legislation. But no one has had solutions or concrete proposals to suggest and when our bill was tabled, it was often the same people who criticized it most strongly.

Faced with the innumerable comments on this bill, I feel somewhat like a referee between two fighters whom nothing can dissuade from doing everything to beat the other.

These two gladiators—a term I reluctantly use for extremists who tolerate no compromise—each have a share of public opinion behind them. Each has the support of 15 to 20 per cent of the population, but between them lies the majority, often called the "silent" majority, which certainly does not make the headlines.

One thing is for sure: No law will please everybody. If we want to protect the rights of the fetus, will we have to continue to take women to court? That is the terrible dilemma we are asked to resolve.

However, we cannot escape our responsibility, because what Canadians want now is an end to the confusion. They want the government to take a position and legislate in a way that strikes a fair balance between abortion on demand and criminalization. Such a law might not deal with the moral issues raised in this debate, but there will always be such problems which are hard to solve by legislation.

As my colleague, the Minister of National Health and Welfare, said, we were elected by the Canadian people to choose the course that will respect the rights of all concerned in as fair a way as possible.

That is why, Madam Speaker, I support this bill. However, I would like it to be just the starting point for another step. For all of us who care about respect for life, respect for the embryo, the fetus, the unborn child, for all of us who deplore the alarming number of pregnancies that are terminated every year, it seems urgent and imperative to me to lay the foundations for a real family policy.

The government's responsibility goes far beyond legislating or banning abortion. Since our role is to promote the welfare of the people, would it not be logical that, along with other government levels, with the private sector and with organizations dedicated to the future of our nation, we direct our combined efforts towards the prevention of abortion, prevention which in concrete terms means helping women who reject their pregnancy, and enhancing the desirability of the child and of the role of the mother?

AFÉAS, a group well known for its enlightened and reasonable positions, advocates the establishment of family planning clinics for men and women alike where they would have access to services related to contraception, fertility, sterilization, and therapeutic abortion. A pregnant woman would be offered a full range of services such as reception, information, local resources reference and psycho-social support. A woman who does not want to have children should be aware of the many contraceptive methods which she and her mate can use.

• (2150)

On the other hand, it is just as important that a woman who wants to bear a child be in a position to look forward to maternity with enthusiasm and optimism. If this commendable aspiration is to be fulfilled, it is essential that a family policy have two objectives, one material, the other psychological.

In the first instance, the policy must eliminate or reduce as much as possible the destabilizing impact of pregnancy on the financial status of an individual, of a couple, or of a family. This could be done through tax measures which clearly favour women who want children. The baby bonus is a modest step in the right direction, but we have to think about the longer term. It is absolutely imperative that the career of family mother—or family father, in some cases—no longer be beyond the reach of most Canadians. The time has come for the tax burden to be distributed more equitably among those who are concerned about the survival of this nation and those who care only for their pleasure here and now.

As to the psychological objective of this policy, it seems to me to consist only in the enhancement of the contribution made by the father and mother. Even if we succeeded in making this contribution financially affordable, we would have achieve only half our goal if we did not make it socially worthwhile in the eyes of everyone. The mother who stays at home must be perceived as a

precious asset and not simply as an "Yvette", as she was unfairly caricatured in Quebec during the referendum campaign.

In our new society, the couple who decides freely to enrich their home with one or several children deserve the congragulations, encouragement, moral and financial support of the state. In short, they should get incentives to realize their objectives and to achieve their educative goal.

Personally, I think it is high time for the government to help society become more open to all life, as suggested last year by our Catholic Bishops. It should take society by the hand, walk side by side with it, educate it, convince it to help the family seek more children.

Thanks to such family human development assistance policies, abortion would practically disappear. Then and only then might we feel that we have done what we had to do to prevent abortion. That could be our most worthwhile contribution to the welfare of Canadian men and women.

[*English*]

Mr. Nicholson: Madam Speaker, I wonder if there would be unanimous consent in the House to call it ten o'clock.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The House has heard the suggestion of the hon. parliamentary secretary. Is there unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Before adjourning the House, I think it would be in order for the chair occupant to wish each and every one of us in the House a happy first anniversary.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): It being 11 o'clock p.m., pursuant to the order made Monday, November 20, 1989, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at two o'clock, pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 9.54 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, November 22, 1989

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

AGRICULTURE

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the farmers from Ontario and Quebec who were here on Parliament Hill yesterday to try to make this government understand that its policy direction is unacceptable for Canadian agriculture and will end in the destruction of this once vibrant industry.

Those thousands of farmers who conducted this demonstration with purpose and dignity and their forceful presentation should make this government realize that the free trade agreement has already proven to be a disaster to Canadian farmers and Canadian food processors.

We have had a countervail placed against our pork entering the United States from Canada. We have a threat of countervail against our Durum wheat entering the United States. We have a GATT decision against our dairy farmers allowing ice cream and yoghurt into Canada, while the United States restricts imports of our ice cream into their country. Just last week the St. Lawrence Starch Company announced that it was closing its plant in Ontario and moving to Buffalo, New York.

This government has been systematically dismantling the most sophisticated marketing system of any country in the world and Canadian farmers are being thrown to the vultures of the market-place.

I call on this government today to stop this madness, to restore agriculture to the position that it deserves in society, to restore the Advance Payments for Crops programs, to provide its share of crop insurance premiums to make it truly tripartite, to restore At and East transportation policy, and to restore the Farm Credit Corporation as a credible lending agency rather than a collection agency.

I call on this government to make agriculture a national security issue and give the Canadian farmers who demonstrated here yesterday a secure living that is commensurate with that of the rest of society.

* * *

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Québec-Est): Mr. Speaker, in my riding office, I regularly receive people in search of employment, as do my colleagues in this House I suppose.

In recent years, I have noticed a lack of coordination between employers and potential employees.

Mr. Speaker, more and more employers lack skilled workers and must make do with fewer employees than they need. At the same time, prospective employees only have such general training with no specific skills that they conclude few jobs are available.

Some say that there are no jobs, but I wonder! Take a look in the Canada Employment Centres where jobs are posted. There are jobs, and I am convinced that a very small effort in terms of training would create openings for them that they do not even suspect exist.

Once job seekers understand that employers' needs go beyond the status quo, we will train a society that can meet our expectations.

* * *

[*English*]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Agriculture told the 5,000 farmers who were in front of the Parliament Buildings that his government was not undermining farm support and that the supply management program is preserved in the free trade agreement with the United States. In fact, the free trade agreement states that both the United States and Canadian governments should

work for the elimination and the reduction of import barriers.

The United States views supply management as a restriction of imports and Canada is showing complicity with the American point of view. The British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association has stated that the agricultural industry in that province will cease to exist if these marketing boards are removed. The $30 million Okanagan Valley commercial soft fruit industry will virtually disappear as tariffs are removed over the next 10 years. The elimination of supply management will serve to deliver the death blow. Supply management and tariffs ensure a secure market for domestic products. The combination of free trade and this government is proving lethal to farmers, especially the fruit growers in British Columbia.

* * *

[*Translation*]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Gilles Bernier (Beauce): Mr. Speaker, yesterday our farmers came to Ottawa, to make the government realize that agriculture in Québec and in the Beauce region faces an uncertain future.

Our spokespersons for international trade should realize that we will not tolerate any indifference on their part to Québec demands as they relate to the GATT talks.

Mr. Speaker, agriculture in Québec has become very organized. I want 100 per cent protection for our joint ventures, our marketing boards and our quotas. Many sacrifices have been made to set up our family farm operations, with the co-operation of governments and the UPA.

As the Member for Beauce, Mr. Speaker, I demand that francophone negotiators from Québec, who are familiar with our needs and requirements, be included on the Canadian negotiating team in Geneva.

Mr. St-Julien: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bernier: We must strengthen GATT Article 11. We will keep our eyes open, believe me!

[*English*]

EL SALVADOR

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, we hear today that the armed conflict between the military in El Salvador and the opposition forces continues to escalate. The Liberal party believes that Canada can no longer take a passive stand in light of these dramatic developments. We would like to ensure that the Canadian government immediately addresses the following recommendations.

First, that the Canadian government through its new role in the OAS urge the United States to reconsider its policy on El Salvador and in that context suspend its aid to the Salvadoran military and condition its economic aid to political negotiations, human rights and compliance with the Esquipulas II peace accord.

Second, encourage the OAS, specifically its human rights arm, to investigate the human rights abuses in El Salvador and report as soon as possible, as well as call on El Salvador's government to cease and desist immediately from human rights violations.

Third, that Canada adopt an open-door policy for refugees escaping the conflict in El Salvador during this time of crisis and hardship and put a moratorium on the deportation of any El Salvadoran refugees now living in Canada.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Bruce Halliday (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, the recently released discussion paper entitled "Growing Together: A Vision for Canada's Agri-food Industry" has provided an unprecedented opportunity for us to review our many past achievements as well as to forecast our future direction in the agri-food industry.

The organization Dairy Farmers of Canada is to be congratulated for the initiative it has taken to study and make recommendations on the future of the dairy industry in Canada. In the past, we as Canadians have been able to look inward to decide what is best for Canada. Now as we enter the 1990s there can be no mistake about the fact that we are intertwined in a rapidly emerging global economy. Our involvement in

this global economy will have tremendous long-term benefits for Canada.

The four fundamental components directing the review process will ensure that our competitiveness in international markets will be continually strengthened throughout the 1990s. However, the most important feature of the review process is that it is participatory. Producer representatives and producers themselves are encouraged to get involved in this initiative which gets under way with a national agri-food policy conference on December 11 and 12 in Ottawa.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiaq):

[*Editor's Note: Member spoke in Inuktitut.*]

[*English*]

Mr. Anawak: Mr. Speaker, an unacceptable case of toxic contamination exists in the community of Rankin Inlet in my constituency in the Northwest Territories. The contamination has been found in the tailings pond of an abandoned nickel mine. The results of a consultant's report show that the level of contamination for arsenic, copper, nickel and sulphur exceeds the severe contamination level.

The report suggests that for the past 20 to 30 years the tailings area has probably been generating an acidified leachate which has drained into the marine waters of Rankin Inlet. It points to possible problems arising from heavy metal accumulation in sediments and the food chain.

The consultants say that more detailed investigations to assess the nature and extent of the contamination and the associated health risks to the community are needed as soon as possible.

I call upon the Government of Canada to exercise its environmental responsibilities and act upon its expressed concern for the Canadian Arctic environment. Get involved, clean up the contamination now.

• (1410)

[*Translation*]

TRIBUTE TO VICTOR DAVIS

Mr. Jean-Marc Robitaille (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, on November 13, this year, Canadians heard the sad news of the tragic death of one of our most famous athletes.

A gold and silver medal winner at the 1984 Olympic Games and three times winner of the world record for the 200 metre breast stroke, Victor Davis was throughout his career and his all too short life a shining example of courage and determination and a proud symbol for Canadian youth.

Even after his death, Mr. Speaker, Victor Davis continued to set an example by donating his vital organs, his heart, eyes, lungs, liver and kidneys, so that other persons may live.

His fighting spirit and his love and respect for his fellow men were qualities that endeared him to all Canadians and won him their respect, admiration and love.

I wish to extend our condolences and express our feelings of sympathy and profound sadness to all members of his family.

Victor Davis' example will be with us forever.

* * *

[*English*]

EL SALVADOR

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, President George Bush has defended U.S. military aid to the government in El Salvador by stating that "Cristiani is doing a job for democracy". "Doing a job for democracy" means the brutal murder of Jesuit priests, the detention of foreign nationals and terrorizing of the civilian population. Increased militarization will not lead to democratization as the United States maintains.

Bush argues that the elections in El Salvador this spring were "certifiably free and fair". Is the U.S. now issuing certificates to justify military intervention? I was in El Salvador at the time of the elections with the Mission for Peace. Our report made clear that elections

are only one instrument of a democratic system. If other instruments are absent or weak, elections have questionable validity.

To declare the process in El Salvador fair and free is to severely distort reality. By not formally denouncing the position of the United States, this government is allowing the myth of democracy in El Salvador to be continued. Until the Bush administration accepts that democracy means the participation of all members of society without fear, there will be no peace and no democracy in El Salvador.

* * *

[*Translation*]

DRUG AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. Jean–Guy Guilbault (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Government realizes it is necessary to make youth aware of the dangers of drug abuse and has therefore announced that the week from November 19 to November 25 will be national drug addiction awareness week.

Canada's decision to set up a national anti–drug strategy, initiated in 1987 with a budget of $210 million, is praiseworthy, but drug awareness and prevention programs will not stop the supply of drugs and the dependency it generates.

Today more than ever before, we must be concerned about the insidious effects of drugs.

Increased drug use is a new threat to national security. Life loses its value, the crime rate soars and young people's lives are ruined for good.

Every year, hundreds of millions of dollars worth of drug trafficking profits cross the border between Canada and the United States.

The fight against drugs cannot be won by governments alone. Mr. Speaker, we should take advantage of this week to maximize our efforts to fight drug abuse.

* * *

[*English*]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Prince Edward—Hastings): Mr. Speaker, yesterday thousands of farmers from Ontario, Quebec and other parts of Canada gathered on the lawn in front of the Centre Block to protest this government's lack of direction in farm policy. They voiced their concerns in many ways. Their anxiety was apparent.

The fate of their farms and the agri–food industry is in serious jeopardy as they see their industry being systematically dismantled, a system they have struggled for decades to put in place to ensure the production of quality food products in Canada. They feel that the government has done nothing but trade away their industry. They feel strongly that organized marketing as they have known it is coming to an end in Canada.

I join with the thousands who made the trip to Ottawa, representing farmers across the country, in voicing my continuous concern for the future of the farming industry in this country.

* * *

[*Translation*]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Guy St–Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, the farmers of Abitibi demonstrated on Parliament Hill yesterday. The signals they have been getting from Ottawa recently gave them reasons to be seriously concerned about their future. Nevertheless, the president of the UPA, Jacques Proulx, reached out to the Minister of State for Agriculture and said, "Let's work together."

Mr. Robichaud: He will be disappointed again!

Mr. St–Julien: The demands of our Quebec farmers relate to three areas, namely freer trade in agricultural goods because of GATT and the Free Trade Agreement, advance payments for crops and the reform of agricultural policies.

Mr. Speaker, the government must act on this because farming is essential to Canada and to Quebec.

* * *

DEATH OF PRESIDENT OF LEBANON

Hon. Monique Landry (Minister for External Relations): Mr. Speaker, I rise to mourn the death of Lebanese President René Mouawad today in Beirut. Mr. Mouawad was elected only a few weeks ago, but already, thanks to his reputation as a man of dialogue, his country was able to move significantly towards peace and national reconciliation, in a land torn by more than 14 years of pitting brother against brother. Canadians welcomed his arrival among the world's heads of state because it

marked an important step on the road to the unity, sovereignty and reconstruction of Lebanon.

The attack which took President Mouawad's life is totally unjustifiable and those responsible have dealt Lebanon a heavy blow. The Canadian Government condemns this act and hopes that all parties with influence in Lebanon will show restraint and continue to work towards a political settlement of the Lebanese conflict. Mr. Speaker, violence cannot solve this conflict.

President Mouawad sacrificed himself to make the Lebanese nation what it was before, a beacon of civilization and community understanding. I wish to express our condolences to President Mouawad's family and to all the people of Lebanon.

[*English*]

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, the Lebanese community around the world was horrified and shocked at the assassination of President Mouawad early today, an assassination which was undoubtedly a vicious attempt to thwart the Arab League Peace Plan that recently became the only hope of reconciliation to the people of Lebanon and to others around the world.

President Mouawad was elected on November 5 of this year by Lebanese legislators at a special session called for in the peace plan as an attempt to bring to an end 14 years of violence and bloodshed.

I want to call on the Arab League to not be discouraged by this brutal act, to not let this act deter them in their efforts toward a final resolution of this long and tragic conflict, and to elect another president quickly to avoid any further deterioration that would almost undoubtedly result in absolute anarchy.

I want to call on General Aoun to endorse the peace plan by offering full support to the process and decisions agreed upon by the Lebanese legislators and the Arab League.

I want to call on the Government of Canada, this time to use our seat on the Security Council, bring the matter up for action and show the people of Lebanon that we will not stand by any more while innocent people are being murdered, and that we will be willing to work with them, to work with the Arab League, to put an end, once and for all, to this senseless killing that is tearing the heart out of the Middle East.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my party I would like to join with everyone here in the House of Commons in condemning this act of violence, the assassination of the President of Lebanon.

We extend our sympathies not only to the family of the president but to the entire people of Lebanon who have suffered these last 14 years an endless cycle of violence which can only be perpetuated by the kind of violence which we saw enacted there today in the bombing that killed the president.

I am reminded that today is the anniversary of another assassination, the assassination of President Kennedy on November 22, 1963. We see that whatever hopes that we had at that time that assassination might disappear from the face of the earth have been shattered time and time again and are shattered here today, shattered in a country where assassination and violence have become a way of life.

• (1420)

I join in the appeal that the Arab League and others who are sincere about peace in Lebanon not be discouraged by this event, that the life and the courage of the President of Lebanon, who no doubt knew that this was a dangerous job when he took it on, not be offered up in vain, and that some day soon everyone who has influence and power in that region of the world will come to their senses and make it possible for peace to come to the people of Lebanon.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

On June 6 this year, the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police wrote to the House of Commons justice committee confirming that on November 8, 1988, that is to say in the middle of the last general election, indeed two or three weeks before the election

date, the RCMP had received a document from the Prime Minister's principal secretary, then Peter White, using the commissioner's words, a document "relating to the investigation which led to criminal charges, including those against Mr. Richard Grisé."

The commissioner wrote the justice committee that he had received legal advice, I assume from the Department of Justice, not to release the document from the Prime Minister's principal secretary. In light of the extraordinary revelations with respect to the Grisé affair, will the Deputy Prime Minister ensure that the part of the document given to the RCMP by the Prime Minister's principal secretary, Peter White, which relates to the convicted Conservative member of Parliament, Richard Grisé, will be made public immediately?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Solicitor General of Canada and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, this matter, which was discussed yesterday and is still being discussed today, was already dealt with by the Commissioner. The Commissioner is now outside the country at an Interpol meeting. When this question was put to the RCMP Commissioner, the answer was, if I recall correctly, that at the time there were legal grounds for not disclosing the letter. I think it would be entirely appropriate to ask the Commissioner again, when he is back in the country, whether this document can be made public. I believe that the government acted entirely appropriately, in the circumstances. As soon as it was informed of the facts, the information was handed over—

An Hon. Member: Answer the question.

Mr. Blais: If the hon. member will let me proceed I listened to the question and if I could have a chance to answer the question—

The government immediately handed over the information it had to the RCMP, so that the RCMP could conduct its investigation. The results of the investigation are now public knowledge. I think that if people have further questions for the RCMP Commissioner, they can put those questions when he comes back. However, it is my feeling that everything was done in an entirely appropriate manner and that there are no grounds for further questions on this matter, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, we are very anxious to have the commissioner appear again before the committee, but this is a matter I feel concerns the Prime Minister's Office and the principal secretary at the time.

[*English*]

The Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police did not deal with this issue yesterday, but he did tell the justice committee that the officer in Montreal who delayed the search warrants had acted on his own. That particular officer later told reporters that one week before last year's general election he had advised the Acting Deputy Commissioner of criminal investigation here in Ottawa of the decision to delay search warrants and that the Acting Deputy Commissioner told the officer "He had no problem."

This officer who delayed the search warrants told a Montreal newspaper yesterday: "proceeding with those searches less than one week before a general election—perhaps could have influenced the election on a local and national level."

I want to put this question to the Deputy Prime Minister because he understands, I am sure, the profound questions involved in this affair which go to the root of our system of justice. The public interest demands prompt and impartial investigations and the administration of justice whether or not there is an election on. Nobody is to be convenienced by when a search warrant will be laid or when a charge will be laid.

Six days before the decision to delay the search warrants was made, the RCMP received a document from the Prime Minister's principal secretary. I put the question to the Deputy Prime Minister, what was in that document?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the right hon. gentleman keeps trying to incriminate the RCMP and undermine the integrity of the RCMP. I consider this to be a very serious matter. The members opposite do not.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: I would remind hon. members that a question has been put to the Deputy Prime Minister who has the floor and is trying to answer.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, my understanding is the RCMP Commissioner, Mr. Inkster, was very frank and forthright with the committee yesterday and undertook to look into this matter in its fullest detail. The Solicitor General has responded in a similar manner. What is happening here is that we are providing the answers that are being made available to us. The RCMP are providing the answers that are being made available. Because the opposition does not like the truth and it does not fit their political motives, I cannot help that. We want to ensure—

Some Hon. Members: What was in the letter?

Mr. Mazankowski: Well, Mr. Speaker, that will be something for the RCMP to decide because as he said yesterday, he would take grave exception to any individual who would make an effort to tell him what to investigate, who to investigate, or how that investigation should be undertaken, and I agree with that statement.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, this issue at this stage does not relate to the integrity of the force. We support that. It relates to the integrity of the Prime Minister's Office and the heart of this government, and that is why we want to know what was in that document and whether the Deputy Prime Minister will produce it.

We do not need the return of the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for this answer. We will await his return before the committee. We want to know why an intervention was made eight days before the election by the Prime Minister's principal secretary relating to the Grisé affair and why the Deputy Prime Minister will not produce that document.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman can ask the RCMP if they will produce the document. If he wants to interfere with the investigation then he can be my guest.

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, the RCMP have said that they will not produce that letter. They have told us, and I want the Deputy Prime Minister to get this, that they will not give us the letter. We are asking the government for that letter because of the circumstances in which that letter was sent. Will the Deputy Prime Minister make that letter public?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is not satisfied with the truth.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): You are not giving us the truth.

Mr. Mazankowski: Yesterday there was a firm undertaking by the Commissioner of the RCMP to get to the bottom of this and report back as quickly as he possibly can.

I also noted that the hon. member has great confidence in the Commissioner of the RCMP. If he has so much confidence, why does he not let him complete the review and the investigation and report in an appropriate fashion?

Mr. Kaplan: Mr. Speaker, we all know that the Commissioner of the RCMP will not make public a letter that he got from the Prime Minister's Office. That is for the Prime Minister to decide to do and we are asking the Deputy Prime Minister to make that letter public. The investigation is over. A conviction was obtained. What is the public interest in withholding from us and from the Canadian people the contents of that very important letter?

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, the public interest is in defending the independence of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. That is the issue.

The investigation that was undertaken was undertaken by the RCMP. It was conducted in the manner in which the RCMP saw fit, its conclusions were made in an appropriate fashion, and what we are doing here again is imputing motives.

The hon. member is making suggestions of political interference and political wrong–doing. The RCMP Commissioner has been very clear and categorical on that account. He may not believe us but surely he should believe the RCMP Commissioner.

• (1430)

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General. May I just say that it is very clear from the facts in this case that the Commissioner of the RCMP has been kept in the dark in this whole matter.

My office learned yesterday from Chief Superintendent McConnell that he normally reports to none other

than Deputy Commissioner of Operations, Henry Jensen, and that Mr. Couteau who received the call from McConnell yesterday was simply sitting in for Jensen who was away.

Now Mr. Jensen sat in the justice committee beside Mr. Inkster in June when he misled the committee. In the case of Inkster this may well have been unintentional, but it is not unintentional on the part of this government.

An Hon. Member: Get on with the question.

Mr. Brewin: In view of the fact that the Solicitor General has had 10 months in office to get to the bottom of this affair, how can he say that he has not either been negligent in his duties to the people of Canada or, because he is afraid of what he might find out if he looked into this affair, he is simply intentionally acting contrary to the interest of the people of Canada?

Mr. Speaker: Now that was a charge, and I have said before that we are not using preambles by way of charges. The minister may wish to respond.

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. We know that eight days before a decision was made to delay the issuance of search warrants in the Grisé matter Peter White wrote a letter to the RCMP. We know that Bernard Roy apparently told an engineer who had given bribes to Michel Gravel that this would be a little in-house investigation and that Gravel would quietly resign. There was not supposed to be any charges or any big scandal. We all know that is not what happened.

Will the Deputy Prime Minister explain to the House precisely what role was played by Bernard Roy in the Michel Gravel investigation? What role was played by Peter White from the Prime Minister's Office in the investigation of Richard Grisé? Will the Deputy Prime Minister stop trying to cover up political interference in the administration of justice in this country and—

Mr. Speaker: The question was doing quite well until the last moment or two. The minister may want to respond.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, with respect to Mr. Bernard Roy, I noted in *The Toronto Star* today, November 22, that allegations which were made in regard to any information he had with respect to the probe into the dealings of Michel Gravel were "odious and false". It is my understanding that he has written to the letter publisher or the editor of the Montreal *Gazette* to that effect.

In so far as the other matter is concerned, the only information I can give to the hon. member at this particular time is that as soon as information was made available to the Prime Minister's Office with respect to this, it was turned over to the RCMP.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Solicitor General. Yesterday RCMP Superintendent McConnell stated, after admitting to delaying search warrants in the Grisé affair for political reasons, that he would do exactly the same thing again. I want to ask the Solicitor General who is responsible for the RCMP: Does he accept this very dangerous decision by the RCMP, or will he now finally show leadership and assure the House that this kind of political manipulation of the criminal justice process is totally unacceptable—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Andre: Why is he allowed to continually do this?

An Hon. Member: You are questioning the Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I think that under the circumstances I will have to proceed to the hon. member for Saint-Léonard.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FEDERAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BANK

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for the Federal Business Development Bank. Yesterday, in answer to my question, he said and I quote:

> Headquarters believed a pub-disco was operating in a building owned by the company to which the loan was made.

The Federal Business Development Bank's loan policy excludes this kind of business. Therefore it is not a mistake but it is contrary to the policy. Will the minister clarify this matter? Will he tell this House who received

the loan application at the branch office, and who reviewed and authorized this loan exceeding $1 million at headquarters? Are we going to find out the truth once and for all?

[*English*]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, five times, the application was sent to headquarters for approval because of the nature of the business, being a night club–pub–disco. The vice-president at headquarters approved it, not knowing it was a strip club. He ought not to have done that. It is contrary to public policy. That is the sixth time I have given that answer to this House.

Mr. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, today we learned from *The Toronto Star* that Ken Cavanaugh, the spokesman for the federal bank, said that the loan in question was supported by a chartered bank.

Now if it was supported by the chartered bank, why did the bank not make the loan? Why did the FBDB make the loan, which is a last resort lending institution? Is that another mistake?

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, his leader is a former director of a chartered bank. He should ask him why the chartered bank would recommend that kind of a loan.

How am I supposed to know?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the minister responsible for the Federal Business Development Bank and is on the same subject.

The minister told us yesterday and again today that the branch office and the headquarters of the Federal Business Development Bank both made an error in approving a loan to the Lido strip joint. Today, Mr. Ken Kavanagh, spokesman for the bank, said in an interview with CBC that the bank had no intention of "divesting" itself of this client. If the loan is contrary to the policy, as the minister told us yesterday and again today, if it is unacceptable to finance this kind of business, is is not also unacceptable to keep this client? Why is the government continuing to finance a business which it considers unacceptable?

[*English*]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, a contract was entered into between the FBDB and the numbered company that owns the land and property and the business contained therein. That contract obligates the FBDB, as well as the holder of the loan. There are no provisions in that contract.

There will be in terms of the policy from now on, as I indicated yesterday in the House, but there is no provision in that contract to call the loan in the manner the hon. member is suggesting.

Mr. Boudria: I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the minister told us there was a mortgage and today he tells us it is a loan. That is a fascinating way he has of getting himself confused.

I want to ask the minister a very serious question. Can he give this House his assurance here and now that the Federal Business Development Bank has not financed any other such establishments, that the Federal Business Development Bank has not financed strip joints directly or indirectly in the past other than the Lido strip club in Hull?

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, to spare the hon. member hours of work sniffing down a blind alley here, let me tell him that it is a loan secured by a mortgage on the land and property as well as certain assets within the business.

Mr. Jelinek: He would not understand that.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, five times and today at least once, a mistake was made. The policy has been changed.

• (1440)

The policy now reads: "The bank does not provide financing to businesses which would result in FBDB being identified as encouraging activities which, while legal, generally could be considered offensive".

Mr. Boudria: Are there any more?

Mr. Andre: The hon. member again shouts from his seat showing he is more interested in feigned indignation for the benefit of television rather than information from this side of the House.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. Yesterday thousands of farmers demonstrated in Ottawa searching for answers from the Minister of Agriculture—

Some Hon. Members: How many?

Mr. Althouse: Thousands—regarding the future of national farm marketing boards. They got no answers.

Specifically what role does the minister and this government see for national marketing boards? What role will they play in the export of farm products in the 1990s? Will he be expanding the existing legislation to permit the establishment of new national boards by removing the current restrictions on fruit and vegetable producers, grains and oilseeds producers, and livestock producers which now prevent them from establishing such boards?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the position of the government and the position that we have taken as a party for many, many years is that we will honour the type of marketing system that producers want. If the majority of producers want a marketing board system, that is something we will facilitate for them. The fact of the matter is that—

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): Did you check the free trade agreement?

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, a Liberal is saying from her seat that that is not what the free trade agreement says. The free trade agreement very clearly establishes the right for marketing boards to exist under the provisions of GATT.

What this government is doing during the GATT negotiations is an attempt to clarify and strengthen Article 11, the foundation under which supply management systems can exist and under which import controls can be implemented.

As a result of the ice cream and yoghurt decision, which was not a free trade decision but rather a GATT decision, it is necessary to clarify that provision because the wording goes back to 1947 and there have been a lot of changes since that time.

Mr. Althouse: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister might focus on answering the question. All sides of the House applauded when east bloc countries, specifically East Germany, began tearing down the wall that kept people in. Now East Germans have a choice.

Will the minister and his government tear down the blockage that exists in the natural products marketing law which restricts the producers of grains and oilseeds, livestock, fruits and vegetables from even considering establishing such marketing boards? They have to get the legislation changed first. They have to get permission to go through the wall. Will he tear it down?

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has been living in Ottawa too long and not getting back to his constituency often enough.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mazankowski: If he was paying any attention to what was going on in rural Canada, he would know that beef producers in Ontario rejected a marketing board and supply management concept.

We believe in democracy. If they had voted in favour of one, we probably would have taken action to facilitate that course, but democratic forces prevailed. They did not want that kind of a system, and we will uphold the decision of the farmers.

* * *

[*Translation*]

MONEY LAUNDERING

Mr. Jean-Guy Guilbault (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Finance.

After a convention of North American chiefs of police held recently in Kentucky in the United States it would seem that billions of dollars of drug trafficking profits cross the American border every year and are laundered in Canadian financial institutions.

Considering that the laws of our two countries are not compatible and that our banks can break up a large deposit into several smaller deposits to various bank accounts and then transfer them to U.S. accounts, with a view to correcting this situation, does the minister intend to take appropriate and concrete steps to authorize our police forces to obtain information from our banking institutions so as to uncover these fraudulent operations

and enable our society to make progress in the fight against drugs?

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, the government looks upon money laundering as a serious issue. I should like to reassure the Hon. member for Drummond by telling him that we have been and will be using the latest and most effective measures to fight against this plague.

For example, some people have suggested registering any transaction in excess of $10,000. My response is that drug traffickers may be criminals, but they are not necessarily stupid. It is very easy to find other ways to complete the transaction. We looked at that suggestion on three occasions and, for the time being, our conclusion is that the methods we use with the banks, the RCMP and the Superintendent of Financial Institutions are up to date and effective. We will continue to use the latest technology.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State (Agriculture).

Yesterday, while some 15,000 angry farmers were protesting—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Ouellet: The minister had the gall to brag in the House about his dairy policy. Is the minister not aware that his policy became worthless when his government signed a free-trade agreement with the United States, and especially decided to progressively remove the tariff on yogurt and ice cream, before securing from the United States the assurance that they would allow Canada to add these two items to its import control list? Does the minister not realize that the people who were outside booing him and insisting they no longer trusted him are seeking a better treatment from him? What is he going to do?

Hon. Pierre Blais (Solicitor General of Canada and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, I realized that I was fortunate to hold two portfolios when RCMP officers advised me that there were 4,500 farm producers demonstrating yesterday in front of Parliament.

In this connection, my Hon. friend ought to know that the decision dealing with yogurt and ice cream—

I am aware that NDP members could not care less about Quebec farm producers, but I suggest that there are people both in and out of the House who care about them.

In reply to his question, may I suggest to my Hon. friend that he should know this is a GATT decision which has nothing to do with our free trade agreement with the United States. It was at the request of farm producers that we had added yogurt and ice cream to that list. The tribunal ruled against us; yet, we have done something which Liberal Governments had not done in over 20 years, to wit, sit down with Quebec farm producers in an effort to put together a new dairy policy and strategy with respect to GATT talks. You did not even have a long-term dairy policy. For five years, farm producers waited for some action on your part.

Since my colleague is absent from the House, may I suggest, as I did yesterday, that we have no lesson to receive from hon. members opposite. We have always looked after dairy producers and we will continue to do so.

Mr. Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the Minister of State (Agriculture), who is fully aware that he simply extended for a five-year period a dairy policy that has been of benefit to Québec farmers for years and years as it was renewed by the Liberal administration. The industrial milk policy has done so well in Quebec because it was well designed years ago.

When in 1976 there were demonstrations on Parliament Hill, the government of the day listened and made corrections.

Here is my question to the minister: Faced with that demonstration, by whatever the number of farmers, because all farmers in UPA and the whole UPA membership in the province of Quebec, support those who came to Parliament Hill and are demanding that the Minister take concrete steps to protect, not only yogurt and ice cream, but also butter, cheese, powdered milk.

What will the minister do to ensure that Canada's industrial milk producers are not put out of business by the Americans, as they are now preparing to do?

Mr. Blais: Mr. Speaker, it is amazing that after five years the hon. member for Papineau would ask a question dealing with agriculture. For five years, Mr. Speaker, this government has been looking after farmers. In 1986 we brought in the first long-term dairy policy ever a policy they could not get from you.

Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, which is of significant importance for dairy farmers, they sit with us on a strategy committee. We are reviewing the current dairy policy with a view to strengthening it and ensuring—

Some Hon. Members: Order!

Mr. Blais: If you will listen—and ensuring that we are able not only to address what we have gone through over the last three years, but also to meet the challenges of the future.

We believe that under a strengthened and clarified Article 11 marketing boards will be in a position to compete during the 1990s and into the next century, Mr. Speaker. This is what farmers need.

* * *

• (1450)

[*English*]

FISHERIES

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans who has thrown in the towel in determining fishery policy in Atlantic Canada, leaving two big fish companies to call the shots on which fish plants to close and leaving thousands of plant workers and fishermen economically stranded.

Does the minister not agree that catch quotas rightfully belong to the individual ports and fish plants, and not to the companies?

If the companies try to close particular plants in Atlantic Canada, will he ensure that the appropriate quota shares remain with the individual fish plants? Does he not agree that sharing the work is better than shutting down individual plants altogether, permanently?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the hon. member that I certainly have not agreed to throw in the towel, although if he needs one, feeling rather wet, I could provide him with one.

Mr. McKnight: Actually it is a crying towel.

Mr. Siddon: Mr. Speaker, there are certain matters with respect to the distribution of fish quotas that come ultimately under the authority of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

As we plan for the quota management of the 1990 fishery we will be setting those quotas in a fair and equitable fashion, following a process of consultation involving all industry sector groups, affected provincial governments and ministers of fisheries.

There are other matters as to which plants should receive which portion of supply under quotas accorded to private companies which have been properly the domain of those private companies. In the course of the work of the special cabinet committee on the northern cod issue in particular and the Atlantic fishery more generally, that matter is being considered very carefully.

Mr. Simmons: Mr. Speaker, the minister knows as much about towels as he does about the fishery.

Does he not agree that the fish belong to the communities and the people, not to those multinational fish companies?

Yesterday there were some meetings in Halifax on this subject. I am sure the minister has heard reports are circulating from that meeting yesterday that both inshore and offshore quotas are going to be drastically reduced. That should come as no surprise to him.

Will the minister now bite the bullet and set some direction on how the quotas are to be distributed between the offshore and the inshore? Will he undertake to see that the two sectors of the industry are not being played off one against the other, leaving the industry in even deeper chaos?

Mr. Siddon: Mr. Speaker, first the member was concerned that I would throw in the towel. Now he wants me to bite the bullet. I think he really needs a shot in the arm.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Siddon: The hon. member knows full well that for several years there has been a process of consultation in which we discuss these questions with the affected sectors of the Atlantic fishing industry and provincial governments.

Upon completion of that process of consultation we will publish the 1990 Atlantic Groundfish Management Plan on or around December 30 or 31 of this year, and all the answers to his questions will be revealed at that time.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Defence. The minister will know that the Prime Minister said yesterday in Moscow that the 1987 White Paper on Defence was outdated. Of course the Prime Minister was the last person in Canada to realize this, but we are glad he has come to this conclusion.

I am wondering if the Minister of National Defence could tell us what process the government now has in mind for reconstructing Canadian defence policy along the lines of the new realities that the Prime Minister has observed, and whether in the context of that process he is prepared to say now that the government will suspend its commitment to low-level flight testing over Innu territory in Labrador until such time as the government can arrive at a new defence policy?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the member asks a very important question. The White Paper was drafted in 1985 to 1987. It was released in 1987 and it was the reality of the time. I think the hon. member admits that, as do others.

Several things have happened since that White Paper was drafted. There was a budget and, to provide the economy of Canada with the strength that we think it needs, there was a reduction in the allocation for the Department of National Defence. A review was undertaken at that time and it is still ongoing.

There are realities today and there are opportunities today that were not available four weeks ago and were not available some six months ago. Therefore, naturally we look at the changes as we progress and the White Paper will continue to be reviewed.

I suggest to the hon. member that it would be prudent to take the time and to allow this government to take the time to come to the right answers as there is a changing reality in the world today.

Mr. Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, with respect, I think the minister should acknowledge that even in 1987 there was disagreement about the White Paper. It is true, of course, that other things have happened in the meantime.

I asked the minister about a process for reviewing the White Paper, and I asked him in that context to suspend the government's commitment to low-level flight testing, to put a moratorium on it until such time as it can be re-evaluated. The minister has not answered that question.

In the same context, would he also consider suspending Canada's commitment to cruise missile testing which also belongs to a very outdated view of the world?

Mr. McKnight: Mr. Speaker, the member represents a party which believes we should not seek collective security in the NATO alliance. This government believes we should and that we should continue to seek security in the NATO alliance.

The member has to understand, and I am sure he does. The changes that have been taking place in Europe today, yesterday and the day before were changes that were encouraged by NATO over the whole period of its existence. NATO has never been an aggressive force. NATO has been a defensive force. It will continue to be. So are the activities and the training that Canada takes part in today.

Mr. Speaker: I wish to advise that in view of the intervention of the hon. minister and the replies by the opposition parties, we will end Question Period at 3.05.

* * *

• (1500)

INVESTMENT CANADA

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): My question is for the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology. In February the minister and Investment Canada approved the takeover of Texaco by Imperial Oil even though the Investment Canada Act says that the question of competition must be resolved first, and that was not done until June. Even though the question of competition was resolved in June, the competition tribunal said that the decision on competition was flawed on November 10.

If the competition question was not resolved until November 10, how could Investment Canada give its approval and say that the competition question was resolved in February, thereby violating its own enabling legislation?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, the mandate of Investment Canada was to examine mergers and acquisitions to see if they are in the national interest. In matters relating to the oil and gas industry, it is the oil and gas policy that imposes certain restraints and applies particularly to upstream assets, namely the oil and gas in-ground reserves.

Those policy requirements were met in terms of this agreement. There were certain dispersals imposed on Imperial Oil. It had to dispose of certain assets and so on in order to meet the requirements of the energy policy.

The Competition Act has its own authority and there is no sequential arrangement. They both must be approved before any acquisition is finally approved. As you know, the competition questions are currently being examined very closely and certain amendments being caused, and that will carry itself to its conclusion. Either it will be permitted or not permitted, but that has nothing to do with Investment Canada's responsibility and mandate.

Mr. MacLellan: Mr. Speaker, yes it does, because the Investment Canada Act says that the question of competition must be resolved before Investment Canada can give its approval to the takeover, and it did not do that. In fact, the competition question was not resolved until four months after Investment Canada gave its approval.

From here on, will Investment Canada wait until the competition question is resolved before giving its approval on investments such as this, particularly takeovers and mergers, or is this going to be a regular procedure, that of the enabling legislation of Investment Canada being breached for the convenience of the government?

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, it is not for the convenience of the government, it is for the convenience of commerce in the country. I do not see any advantage to anybody to follow the procedure the hon. member is suggesting. There are two conditions that must be met; the net benefit to Canada test of Investment Canada and the Competition Act test. Each must be met separately or a deal does not go through. The procedure the hon. member seems to be suggesting offers no benefits to anybody.

* * *

CHILD CARE

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. He will know that the United Nations General Assembly has approved a comprehensive convention with regard to the rights of the child. Canadian governments, both present and past, have been strong advocates of this. Today 10 per cent of Canadian children are in need of some form of child care, however, they are not being accommodated. In Ontario 11 per cent of the province's children in need are being served by the child care program in this country.

Why is the government of Canada not finding this subject matter to be sufficiently important to introduce a comprehensive program, thereby creating the many new spaces which are needed for child care in this country? Is it or is it not a priority?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member knows that this was the first government in Canada that did try to introduce a comprehensive child care plan for children in Canada and that it was stopped by the other place with his party being instrumental in that stoppage.

Let me say as well that this government has committed itself to bringing in another comprehensive child care plan before the next election, within the next two or three years, and that in the meantime the Canada Assistance Plan is available for the provinces to use. It is an open-ended plan to which this government is committed.

Mr. Dingwall: The minister knows that they have had almost six years to come forward with a national program for child care and they have failed with that particular priority.

There are fewer than 70 child care centres serving more than 1,000 native communities across Canada, some of which are now facing closure because of lack of

funds. At the present time the Government of Canada spends less than $5 million for First Nation child care.

Would the minister explain why the government has gutted $60 million from native child care? Why is the Government of Canada denying native people, whose needs must be obvious to everyone in this House, of high quality and culturally sensitive child care?

Mrs. McDougall: Mr. Speaker, this government is well aware of the particular needs of native children and of native women. We have done more to show that than has any previous government. Let me go back to some other things too.

In terms of child care, this government introduced tax measures that will provide financial assistance to parents. We launched the Child Care Initiative Fund which includes the very kinds of things the hon. member is talking about. The Child Care Initiative Fund was set up specifically to deal with doubly disadvantaged children and women who need particular help, such as native inamen. That is in action now and it is moving forward. This government also recognizes that we need to have a national child care program and we will do that as soon as possible.

* * *

[*Translation*]

QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE

RACIST ADVERTISING

Mr. Vincent Della Noce (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today on a question of privilege. My background is Italian, and my office received an anonymous telephone call asking whether that made me a *mafioso*. Enquiries were made, and it seems that Télé-Direct, the company responsible for printing the yellow pages across Canada, has committed a grave injustice vis-à-vis the Italian-Canadian community. Collège Platon, established in 1957, is a language school and teaches 25 different languages. The college is located in Montreal and is known not only to Canadians but also to foreign students. For the year 1990-91, the college placed an ad in the yellow pages on page 453, listing 23 courses offered to students. It says: "English, French, Portuguese, Dutch", and so forth, but instead of Italian, it says: "mafia".

Point of Order

Needless to say, the entire Italian-Canadian community, of which I am a member, was shocked by this racial slur. When Italians first immigrated to Canada, Mr. Speaker, they were called a number of unpleasant names like "mafioso". We worked as labourers for abysmally low wages, to gain recognition and be accepted as solid citizens. For 20 years we have been part of the Canadian and Québec community.

Just look at the newspapers! Italians are no more likely than the English, French or dyed-in-the-wool Québécers to commit crimes, rape, or be involved in shady dealings or drugs. We are Canadians, not *mafiosi*. On behalf of the Italian-Canadian community I represent, I ask Télé-Direct to take action against the person or persons with this warped attitude and withdraw this racist page from the directories or make the appropriate corrections.

Mr. Speaker, the Italian community doesn't deserve to be treated like this in Canada.

Mr. Speaker: I listened with some interest to the hon. member's statement. This is a very serious matter. It may be appropriate for the Chair to consider the matter and make a statement later on in the House. I want to thank the hon. member.

• (1510)

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, although I have not seen the document, I agree with the hon. member that in 1989, such insults are unacceptable, and speaking on behalf of the Italian community and with the hon. member, I hope that with the support of this House, steps will be taken to prevent any recurrences.

* * *

[*English*]

POINT OF ORDER

COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I have a brief point of order arising from the proceedings during Question Period yesterday, November 21. This is the first opportunity I have had to raise the point.

It has to do with a question put by the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell who said, as reported at pages 5931 and 5932 of *Hansard*:

Point of Order

> Given that less than four hours later Radio–Canada confirmed that the Federal Business Development Bank had made two loans to the Lido strip joint in Hull owned and operated by a friend of a former cabinet minister and totalling $1.3 million—

Mr. Speaker, I have heard you many times in this House, indeed I heard you today and yesterday, admonish members about using preambles and comments that amount to charges or impugned motives and so on. No doubt you are reflecting the admonitions in Beauchesne's sixth edition, section 409(7) which says:

> A question must adhere to the proprieties of the House, in terms of inferences, imputing motives or casting aspersions upon persons within the House or out of it.

In this particular case the reference is to a former cabinet minister, with the inference that somehow perhaps he influenced this loan which I admitted was an error.

Outside the House the hon. member mentioned that it was Roch LaSalle he was talking about. That, of course, had the press going and they were pursuing me to see if I was going to follow this up with a full investigation into what was to them imputed wrong–doing. Other reporters checked that out and Mr. LaSalle denied categorically knowing the owners of the Lido strip joint or ever having been in the establishment. My office confirmed that. He absolutely denies that.

Mr. Speaker, in keeping with your admonitions my request is very simple. I am not accusing the hon. member of deliberately inferring wrong–doing on the part of Mr. LaSalle. He may have received information which was in error.

In any event, I think it would be in keeping with the kind of atmosphere we would like to promote in this House if the hon. member would withdraw that comment and recognize that Mr. LaSalle is not a friend of the owner of this strip joint and has not been a frequenter of this strip joint. He should recognize that any reflection such as that is unfair to this person who is no longer a member of this House, and particularly unfair to that person's family.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I invite you to read carefully what *Hansard* says and what the minister himself has stated:

> —four hours later Radio–Canada confirmed that the Federal Business Development Bank had made two loans to the Lido strip joint in Hull owned and operated by a friend of a former cabinet minister—

I was stating what Radio–Canada had said. If the minister across has some difficulty with what reporters of Radio–Canada say, he can phone Mr. Normand Lester at Radio–Canada and ask him publicly to recant.

As you will know, Mr. Speaker, neither members of the opposition nor anyone else in this House are in a position to dictate to Radio–Canada what to say. I would imagine that Mr. Normand Lester has a mind of his own, he can say what he likes, and if that is not satisfactory to either Mr. LaSalle or to someone else they can take it up with Mr. Lester or with Stevie Cameron or all the others who have made such statements. But for me to read what has been said on television last night can hardly be considered a slander or anything of the like, and I say to the minister across the way that just because he does not like something does not make it slanderous.

Mr. Speaker: I will consider the interventions that have been made and report back to the House.

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order. If I am not mistaken, the hon. minister who raised the point of order was in the House yesterday at the time that the words he complains of were spoken by the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell. He heard the words and he therefore was in the position to raise the point of order, if one existed, promptly after yesterday's Question Period.

I just point out he did not do so at the first opportunity. I simply add that point to what I think are the extremely valid words of the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, and I point out to you, Mr. Speaker, that words like those used by the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell citing basically a press report have been used many times in this House by members on the government side when they were in opposition and in replying to questions and no complaint has been made. I think there is no validity, as a result, to what was said by the hon. minister in his point of order.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, at the time the accusation was made by way of statement, I had no way of knowing if it was true or not true. Of course, no names were given at that time. It was outside the House that the name Roch LaSalle was mentioned so I did not have the opportunity to verify. I then sought out independent verification. My office talked to Roch LaSalle and he is again deploring the fact that even though he has left this place, his family continues to be abused in this fashion. It is for that reason and that reason alone that I just say,

would it not be nice if for once we could say, "We are sorry we dragged your name through this muddy situation, it should not have been dragged through".

I did not suggest the hon. member invented this fact. He says he got it from Radio-Canada, that is fine. However, is it not about time that perhaps just out of decency, out of respect for the man's family, we acknowledge a mistake was made and withdraw the remark. That is all I was asking for, Herb, that is all I wanted.

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I just wish to comment that my hon. friend, the House Leader for the Official Opposition, just made the point that the minister was in the House yesterday and could have complained at that time but did not rise at the appropriate time. I appreciate the point my hon. friend has made. We are taking due note of that and will follow that precedent in the future.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair is in a position to hope. The hon. member for York Centre.

JUSTICE—QUESTION PERIOD COMMENTS

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order arising from Question Period. My leader and I asked questions about a certain letter sent by Peter White of the Prime Minister's Office to the Commissioner of the RCMP containing information on which charges were eventually laid. The Solicitor General did not answer the question and said, in his reasons for not answering it, that yesterday at the justice committee the commissioner had been asked and had answered all the questions about the letter.

I was at the justice committee meeting yesterday and I have a transcript of the meeting. My recollection is confirmed that there was no discussion at all about that letter at the justice committee meeting yesterday. I submit that the Solicitor General has misled the House and he should retract that answer that he gave.

Mr. Speaker: I will consider what the Solicitor General said and I will also look at the proceedings in committee and report back to the House.

Routine Proceedings

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

ORDER IN COUNCIL

TABLING OF APPOINTMENTS

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, a number of Order in Council appointments made by the government. Pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 110(1), these are deemed referred to the appropriate standing committees, a list of which is attached.

* * *

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government responses to 128 petitions.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

* * *

• (1520)

[*Translation*]

BILL C-23

TABLING OF LEGISLATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Guy Ricard (Laval): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the report of the legislative committee on Bill C-23, an Act to amend the National Energy Board Act and to repeal certain enactments in consequence thereof, with amendments.

* * *

[*English*]

VICTIMS OF CRIME COMPENSATION ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-278, an act respecting compensation for Canadian victims of crime travelling or posted abroad.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. member shall have leave to introduce the bill?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Brewin: Madam Speaker, this bill is designed to fill a gap in compensation for criminal injuries. All provinces and territories in Canada have legislation under which victims of criminal acts have an opportunity to apply for compensation from the province. Unfortunately, if a Canadian is travelling or working abroad and is injured there is no possibility of claiming compensation. The event must occur within the provincial or territorial jurisdiction.

This bill is designed to provide, at the federal level, that Canadians who are travelling or working abroad and are injured may apply to their provincial or territorial compensation tribunals and would assume that the federal government would pick up the compensation thus applied for.

I urge the House, at the appropriate time, to adopt the legislation.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

* * *

PETITIONS

CHILD CARE

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition pursuant to Standing Order 36 wherein petitioners from western Canada point out that one-sixth of all Canadian children live in poverty and that the percentage of children living in poverty is growing in Canada. The petitioners are calling upon Parliament to support Private Member's Motion M-254 which calls upon the government to negotiate with the provinces of Canada to provide a comprehensive bill of rights for children.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Madam Speaker, I have another petition. The petitioners, again from western Canada, point out their concerns regarding the government's decision to curtail passenger rail service and are asking the Parliament of Canada to maintain, improve and modernize VIA Rail services in those areas of the country where it can provide a more rapid, economic, safe, convenient, environmentally sound and energy efficient alternative to other means of transportation.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Madam Speaker, a last petition, again on behalf of a number of petitioners, largely from Kamloops, British Columbia, who point out a whole variety of concerns they have regarding the government's initiative concerning the goods and services tax. The petitioners are opposed to the goods and services tax and request the government go back to the drawing board and draft a comprehensive tax reform package that is fair to Canadians.

POST OFFICE

Mr. Arnold Malone (Crowfoot): Madam Speaker, I have the honour and the duty to table a petition submitted by a number of petitioners who wish to exercise their ancient right to express a common opinion and who seek to submit a grievance with respect to the rural post office.

LAW OF THE SEA

Hon. William Rompkey (Labrador): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition signed by 170 of the people in my riding who are calling upon Parliament to enjoin the Government of Canada, to request—indeed I think they should demand—that the Government of Canada extend its jurisdiction to the very edge of Canada's continental shelf as is consistent with international law and as every other coastal state in the world has done, so that Canada can protect and regulate the fish stocks vital to Atlantic fishermen. This is the subject, as you know, Madam Speaker, of a crisis in our most important industry at the present time.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Hon. William Rompkey (Labrador): Madam Speaker, I also have the honour to present a petition signed by 510 people calling upon the House to request that the Government of Canada establish an unemployment insurance pay centre at Happy Valley, Goose Bay, to service all of Labrador. This would mean that those people who qualify for unemployment insurance, which is about 50 per cent of the people at the present time, can avail themselves of their legitimate rights.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Hon. William Rompkey (Labrador): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition signed by 420

people in the riding requesting Parliament to demand that the Government of Canada reject the proposed goods and services tax which is going to have a negative effect all across the country but which will have enormous consequences for the north. If you consider that the goods and services tax will add 100 per cent disability to southern Canada, it will be 150 per cent to northern Canada.

CANADA EVIDENCE ACT

Hon. William Rompkey (Labrador): Madam Speaker, I also have the honour to present a petition from residents in my riding calling upon the House to request that the Government of Canada revise the laws of Canada and the Canada Evidence Act to better serve victims with disabilities, allowing them to communicate their account of their victimization in court.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy—Royal): Madam Speaker, I have been asked by several thousand people in the province of New Brunswick from the Grand Falls area, Plaster Rock, Quispamis, Moncton, Fredericton and Saint John, totalling 11,720 petitioners who have asked me to present a petition on their behalf indicating that they sincerely and strongly believe that faith in our future can only be guaranteed by our witness to respect for life from the unborn to the aged.

They believe that human life is a gift given by God and that life is unique and special, and they believe in the sanctity of that life from the moment of conception. They humbly pray and call upon Parliament to formulate and legislate a law to protect life from conception, a law which seeks to save the life of both mother and child.

It is quite evident from the size of this petition that there are a significant number of people in this country who are concerned. We must consider that the over 11,000 people who signed this petition represent a province that has a population of about 700,000 people. Indeed, at this critical moment in the history of this Parliament, they ask for deep consideration.

[*Translation*]

OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present to the House eight petitions signed by residents of York West all opposed to the new tax, this GST being proposed by the Conservative government, not only because of its impact on small businesses, but also on average citizens. This proposal, the thirteeth new tax presented by the government since 1984, would cause a lot of hardship. We, the Liberals, ask the government to reject completely and totally this new GST.

[*English*]

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am very pleased to present 1,000 petitions that have been certified. I have more thousands of petitions that are not certified. I appreciate I can only recognize those petitioners but they are bowlers, psychologists, consumers and business people. Everybody in Sault Ste. Marie is against this tax. I present these petitions with the hope that the government have an eleventh hour change of heart and scrap the goods and services tax.

• (1530)

LOW LEVEL FLIGHTS

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Madam Speaker, it is my honour and duty pursuant to Standing Order 36 to present a petition from a number of residents of Rosthern, Saskatchewan. These petitioners are concerned that we should support Canada's original peoples in traditional use of their lands. Therefore, they ask this House to join with the Assembly of First Nations, the Inuit of Labrador and other aboriginal peoples of northern Canada, to demand the end of all NATO–NORAD low level flight training and to refuse the establishment of NATO operations in Canada. They demand that we redirect Canada's NATO–NORAD funding toward enabling Canada's aboriginal peoples to regain control of their lands and their livelihood and to promote sustainable development for all Canadians.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Madam Speaker, I have another petition from a number of residents of Ontario, from London, St. Mary's, Lambeth, Ottawa, Oakville and Hornepayne. These petitioners point out that VIA Rail provides Canadians with an affordable and environmentally friendly means of intercity transportation on which many Canadians depend. They, therefore, humbly pray and call upon Canada's Parliament to reject any proposed reduction or elimination of VIA Rail, to modernize existing equipment and to build a high-speed passenger train between Montreal and Windsor.

EXTRADITION

Mr. Bob Hicks (Scarborough East): Madam Speaker, it is my honour to present a petition to the House for the following reasons. It is clearly evident by the widespread interest shown that Canadians are growing increasingly impatient by the lethargic approach we are taking to the extradition of those accused of heinous crimes against humanity.

The current extradition laws in this country allow alleged or convicted criminals to escape justice for sometimes brutal crimes committed outside of Canada. An example is Charles Ng who is wanted in the United States for 13 savage murders in the State of California.

I have the honour to present today petitions supporting the extradition of these individuals seeking haven in Canada. The petitions I am tabling today have 1,381 signatures, although I have received over 2,000 signatures to date. Unfortunately, many did not meet the rigid format required by the House.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): I continue to be amazed, Madam Speaker, and somewhat overwhelmed by the ongoing number of petitions that we are getting, all in opposition to the 9 per cent GST. They come from all parts of Canada from people in all walks of life and from all segments of our society.

These particular ones come from my community in Brockville. Like some of the previous petitions presented they do not all meet the criteria, but the spirit is there with them.

Having said that, the names of petitioners on this sheet do meet the criteria in accordance with Standing Order 36.

It is a pleasure to present this petition, which has been attested to as to its propriety in form and content.

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Madam Speaker, I rise today to present petitions from Burnaby, B.C. and from Sarnia, Ontario. They contain a total of almost 900 names. These petitioners are asking this government to reconsider its position on the goods and services tax. These petitions have been certified by the table officers of the House of Commons.

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiaq):

[*Editor's Note: Member spoke in Inuktitut.*]

[*English*]

Mr. Anawak: I have the honour, Madam Speaker, to present pursuant to Standing Order 36 a petition signed by people from my birth town of Repulse Bay. They object to the proposed goods and services tax. As well, I have a petition which is signed by residents of the community of Pelly Bay in my riding of Nunatsiaq where exists the highest cost-of-living in all of Canada because they can only get their produce and other goods by airplane, and certainly not by trucks or other forms of transportation.

These petitioners from Pelly Bay object to the proposed goods and services tax because if it goes through the cost of living that they are enduring now is going to get even higher and they will not be able to afford it.

QUEBEC BILL 178

Mr. W. C. Scott (Victoria—Haliburton): Madam Speaker, it is my privilege and duty on behalf of a number of petitioners from Cavan, Mill Brook and Frazerville to present a petition which calls upon Parliament to exercise its constitutional powers of disallowance with respect to Bill 178 of the province of Quebec.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX AND VIA RAIL

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Madam Speaker, when the hon. member from Victoria—Haliburton rose I was waiting for him with open ears to hear that his petition did not deal with that particular subject but instead with an approval perhaps of the goods and services tax, or an approval of the cuts to VIA Rail. No, his constituents would not do that sort of thing.

I have in my hand petitions from the Northumberland and Belleville areas containing hundreds of names, dealing first of all with the need to protect our rail transportation system in Canada and condemning this government's action in cutting VIA Rail.

I have hundreds of signatures on these other petitions dealing with the goods and services tax.

I look forward to the day when members from the opposite side of this House will rise and present the same type of petitions dealing with their constituents who want VIA Rail cut, and who want that 9 per cent goods and services tax imposed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Madam Speaker, I have the honour and pleasure to present to this House 13 petitions signed by 3,211 people from Saint-Léonard and the greater Montreal area. These Canadian citizens ask Parliament to reject any new tax on goods and services. This new tax would lead to inflation, higher interest rates and lost jobs. It is a nightmare for small businesses to have to deal with this tax.

So I have 3,211 signatures and many more still to come, Madam Speaker. I hope that the government will go back on its decision.

[*English*]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to present a petition on behalf of the Canadian Vietnamese community who are calling upon Parliament to request the Government of Canada to consider the following actions. First, putting pressure on the Hanoi government to end its abuse of human rights in Vietnam. Second, negotiating with the countries of first asylum to maintain the existing refugee camps in southeast Asia and not to send the refugees back to Vietnam against their will. Third, requesting the governments of Thailand and Hong Kong to open up their closed refugee camps to give the refugees kept there access to settlement services.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Gus Mitges (Bruce—Grey): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present petitions pursuant to Standing Order 36 on behalf of Ontario citizens concerned about the rights of the unborn. These petitions contain the names of 1,352 individuals who join with the many other petitioners whose petitions I have presented during the past week, calling for Parliament to pass legislation that will protect the life of the unborn from conception instead of the proposed law that would legalize the killing of innocent human beings.

I have no hesitation, Madam Speaker, in highly endorsing these petitions whose origins are from many communities in Ontario, namely, Chatham, Dryden, Wallaceburg, North Bay, New Liskeard, Sault Ste. Marie, Woodstock, St. Catharines and Nipigon.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Madam Speaker, I too have the honour pursuant to Standing Order 36 to table a petition on behalf of the constituents of Parkdale—High Park who are objecting to this government's 9 per cent tax on goods and services. The reasons they give for their opposition is that this government has already increased taxes 31 times. It has increased the manufacturers' sales tax from 9 per cent to 13.5 per cent. They also argue that this tax will cause serious and unfair hardship to low and middle-income Canadians. As a result of those arguments, the petitioners are calling upon this House to force this government to cancel the goods and services tax.

• (1540)

RCMP DRESS CODE

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River): Madam Speaker, I am honoured today to present several petitions to the House pursuant to Standing Order 36. There are 9,631 signatures here, over 5,000 from Saskatchewan, over 4,000 from Alberta, and most of the rest from British Columbia. These Canadians believe that the RCMP dress uniform is a symbol of Canadian tradition and culture and are asking Parliament that it remain unchanged.

OLD AGE SECURITY AND FAMILY ALLOWANCES

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River): The second petition I am presenting pursuant to Standing Order 36 is from about 50 senior citizens in my riding. These seniors are adamantly opposed to the budget proposals to tax back Old Age Security and family allowance payments.

Of course, I am always pleased to present petitions to the House on behalf of the residents of Beaver River.

ROUGE RIVER VALLEY

Mrs. Pauline Browes (Scarborough Centre): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to present to the House of Commons today a petition signed by a number of people from Scarborough, Agincourt and Toronto. They are calling upon the Government of Canada to work with the province of Ontario on a very important issue.

This issue is to save the Rouge Valley. It is 5,000 acres in the northeast part of Metro Toronto. The wildlife and wilderness aspects of this valley are of national significance. The interim report of the royal commission on the future of the Toronto waterfront recommended that the Rouge Valley be protected as a natural heritage area.

I would just like to mention in relation to this petition that the Legislature at Queen's Park this week approved unanimously the Progressive Conservative motion to have the Rouge Valley as a park. We now need action, as the petitioners are asking, to have the Government of Ontario establish the Rouge River Valley as Canadian heritage land or a provincial park.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Madam Speaker, I have the honour today to present a petition signed by people from my province. They strongly oppose the proposed goods and services tax. They feel it will cause serious and undue hardship to low and middle-income Canadians. Also, they say not only will it mean higher taxes but higher interest rates, higher inflation and higher unemployment. Therefore they call upon Parliament to reject the proposed goods and services tax.

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions to present to the House today pursuant to Standing Order 36. They have been certified as correct as to form and content. The first one contains many hundreds of signatures and is in regard to the goods and services tax. The petitioners point out that the government is now trying to tax reading, hair-cuts, diapers, coffins and home heating fuels.

They are asking the government to reform the taxation system so that there is an effective minimum tax on wealthy individuals and corporations, and where there is a broad public consensus on the sales tax measure to replace the manufacturers' sales tax and that this reform not be an opportunity to impose a massive tax grab.

VIA RAIL

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Madam Speaker, the second petition is also from my constituents and contains roughly about 75 signatures. It is concerning the VIA Rail transportation system.

The petitioners point out that this government, like its Liberal predecessor, has refused to provide VIA with the necessary support to fully realize its potential to develop the kind of national passenger rail network that Canadians want and deserve. Coming from a region where there is going to be an elimination of a whole line, they ask that this government please abandon the plans to cut VIA Rail service.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, like Canadians in Malpeque and across the country, the residents of Kingston and The islands object to the continual string of tax increases imposed by this government. After 31 such increases they decided to take matters into their hands and sign a petition.

A bunch of them have done so, and as their Member of Parliament I am honoured to present this petition pursuant to Standing Order 36 in which these residents of my riding call upon Parliament to reject the goods and services tax as number 32 in a string of unpopular, unnecessary, unfair and unwanted tax increases.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mrs. Pauline Browes (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Citizenship)): Madam Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Shall all questions be allowed to stand?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mrs. Pauline Browes (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Citizenship)): Madam Speaker, I ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Shall all notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S. O. 52

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 52 I ask leave to propose a motion to adjourn the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration of the House, namely, the unsatisfactory response by the government to the pressing and specific needs of Canadian farmers in financial, trade, marketing and other areas which is creating a dangerous level of frustration as seen in yesterday's mass demonstration in which thousands and thousands of farmers from throughout Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick massed on the lawns of Parliament.

We believe that an urgent debate is required in order to expose and to ventilate these frustrations which all Canadian farmers feel today.

[*Translation*]

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The Chair is quite aware of the problems raised yesterday by Canadian farmers. However, I do not believe that the situation calls for an emergency debate at this time.

[*English*]

If we are to look at the requirements stated in Standing Order 52, I do not think for the time being that this would require a debate at this time.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed from Tuesday, November 21, consideration of the motion of Mr. Lewis that Bill C–43, an act respecting abortion, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have a chance to speak on this bill, although it is a very difficult matter. It is the act respecting abortion, Bill C–43.

I believe the bill is unfortunately mistaken. It is no doubt well meant, but I believe if it were enacted it would do more harm than good. Therefore, I must oppose it.

In brief, the bill tries to outlaw abortion by using the Criminal Code and the threat of prison, but then it goes on to try to excuse abortion in most of those cases.

What is the effect? The effect will be confusion. It will be to make a number of women and doctors fearful, perhaps with cause, that is, that they might be imprisoned, perhaps without cause. The results in the courts will be uncertain. It will worsen conditions for normal childbirth; and it will not reduce the number of abortions.

It is the wrong way to go. It is impractical. There is no need to recriminalize abortion.

The problem of which abortions are very often the expression is a problem of family life. We should rather be looking at the causes of family trouble.

In fact, it is my understanding that abortion from a moral standpoint may be murder of a person, as some people are pointing out in this debate, but that from a legal standpoint the comparison with murder is mistaken. The reason is that the foetus is inside another person. Even if the foetus be regarded as a person still the fact is unchanged that it is inside another person. We cannot separate them to protect one or both separately.

• (1550)

I want to remind the House of part of the opinion given by Chief Justice Brian Dickson of the Supreme Court of Canada who said:

> Forcing a woman, by threat of criminal sanction, to carry a foetus to term unless she meets certain criteria unrelated to her own priorities and aspirations, is a profound interference with a woman's body and thus a violation of security of the person.

In the same court Madam Justice Bertha Wilson said:

> Liberty in a free and democratic society does not require the state to approve the personal decisions made by its citizens; it does, however, require the state to respect them.

I believe along with her that this is a personal decision in which there is indeed a moral obligation. There may be several moral obligations. They may even seem to be in conflict with each other. The state does not have a duty to agree with this decision or that decision in that case but it does have a duty to respect the decision.

She goes on to state:

> It is a decision that deeply reflects the way the woman thinks about herself and her relationship to others and to society at large. It is not just a medical decision; it is a profound social and ethical one as well. Her response to it will be the response of the whole person.

In other words, it is not a private, individual or isolated act. It is the act of a person who is a member of society and who normally recognizes that membership. It seems to me that there is a tendency among some of the remarks I have heard in this debate to regard women in a traditional way as somehow weaker. Not only weaker in body, but weaker in moral fibre. I do not know any good reason for holding that view. We do not assume that about men in that case, although there could be an argument for saying that generally women exercise more responsibility about childbirth than men do. In a country where most of the police are men, most of the lawyers are men, most of the judges are men, most of the legislators are men, it is a little disturbing to hear again and again the suggestion that a woman is not fit to make this moral decision.

The fact is that there are countries that have taken the line that some people here would like them to take, countries such as Brazil, Ireland, Italy and Romania. They all have very severe laws against abortion. They all have a much higher rate of abortion than Canada does.

It seems foolish to repeat their experience by insisting on an extreme law, an extreme threat of punishment in the matter of abortion. In Brazil, there are 4 million abortions annually where there are 3 million live births. That is a dreadful situation, but it is not stopped by criminal threats. In Romania, I read in *The Toronto Star*, the birthrate there has dropped from 24 births per thousand women in the late 1940s to 14 per thousand in our time. This is in spite of a very severe prohibition and threat of punishment for abortion. In fact abortion deaths there have soared from about 25 per million women in the year before the present government to about 100 per million—four times the amount in the 1980s.

There seems no good reason among those who have spoken for recriminalizing abortion. In fact, it is not even clear that there is any reason to change the status since the Morgentaler decision.

Planned Parenthood has pointed out that abortions have not increased since the Supreme Court of Canada ruling in January, 1988. That is in its report from which I have just quoted.

The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada does not feel that the situation is out of hand because we lack specific criminal prohibition of abortion. The society points this out in its official statement entitled, the "SOGC Abortion Position",

> To circumvent the need for abortion should always be the ultimate goal. To this end, there is great value and urgency for provincial Ministers of Health, Education and Social and Community Services to integrate programs devoted to sex education with family planning clinics and abortion services. Only in this way can the adolescent population that contributes so heavily to the abortion statistics be reached effectively.

They also point out that the decision to perform an abortion should be considered a medical one and as such the issue of therapeutic abortions should be removed from Canadian criminal law.

This is the opinion of the specialists in this subject. They go on to state:

> Nevertheless, abortion services should be uniformly available to women across Canada.

Of course this law does absolutely nothing to bring that about.

The Canadian Medical Association has also issued its statement in the matter in which, in part, it states:

> The decision to perform an induced abortion is a medical one made confidentially—

That is an important point, Madam Speaker.

> —between the patient and her physician within the confines of existing Canadian law. The decision is made after conscientious examination of all other options.

The proposed bill is rather insulting to all these medical doctors by suggesting that they are not now exercising their professional responsibility in the matter.

> Induced abortion requires medical and surgical expertise and is a medical act. It should be performed only in a facility that meets approved medical standards, not necessarily a hospital.

The argument some people have used is that there are a growing number of abortions. Certainly I, for one, am not happy with the number of abortions, or even with any abortions. My wife and I, as we have had opportunity, have occasionally been able to encourage and help a person to choose a course of action other than abortion, but it was her choice.

The statistics are interesting. In 1970 there were 11,200 abortions in Canada. In 1982, there were 66,319, a large increase. But in 1987, there were 63,662, almost 3,000 less abortions five years later. There has not been an explosion of abortions.

If you look at how many abortions are performed per thousand women, again the number rose 2.5 per thousand women in 1970. In 1982 it was 11.1 per thousand women; and then it dropped in 1987 to 10.2 per thousand women.

It is interesting if you look at the ratio of abortions per hundred to live births to see how many abortions there were. It went from three in 1970 to 17.8 in 1982, again a large increase. It then dropped a small amount to 17.2 in 1987. Abortions peaked in 1982 and have been declining since then. That is true of the number of abortions per woman and the number of abortions per live births, although they declined less.

• (1600)

I think the explanation is in the live birth rate, not in the abortion rate. In 1970 there were 371,988 live births. In 1982, 12 years later with a larger population, there were 372,882, only 900 more, a very tiny increase of live births. In 1987, there were 372,080; in other words, a drop of 800 live births between 1982 and 1987, a time when there was a drop of 3,000 in the number of abortions.

The problem is not with abortions. When the population has gone up by 20 per cent, obviously the number of women has increased. The proportion of abortions to women has gone down slightly. The proportion of abortions to live births has gone down slightly more. The problem is not with abortions but with the country's fertility rate; that is to say from the point of view of those who worry about the number of live births. I do not worry about it personally. Alice and I have seven children and 13 grandchildren and we are hoping for more grandchildren.

Those who talk about the rate of abortions imply that somehow or other it is a cause in itself of all these troubles. That is simply not true. It is much more a result of the breakdown of family life: the rate of divorce, the rate of separation and the large number of single parents, mostly women. These are very much concerns of the last 20 and 30 years. To pin them all down to abortion would be to stand the matter on its head. Other speakers have pointed out, including the last speaker last night, Mrs. Bertrand, that we should be looking at the sources of family trouble. I find those sources largely in a market-driven economy. Children are treated as unproductive or at least unprofitable. In other words, we seem to be sliding back to the days when governments in England in the last century had to legislate that it was not allowable to cause children under 10 years of age to work in the mines. The issue of child labour, or the proposal of child labour, has only been advocated by a few groups like the Canadian Manufacturers' Association. It is not a serious threat yet.

What is a serious threat is the refusal of those who build our cities and housing to provide room physically for children. In Toronto, between 1951 and 1971 there was a net loss of about 20,000 units that had two bedrooms. There are other characteristics of family units but that is a basic one. Just recently, between 1976 and 1985, in the new building with demolition subtracted—in other words, the net increase of residential units—the units that were suitable for families in 1976 were 32.4 per cent of the whole. They declined from there so that the

average now is that family units are only 17.5 per cent of the total units of housing being built in the city of Toronto.

Of course, the builders argued that it was the market which wants that. In fact, I have many people coming to me now, as they came when I was an alderman in the centre of the city, complaining about not being able to find a place for children. In the 1970s it was landlords who explicitly and openly forbade children in their apartments which is now, fortunately, illegal.

In the city of Toronto in 1971, there were 28.6 children for every 100 adults and in 1986 there were only 20.5. In other words, there has been a drop from 28.6 to 20.5 in 15 years in the percentage of children to adults.

In Toronto, children are hungry. According to the Daily Bread Food Bank survey, an estimated 72,000 children 17 years of age and under in metro have found it necessary to use a food program on an average of three times in the past year. Of families using food assistance, I quote: "Sixty-five per cent are single-parent families; 15 per cent of all metro families are single-parent families, but 65 per cent use the food banks". Again I quote: "Children nine years of age or younger are 11.3 per cent of the population of metro but 28.3 per cent of the food bank population". In other words, children of nine years of age have an almost three times greater chance of being forced to go to the food banks.

Those figures from the Daily Bread Food Bank relate to the people who have come to my office because they cannot find a place to live where they can pay rent and still have money for food for themselves and their children. This is a very serious problem in family life in our cities. No wonder there are strains, wife beatings, child beatings, break-up of families when it is impossible to find a place to live without moving right out of the city, when it is impossible to find a place to work since Toronto has a high level of unemployment, even if you do not count the 10,000 or 20,000 people who are homeless because nobody can survey them to find out whether they were looking for work last week.

It goes further than that. There are many ways in which the economy of this country, which finds children unprofitable and therefore considers them really unproductive, simply prices children not only out of the city but out of a decent chance to live. It is very often the mothers of those children who decide that they will make a dreadful decision to avoid having more children that they cannot feed.

My points are that the bill is mistaken. It will not work. My point is that it is ethically wrong to confuse a moral decision and a moral responsibility with a legal responsibility. My point is there is no occasion for recriminalizing abortion because the medical profession has it properly in hand. There is no crisis of increased abortion. There is a crisis of family life. Therefore, this bill should be scrapped and the government should get to work with some of its promises to provide for day care and the other things that a family needs.

Mr. Pagtakhan: Madam Speaker, I enjoyed the debate of the hon. member from Spadina. I would like at the outset to indicate that contrary to his suggestion that because abortion is a moral issue, therefore there ought to be no law on it, I would like to remind the hon. member that in the history of legal construction, the foundation of a good law in fact is morality.

• (1610)

My questions for the hon. member are: first, would he agree that where there are no genuine reasons to do an abortion he would respect the decision of the physician, rather than just asking whether there be no medical reasons not to have an abortion, as his leader said yesterday? There is a great deal of difference between the two positions.

It is the tradition of medical practice, as a medical doctor by background, that before a physician does a medical procedure or prescribes therapy, there ought to exist a rationale for treatment. It is not enough only to say that there does not exist a contraindication for such a treatment. That is only one of the factors when a physician prescribes a therapy.

My second question for the hon. member is: would he agree that when a medical doctor says that there exists no indication for abortion he would respect not only the decision of that medical doctor but also to require that the decision ought to be based only on the basis that there is a threat to the life of the pregnant mother.

Mr. Heap: Madam Speaker, in reply to the hon. member's first point, I would say that while law should be based on moral considerations, not by any means every moral consideration ought to be made the subject of a law. There are many moral considerations which must be left to individuals singly or in groups to work out among themselves. This is one of them.

Second, the position that I have taken, and for that matter my leader has taken, and that the Medical Association and the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists has taken is not the position that the hon. member has suggested. They are not saying they will do an abortion only when they find medical grounds. What they have said is abortion should not be regulated in the Criminal Code. They would want to make sure that the abortion was done under appropriate conditions. They have not defined the conditions in the statements that I have referred to because we have recognized in our law, including the criminal law, that the doctor has the responsibility for judging those conditions. That is not to say that they will judge them only on medical grounds.

Poverty may not be a medical matter but it has medical consequences. For example, it has been found in Montreal that children born of mothers who have been malnourished are almost certainly doomed to an unhealthy life. That is the kind of thing that a doctor may recognize even though it is not necessarily the subject of a medical decision.

The point I am making is the reasons for abortion. The reasons why in fact women have chosen abortion and will continue to choose abortion regardless of what the hon. member may wish, regardless of what I may wish, are social and economic. They have to do with the fact that a great many mothers now must work; with the fact that a great many fathers now do not want to support their children or do it badly. Those are the sorts of facts that move many women to seek an abortion. They are not a matter for a medical judgment but they are a matter for medical care by a qualified practitioner. That is the point that the Medical Association has made.

Mr. Crosby: Madam Speaker, just briefly, I would like to make some comments on the whole subject of criminalization in relation to abortion because I have heard the pleas of the member for Trinity—Spadina and his complaint that he does not want to see abortion criminalized. That notion is unwarranted, given the state of law in Canada.

The Parliament of Canada has only one basis for legislating with respect to abortion and that is the criminal law power. There is no other way the Parliament of Canada can legislate with respect to abortion unless it exercises its power to enact criminal law. It is only in that academic sense that Parliament is criminalizing abortion.

The whole fact of the matter is that if there is to be a prohibition, there must be a sanction, there must be a penalty and that can be called criminal law. Whether the province enacts legislation dealing with abortion, as has happened in my province of Nova Scotia restricting the place at which abortions can be performed, or whether the Parliament of Canada enacts a prohibition, it must be enforced by a penalty and that is what we call criminal law.

The question is not really criminalizing abortion, the question is: are we going to legislate with respect to abortion? I hope the member will understand that because his or her choice, as a member of Parliament, is to vote against the law, whether they characterize it as criminal or some other kind of a law.

The real question is, and I do not want to see the member avoid it: should Parliament legislate with respect to abortion? That is the issue. Do not be confused by terms like criminalize and so on. Make your decision on that question: should Parliament legislate with respect to abortion? I think that Parliament should legislate with respect to abortion. If the member does not agree with that, he simply votes against it. Do not bring in questions like criminalize or non-criminalize to confuse the issue.

Mr. Heap: Madam Speaker, I think Parliament should indeed legislate with respect to abortion. I do not share the hon. member's one-eyed vision where he thinks the only thing Parliament can do is to prohibit. Of course, if the member wants to prohibit abortion or if the member wants to prohibit wearing eye glasses or having white hair or anything like that, the only way he can do it is by getting Parliament to put it into the Criminal Code.

I do not want to prohibit abortion. I would like to bring abortions to an end or to a much smaller number. I have spoken before and today on how that should be done. Prohibition is what I said did not work in Ireland, Italy,

Brazil, Romania and probably failed to work in many other countries. It is a stupid thing to try here.

There is legislation that Parliament ought to consider for abortion. It ought to amend the National Health Act to ensure that the basic principle of the National Health Act is upheld across this country and that abortion services are equally available to women in all parts of Canada. That would be parliamentary legislation which would improve the health of all concerned. It would be a step to accompany, for example, legislation, to provide day care services for the children of working mothers which would do more than anything else I can think of to reduce the number of abortions.

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this debate on Bill C–43, legislation that we have introduced to deal with abortion.

Some of my colleagues will know that I have spoken in this House on three previous occasions on the issue of abortion: twice with respect to private members' bills and once last year when we had the debate to determine if there might be a sense of the House about how we might proceed with the issue.

I think my personal views which I have expressed on this issue are well known to members of the House.I believe that women should have the broadest possible range of freedom to make decisions about themselves, their bodies and their futures. Like many of my colleagues, particularly some of my female colleagues who have spoken on this legislation in the past week, I have come to this debate with some concerns, a lot of thought and some heartache but finally in my own mind with a recognition that what we have brought forward is fair and does meet basic criteria which I believe are important for women and is also workable.

I also understand how so many other of my colleagues, who have come to view this issue from a different kind of perspective, have worked hard and how caucus members have worked together to see if there is a way that we can jointly come forward with what the role of the state and the government should be in providing a regime with respect to abortion. Upon reflection, I will be supporting the bill because I think it is fair; I think it is workable.

• (1620)

I would like the opportunity today to go back and look at how I feel and where I have come from on this debate, talk a bit about the legislation and talk a bit in more general terms about the issue of abortion itself. Certainly, in terms of my own thinking this goes back many, many years recognizing that as a woman in modern–day society we have had to fight pretty long and hard to gain legal equality, to gain economic and social equality in many areas.

I suppose that many of us come from the strong feeling that we do not want to see anything or any law which would in any way restrict that freedom that we fought so hard for. If we look at this issue purely from a feminist point of view, we have difficulty accepting any kinds of restrictions in law that might restrict our ability to make a choice as to whether or not we would want to have an abortion or proceed with a pregnancy.

I also think we have to recognize that no rights are absolute in society and that there always has to be a balance. No one of us can do anything that we want at any time, particularly if it is going to interfere with somebody else. The role of the state is to regulate between often conflicting rights, sometimes the rights of the individual versus the rights of a group or between individuals. That is one of our responsibilities as legislators, to try to achieve that balance while minimizing the interference of the state in the lives of Canadian men and women.

When we think of what we are dealing with here, are there reasons why the state should play a role? Why should I, as a woman, accept that someone else can interfere with my decision? I think there are reasons. When we are dealing with the issue of abortion, we are dealing with something that is different, that does reflect on some very important values that we hold as a society. I guess it does come back to the issue of life or the potential of life. I am not the expert. I am not the one who can say when life begins, and I am not even pretending to be able to do that. However, there is within this issue a recognition of that concern and that value.

As a Canadian society we treasure life. It is fundamental to everything we do in this Parliament, everything we try to do as governments to protect life and to prevent people from interfering with other persons' lives. We pass laws that deal with murder, with assault and with interfering with property rights. We also try in every way

possible to enhance the quality of people's lives through the economic and social policies that we put forward because we believe that that is fundamentally our responsibility.

Sometimes when we compare our society with other societies around the world we can see some differences. Whether those differences are rooted in philosophical or religious beliefs, I do not think it matters. But, I think it does matter that in Canadian society we do treasure life. If someone is killed in an automobile accident, that is considered a tragedy and we use the force of the law to sanction those who might have caused that. In some other parts of the world that is not necessarily the case. I think that is a value we have to hold very dear.

When we come back to looking at the question of abortion, I think we do have to consider that balance. This is perhaps an area in which the state does have a legitimate role, a role which the Supreme Court of Canada in dealing with the Morgentaler case recognized that there needed to be a balance between the security of the woman and the potential interest of the state in the foetus. I can accept that balance and therefore I can accept at this time in an imperfect society that we have a right and indeed a responsibility to provide a regime, a set of rules, which tell Canadians on what grounds there is a legal entitlement to abortion and provides a national standard.

I have also had the feeling from many women and men that I have talked to across the country who support the right of women to choose and believe that abortion should be a matter of discussion between a woman and a physician that they want to feel that there are some bounds, that there is some sense as a society that we have a regime in which abortion is regulated. I have come after some considerable thought to accept at this point that we can have a law and if we have a law, what criteria in my mind would be most appropriate?

In coming back to my fundamental belief in the rights of women, I would say first of all it should be a law which minimizes the interference with the right of women to make choices about themselves, about their bodies and about their future. It should be the least intrusive, it should be workable and not create impediments in terms of delays as we had under the former law which created impediments that were inappropriate. It should also in my mind not restrict where, when or how abortions can be performed.

Abortion, I think everyone would agree, requires medical intervention. We do not want women going back to the past when they tried to induce their own abortions. That is not the right thing. It is not condoned in our society. It is not right for women or for their health. We recognize that it requires the intervention of a qualified medical practitioner and in this legislation we have provided for that, which is determined on the basis of provincial legislation which licenses persons as qualified medical practitioners. Therefore, if it does require a medical procedure, does require the intervention of a medical practitioner, I think it would be irresponsible not to recognize, as my colleague across the floor has indicated, a medical practitioner has to play some role. They have to make a professional judgment about the implications of this medical procedure for the woman and that there has been some considered thought in this decision.

In the legislation we have provided for the criteria to be that if the pregnancy would likely hinder the woman's health, with health being defined in a broad context including physical, mental and psychological, it then provides a joint responsibility. A woman herself has to consider, as I believe she should, why she might wish to proceed with an abortion. Also she would have the professional advice of a medical practitioner who might be able to advise her, first of all, given her particular circumstances what the medical implications might be for her health if she proceeded or not. Obviously there are implications both ways when you are dealing with an issue of this nature.

When we look in terms of society at who can share in making this kind of decision, I think it is appropriate that it is a medical practitioner. That does not, in my mind, take away in an unacceptable manner the right of women to make choices but it is a choice in consultation with a medical practitioner.

• (1630)

The legislation does not restrict where abortions may take place. That would be up to provincial governments. On the other hand, as my colleague from Vancouver Centre pointed out last night—and I agree with her because it does confirm abortion as a medical procedure—it gives greater weight to the understanding that as a medical procedure it should be covered by provincial health care plans. If there were not that kind of consideration it might be easier for provinces to say: "It is not a

medical procedure. It does not relate to health. Therefore we do not have a responsibility under our health care plan to provide for it". I think it does help in that respect as well.

There were other approaches that we had discussed. In fact, when we had the debate last year, I put forward an amendment to the motion that was being considered which would have introduced a gestational approach and different degrees of intervention and/or sanctions depending upon the stage of pregnancy.

After having thought about this and talked it over with people of a wide variety of opinions and opposing opinions, I am comfortable with the concept that we should not proceed on that basis. I know some of my colleagues would say that that in itself would imply differential values at different stages of pregnancy. I can find that that is distasteful. It is not necessarily sound philosophically or from any particular point of view.

Also the gestational approach implied incorrectly that women would wait until later stages of pregnancy. We all know that that is not correct. Over 99 per cent of abortions are carried out during the earlier stages and, if a woman is going to make the choice, except under the most unusual circumstances that choice will be made as early as possible. With the legislative base we are proposing, I believe that we will ensure and enhance that abortions can be carried out as quickly as possible because the procedures involved are not complicated. It requires the woman to seek the opinion of her doctor and then be able to proceed.

The other issue which many colleagues have talked about in this House and which friends of mine have discussed is why the Criminal Code, I guess because the Criminal Code connotes in our minds something that is wrong. I do not think that is a fair reflection.

The member for Halifax West who just spoke a few moments ago had a more appropriate perception of why it is necessary to use the Criminal Code. If we are to provide a regulatory regime, a national standard with respect to legal entitlement for abortion, there has to be a mechanism. There has to be a power of government to proceed, and that really is the only one that we have at the federal level.

It does not imply in any way that abortions are wrong. All it is saying is that these are the conditions under which women are legally entitled to have an abortion and that under some situations, either if it is not carried out by a medical practitioner or the criteria are not met, it would be considered inappropriate and the sanction of the law would come forward.

It is wrong to say that this legislation criminalizes abortion or criminalizes women who seek abortions. That is not the intent; that is not the purpose of the law. The purpose of the law is to provide an appropriate, fair regime under which abortions in Canada can proceed.

I would like to take a few minutes to talk about the issue of abortion. No one likes it. No one wishes it upon women. In fact, our deepest desire from all parts of the House would be to try to find ways to minimize the reasons for abortion, the reasons why women seek it as an option. We can never hope to minimize that to zero. I certainly have friends who, despite their best efforts with respect to birth control which has failed, find themselves in a situation where either for health reasons or because they do not want to they are unable to proceed with the pregnancy.

There is a lot we can do. As you look at the figures you recognize it is still young women who are seeking abortions. I read in the paper the other day that in Ontario in 1987, 47 per cent of young women between the ages of 15 and 19 sought abortions. In the Ottawa region itself it was higher. It was 62 per cent of young women between the ages of 15 and 19. That is a very sad reflection. There is something wrong there.

About 15 years ago I was living in Sudbury. I wrote and produced a documentary for the local television station on abortion. I called it *To Have or Have Not.* Those were early days and I believe in Sudbury it was not possible to obtain a legal abortion because of restrictions in the hospital. It was considered quite something to actually have a television show that talked about these issues.

During the course of researching and producing that documentary I met with people from all different sectors—women who had sought abortions and members of the local women's centre which was the only referral agency to assist women in obtaining abortions. They had to go either to other parts of Ontario or to the United States at that point in time.

I talked to women who had decided not to proceed with abortions but to put the baby up for adoption, and I also talked to representatives of agencies involved in that area. I talked to young women who had proceeded with the pregnancy, kept the child and as young unmarried mothers were still trying to cope with completing their schooling or finding a way to survive the problems and how they felt about it. It was a very moving experience to go through that process.

What saddened and angered me was that it seemed that all those women were in losing situations. None of those were really the answer. The answer lay in more effective education and action with respect to the prevention of unwanted pregnancies among that age group, and in a willingness to be more open, to talk about women's reproductive capabilities and what is involved in sexual relations between young people, and to try to encourage both young men and women to accept a greater degree of personal responsibility for their behaviour and to truly seek more viable options for women. Certainly at that time—and I do not think it has improved significantly since—the option of the young woman trying to keep a child creates barriers for her which are almost insurmountable in our society.

I was pleased when the Minister of National Health and Welfare spoke on this issue several days ago and announced a number of new initiatives dealing with all those areas—assisting young people in their own reproduction and in education and improving access to adoption. All those are important. It is not something that we at the federal level can do ourselves. It is something that has to be done in concert with other levels of government, in the community, and with families. There must be a willingness to be more open.

I know the experience that I have had. I am sure other members have had it. I also consider it to be a sad commentary. A co-worker of mine some years ago, a good friend, was totally opposed to abortion. We had many discussions about this. He was absolutely adamant in his views.

I remember some time later that he found out that his 18-year old daughter had gone to the United States one weekend and had an abortion. She felt that she could not go to her father, knowing his views, that it would not be accepted and that she had to go off on her own to do this. He was stricken. I was saddened.

Despite one's personal views about these kinds of issues, surely we have to encourage a more open dialogue among men and women and between parents and children so that we can deal with these issues more effectively and help our young people in ways in which I think they want to be helped. They want that kind of understanding. They need that knowledge, and they need that acceptance.

• (1640)

My plea to my colleagues in the House of Commons today is: yes, support the bill. We need to get on with this and get it behind us. Also, let us work together to ensure that Canadian women truly have options and that we indeed have a greater esteem and respect for Canadian children.

Mr. Flis: I enjoyed listening to the hon. member. She has given the topic a great deal of thought, time and research, as has almost every speaker who has risen in this House. It takes a topic like this to bring out the true parliamentarian in all of us. I congratulate the speaker for her words.

I was pleased she highlighted that as a Canadian society we treasure life, we protect life. She is right on there. I think that is what makes the Canadian society a little unique, maybe more unique than many other countries. It gives us that identity because we do have this respect for life, this respect for others.

This is why I am having difficulty in trying to analyse why she would support the bill. The hon. member from Trinity—Spadina gave us statistics that for 1987, 63,662 abortions were performed. He was impressed that this was 3,000 less than the year before, but it is still snuffing out the lives of over 63,000 children. This bill will not reduce that. If this bill goes through we will continue to have more than 60,000 to 70,000 lives snuffed out, which goes against Canadian society that treasures life. The minister also said that when someone gets killed in an auto accident we have laws so that one person cannot take the life of another person.

I am one of those who believes that life does begin at conception. I am wondering if the hon. member could clarify how she came to that conclusion, knowing that this bill will snuff out over 60,000 lives a year, and how she can still support the bill.

Just for interest, she also mentioned the right of women to make choices. I called one of the pages and asked for the Oxford Dictionary. I looked up the definition of choices and it said: "variety to choose from". I think that is the beauty of our society too that men and

women who are of an age where they want to have sexual encounters have this variety to choose from. If they make the right choice, there will not be life and there will not be a need for abortion.

With her experience in the television program where she was doing the interviewing, I am wondering if she could share with this House how we can teach our young people—and she specifically mentioned the ages 15 to 19—to make the right choices but to make the choices before the pregnancy, before conception, again not requiring so many abortions.

Mrs. Collins: The member has put a number of questions. I am not sure I will have an opportunity to address them all in the question and comment period today.

It comes back to the balance that I see. Yes, we treasure life, but we also treasure the rights of women to make decisions about that. In my mind the woman should be able to make that choice. I hope she makes an informed choice if she is in the situation of having to make it and understands the implication of that choice. She should have the opportunity, as broad an opportunity as possible within the regime that we are putting forward, to make those choices. That just comes from my own view of the world and the way it should be. I would not place the responsibility or the onus on this law or this bill for causing or not causing abortions in itself. There are a variety of reasons that women seek abortions. In my mind at least it is not fair to say that this bill will result in increased abortions. I hope indeed that if we progress as a society we will see fewer abortions.

What do I say to young people? I have three teenagers myself. My daughter and I talk about this quite a lot, actually. She has some very strong views and is quite abhorred by some of the laws she is familiar with in the States where in some cases a young woman would have no access to abortion or a court, a judge has to make that decision. She thinks that is totally wrong and that it should be a decision between a woman and her doctor.

I have tried to instil a sense of responsibility and that there are consequences to actions. You cannot tell young people not to engage in sexual activity. They are going to have to make up their own minds about that. It has changed from my day and young people perhaps act quite differently now, but I think they have to be prepared for the consequences and therefore take measures, preventive measures. The onus should not only be on the woman. That is one of the things that has always annoyed me in the past, that society has said it is the woman who should take the preventive measures. I think men, young men particularly in this case, have to accept that responsibility as well.

As I said before in my comments this takes education. It takes openness and willingness to talk about it. It is not the approach where you pretend it does not happen. It does happen. It is there. The facts tell us that young people engage in sexual activity. We may have our own views about that, but all we can do is help them through that process and try to assist them in understanding what their responsibilities to themselves and to their own future are as well.

A young girl of 14 or 15 just does not usually have the capacity to look after a young child. Therefore, it is not fair that she should engage in activity that could result in a child being born, without taking appropriate measures. There should be a lot more willingness to be open on these issues.

Ms. Hunter: It should be clear to the minister how disappointed I personally am, and I imagine many of her constituents are, with this Byzantine rationalization to support this bill.

There are a number of points I want to make. I listened with care to her remarks, and I think those remarks were based on the assumption that the great Canadian compromise will bring some resolution to this very painful debate that we are now engaged in. I would like to ask her to respond to that because I think she and I both know that this is not going to be resolved. This is going to be an ongoing, continuing debate as our society develops.

The other comment I would like to make is that she said: "some bounds are necessary". I would like her to answer whether or not she does not believe that women really are capable of imposing their own bounds on that kind of decision. I think that does speak to the kind of respect the minister has for women and their capacity for making painful decisions.

I also would like her to try to get me to understand why she characterizes this bill as fair and workable and why there should be a national standard, because it does not improve any ability for access in this bill.

Finally, I would like her to clarify also her allusion to the Supreme Court decision regarding the foetus in light of the Daigle decision last week which I think made quite clear that the foetus really has no rights unless the child is born alive.

• (1650)

Mrs. Collins: Madam Speaker, my understanding of the decision last week by the Supreme Court is that it referred specifically to the Quebec charter, that they have not yet dealt with the other cases before them, so I do not know what their ruling will be.

With respect to access, this bill does not in itself provide or ensure access. We know the difficulties in certain parts of the country. I also recognize that that is a provincial responsibility. Our responsibility at the federal level is providing the legal framework, and a legal framework which I believe will be more conducive because it will be a national standard. Ultimately, if a province is not providing the service and it is taken to court, it would provide greater justification to be able to be successful in such a case.

I believe compromise is essential in a democracy. I know we all have very strong views about different issues and that this is the place we express and debate those views. We will never really be able to get on with things unless we are prepared to compromise.

I have talked to people from newly developing democracies, to Mrs. Aquino who was here recently, about the difficulties they are having in the new Philippine Parliament, as well as to others in other Parliaments.

One of the difficulties is that people have not been used to this aspect, that you have to be prepared to compromise. If you just hold stringently to two opposing grounds you will never get anywhere. We do that within our caucus and I am sure within the caucus of the hon. member. This is the only way you can move forward. You have to come to a compromise so that you can move ahead with a position which you believe is probably in the best interests of the whole, although it might not be what you prefer personally.

In this case, yes, it is a compromise. We have all admitted that. We have all had to put some water in our wine, as the Prime Minister said, but I believe in the interests of not resolving the issue forever. I know it will not be. I know it will continue to be debated. However, for the majority of Canadians—and this is certainly the feedback that I have had in my riding—this is an appropriate compromise in balancing the different points of view and different interests involved in this issue. Perhaps it is a typical but an appropriate Canadian compromise.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*Translation*]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the Hon. Member for York Centre (Mr. Kaplan)—The Budget—Request for budget withdrawal/Request for Minister's resignation; the Hon. Member for Nunatsiaq (Mr. Anawak)—Canada Post; the Hon. Member for Victoria (Mr. Brewin)—Transportation of dangerous goods/Emergency preparedness.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Lewis that Bill C–43, an act respecting abortion, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I should also advise the House that we have now completed the first eight hours of debate. From now on the members' interventions will be of a 10–minute duration.

Mr. Pagtakhan: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. At the beginning of the debate this afternoon we allowed members of the New Democratic Party and on the government side a 20–minute speech, each subject to

a 10-minute question and comment period. Since you, Madam Speaker, decided not to see the clock beyond the 61 minutes, I wonder if we could request that the next speaker proceed with a 20-minute presentation as well in light of the complexity of the issue.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The Chair did allow the last exchange to go about two minutes more than the 10-minute period should have gone. The debate has gone for eight hours now and, unless the House gives unanimous consent otherwise, we should proceed with 10-minute speeches. Those are the rules.

Mr. Pagtakhan: I regret the determination, indeed. Could there be unanimous consent for my suggestion?

Mr. Nicholson: I am sympathetic to what my hon. friend has to say. My only concern is that I know many members of Parliament have expressed an interest and that many of them are planning to speak tonight. If they do not speak tonight, they will not be able to speak at all for one reason or another. I would suggest, as much as I would like to accommodate my friend from across the aisle, that we now move to 10-minute speeches.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I want to thank the parliamentary secretary for his intervention.

I think he should realize that the reason there were two speakers who had a period of 20 minutes to express themselves, followed by a 10-minute question and answer period, was simply that we were following our rules. There was not any question of making preferences between the different parties. I was in the chair yesterday and we followed the same rotation all day.

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Madam Speaker, it is my honour today and in fact my duty, as it is the duty of every member of this House, to address these very important issues. We have now come to a point where decisions should be made. The decisions that are before us are: When do we terminate a pregnancy, what rights do individuals have in our society, and what are the rights of the unborn child from the moment of conception?

This government has brought in legislation, Bill C-43, which it hopes will address these problems. I suggest that the legislation does not address the problems. The legislation in no way goes anywhere near correcting the problems before the House. Therefore, the legislation is fundamentally flawed. It should be turned down and sent back to this government for reconsideration and redrafting. Then a new piece of legislation could come before this House. It is the duty of the House to bring forth acceptable legislation, and this legislation is certainly not acceptable in its present form.

Let me deal first with some of the arguments that we have heard and have been hearing since the introduction of Bill C-43 from both sides. We hear that at least we now have some legislation, inadequate as it is, but it is better to have this legislation than no legislation at all, inasmuch as no legislation at all allows abortion on demand.

The other thing we hear is: let's get this bill into committee, then at committee stage we can make some amendments and bring it back before this House with the amendments we want.

We also hear that we should draft the amendments, approve them, incorporate them into the legislation, bring the bill before this House, pass it, but before it receives Royal Assent, send it to the Supreme Court of Canada on a reference to test its authenticity, to see if it would pass Section 7 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

I say that these arguments do not hold water. They are not acceptable. It is the duty of the governing party to bring forth legislation, and it is the duty of the opposition to challenge, correct and refine legislation before the House. In this instance it is the duty, then, of each of us in our own conscience to reject or accept the proposed law. It is still the fundamental duty of this government to legislate, but what it has done in this instance is bring forth a very neutral proposal. The legislation before us lacks in total substance. In fact it has very little substance at all.

When the Minister of Justice proposed this legislation, he said in this House on November 7 that the new abortion law had as its overriding objective the balancing of interests—the rights and interests of women, society's interest, and the protection of the foetus. This legislation does not realize these objectives. It does not satisfy those who oppose the termination of pregnancy, and it certainly does not satisfy those who prefer choice as to whether that pregnancy should be terminated.

• (1700)

The law that was struck down on January 28, 1988, in the Morgentaler case, and then the law that was stated by the Supreme Court on November 16, 1989, said that no one has the right to seek an injunction depriving a woman of her right to terminate the pregnancy.

The proposed legislation that we have before us is contrary to this decision. It invites any third party to press criminal charges against a woman or a doctor if there is evidence of an unlawful early termination of pregnancy.

Bill C–43 may be in violation of the Charter of Rights since it in effect removes all choice from the woman, leaving the decision entirely in the hands of a physician. We as legislators, I suggest, cannot abrogate our rights to the courts or to the medical profession. It is the duty of the courts to interpret legislation; it is a duty of the medical profession to heal; and it is the duty of this House to form legislation.

The government has said in this legislation that the decision for the early termination of pregnancies should be left entirely in the hands of the physician. We hear of the Morgentaler decision; we hear of the Morgentaler clinics. We hear the name of Morgentaler but we never hear of the preface. It is not Mr. Morgentaler or Master Morgentaler, it is Dr. Morgentaler. I ask, is this the type of person who will be making decisions on whether or not pregnancies should be terminated?

The bill is pro choice for doctors but has no choice for women. I think it removes all discretionary rights from the woman in her visits to the doctor. The Chief Justice said on January 28, when he struck down the present law, that to carry a foetus to term, unless she meets certain criteria related to her own priorities and aspirations, is profound interference with the woman's body, and this is a violation of the person. I suggest that the proposed legislation before this House is open to challenge on the same grounds as the former law.

Let me discuss one of the fundamental issues that this legislation lacks and that is the rights of the unborn child. This legislation certainly does not address this issue. Joseph Borowski failed to assert fetal rights because there was no longer an abortion law upon which to base a challenge. The proposed legislation does not address the rights of the unborn.

As we discuss the rights of the unborn, just for a few moments let us remove any thoughts of religion from the equation, because this is the area where we run into some difficulty from a religious aspect or from our own beliefs. The greatest thing left to us, with the removal of God or religion from the argument, is life itself.

Even the most radical secular person, the most hedonistic of individuals, must struggle at some time with the fundamental question of when life begins, when life ends, under what circumstances life can be ended, when life must be protected, and what authority in our society protects life? Is it our legal authorities, medical authorities or our church authorities who protect life in our society, or is it a combination of these elements?

In our society, what protection do we extend to the lives of the helpless, the dying, the aged, and the unborn? We must look at all of these phases of life.

Even if some scientists or theologians state that in the early stages of pregnancy we cannot discern human life, the fact remains that the potential of human life is indisputably there. I believe there should be some respect and some caution if the potential is there. At the very least, the potential for life exists and that should unequivocally be respected.

As I was putting together some thoughts about this submission I received in the mail this morning a letter from a Mr. and Mrs. Kowalski. They said something that I want to include in my remarks:

> Visit your aged mother or grandmother and kiss them tenderly; give your spouse, or your friend a warm hug; take a child's hand, or let an infant grasp your finger and look in their eyes, all the time remembering that the only difference between the very oldest and the very youngest is only "time". Their humanity has not changed!

I suggest that the legislation before us today is about life but it fails and fails badly in dealing with life. Let me close by saying that I am glad that I had the opportunity to address this issue. It is so important that I am able to close on the aspect of when life begins and I thank you for the opportunity of being able to address this issue.

Mr. Gus Mitges (Bruce—Grey): Madam Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to take part in this debate on Bill C–43, an act respecting abortion.

As we have seen, the issue of abortion has touched an emotional chord in practically every Canadian across our country. This is one of the most important debates facing our country. Those of us who are pro-life will be fighting for the rights of all unborn children so they will have the opportunity to grow and to reach maturation as God intended. Those who are not pro-life would like to have unrestricted abortion so as to add to the carnage of some 65,000 unborn children who are being killed every year in Canada by abortion, something which a so-called enlightened Canada should never condone or tolerate.

On January 28, 1988, the Supreme Court of Canada struck down Canada's abortion law. Unlike the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in 1973, the Supreme Court of Canada did not rule in the Morgantaler case that women have constitutional rights to abortion.

Nothing in the court's decision prevents Parliament from passing a law banning abortion altogether, a decision that would be consistent with the Charter of Rights. The court ruled that the objective of protecting unborn children is pressing and substantial and that Parliament has the right to pass laws protecting the unborn. Parliament has not only the right but the urgent duty that the state's compelling interest in the promotion of human life beginning at the moment of the child's conception.

It is entirely possible to have a law which would protect all human life from the moment of conception which would be constitutionally valid. To allow the charter to be interpreted in a way that excludes a segment of humanity is to open the door to its total degradation. To accept any law that would recognize wholesale abortion is to accept abortion in principle. If we concede that, we would have no real defence against pressures to accept unlimited abortion.

A law which would permit the killing of innocent human beings would inherently be an evil and unacceptable law. Those who aim to support and pass so-called middle of the road legislation would be simply legalizing abortion. They portray themselves as moderates wanting to please both sides. But since their proposal is not acceptable to those of us who abhor abortions they end up pleasing only those who support abortions. If Parliament ever accepted those proposals, it would simply legalize abortion.

The people who argue that a compromise-type law would only be a necessary and practical step toward better days are not facing the facts. In Great Britain, for example, after 21 years of legalized abortion an attempt was made in 1987 and 1988 to reduce the legislative period of 28 weeks for abortion to 18 to 24 weeks. After strenuous efforts the attempts failed. This ought to teach us not to recklessly support a compromise-type law and lose the opportunity to ban abortion in Canada, except in the few instances of recognized exceptions, such as where the life of the mother is at stake and in cases of rape and incest.

• (1710)

It has been a proven world-wide experience that whenever abortion is available for so-called health reasons, abortion becomes easily available. If there are some restrictions on the meaning of "health", the restrictions are likely to be vague enough to invite wide-scale abuse. Abortionists, who have been defying the law openly for years, will not be restricted from committing abortions by such terms as "seriously", "substantially" and "social". Those, and similar terms, have no legal or medical definition, and are therefore subject to the most liberal interpretation.

The abortion mentality attacks the absolute value of human life and seeks to replace it with a relative value which allows human life to be destroyed if it is unwanted, inconvenient, an economic burden or handicapped. Either by our own action or our own apathy, we are determining the kind of society we will leave to our children. We must ask ourselves: Will it be a caring society, nurturing the helpless and protecting the vulnerable, or will it be a cruel society discarding the socially and economically inconvenient and disguising its cruelty as concern for the quality of life?

We often hear from the pro-choice forces about a woman's freedom to choose. We all value our right to free choice regarding our vocation, our religion, and our goals in life. However, genuine freedom does not give us the right to trample on the human rights of others. The pro-choice slogan focuses on the freedom, while ignoring the choice it demands; the choice to end the life of a living, unborn child. In reality, freedom to choose has become a licence to kill. Women's rights, yes, Madam Speaker, but not at the expense of the human rights of others.

Another slogan of the pro-abortion group is: Should not every child be a wanted child? This slogan makes the faulty assumption that unless the child is wanted, he or she is of no value and can be eliminated by abortion. Simply to be unwanted becomes a capital offence, deserving of a death sentence. Being unwanted is not an attribute of a child. It is truer to say that there are no unwanted children, only parents who are unwilling to raise a child. Nonetheless, that child must always retain his or her right to continue living.

A child cannot be considered merely as property to be disposed of at will. Today, in Canada, there are so many couples waiting to adopt that it has come to the point that many agencies refuse to take new applicants. Yet some 65,000 children are aborted each year because they are unwanted.

We hear also from the pro-abortion groups that unwanted pregnancies result in abused children. How a woman feels during the first months of her pregnancy when her body is undergoing tremendous hormonal changes is not indicative of how she will feel when her baby is placed in her arms. The majority of unwanted pregnancies become very much loved and wanted children. Since we have had virtually abortion on demand in Canada since 1969 and have done away with an estimated 1,200,000 children, the problem of child abuse has not been eliminated but rather has increased to epidemic proportions.

Abortion, the ultimate in child abuse, has not solved the problem of battered children. In fact, since abortion has become commonplace, child abuse has increased by at least 500 per cent. The question has been raised that should we not care about the woman's problem? Undoubtedly we must, but our concern should not mean contempt for the life of the unborn child. Instead, we must have compassion for both and help them in positive and constructive ways. Since 1969, over 2,000 crisis pregnancy centres have been established across North America by pro-life volunteers and others, to give practical assistance to both mother and child during pregnancy and post-partum adjustment.

Abortions performed because of serious maternal health problems, rape, incest or foetal abnormality, account for no more than 2 per cent of all abortions performed in Canada. A full 98 per cent of abortions occur for social or economic convenience.

In a civilized society one does not kill one human being to alleviate the problems of another. Respect for life must remain the cornerstone of our civilization. Once life has begun that life has the God-given right to reach its natural end, and by destroying life the human race is in fact losing honour and dignity. If the suffering of the defenceless does not arouse our compassion, and move us to act on their behalf, nothing ever will.

By destroying other life to ensure one's economic and social success, I believe the human race is losing whatever dignity and honour it has worked to build up for itself over the centuries. To place a utilitarian value on human life, to see each person only in terms of his economic worth can and will lead to the destruction of human life. It will lead to the murder of those already born who through mental and physical incapacity are not able to contribute to society what may be demanded of them by extremists. In some disagreements and arguments that have taken place between pro-lifers and pro-abortionists, the focal point has been the issue of contraception. I said before and I must stress again that proper birth control methods must be readily available to all. Sex education must be taught in a way to make all people understand. Once that is done, people will be able to make the choice concerning the birth of children.

I would like to read into the record a letter that I received from a lady in this area:

> I am ashamed to be a woman. I am disheartened by how irresponsible, cold-hearted and extremely selfish we have become. Led by the "women's movement", we have convinced ourselves we are not the loving, caring, nurturing beings we are by nature. We have convinced ourselves that the child in our womb is not a person worthy of respect. Were we all not a foetus in our mother's womb? Are we not the same person we were then?
>
> No matter how bad a woman's situation may be she can survive and help is there for the asking.
>
> Most abortions, however, are done because the pregnancy is an embarrassment or inconvenience. Is nine months really too much to give for the life of another? Is killing your baby better than giving it to a couple who will love her as their own? Give the baby a choice and I am sure she will choose life.

She concludes by saying:

> I beg women to find courage to take responsibility for their action and not take the easy way out.

The bill before us, Bill C-43, amounts to nothing more than abortion on demand. There is nothing in that bill that offers any kind of protection to unborn children. It is important that Bill C-43 be given short shrift in the

House of Commons by unequivocally and overwhelmingly defeating it.

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to address an issue that has a long and sordid past in the history of our nation. The abortion issue evokes the greatest emotion in people at the very mention of the word. I have seen for some time now that all people, young and old, have an opinion on this issue, whether it stems from the religious, socio–economic or educational backgrounds or from personal experience.

My opinion stems from a fundamental respect for the sanctity of human life, human life which I believe begins at conception. This is not only what I believe. It is a belief that is held by the majority of the constituents in my riding of Hillsborough, constituents who have written to me over the past year and with whom I have spoken many times. These people have expressed a great concern with the developments that have occurred in the abortion arena over the past year and a half.

Since January, 1988, we have seen a virtual saga of events unfold as a consequence of the Supreme Court's ruling in the Morgentaler case. The Supreme Court ruled that the old abortion law did not comply with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. A year later we saw Mr. Borowski's attempt to have foetal rights defined denied by the Supreme Court of Canada since the Morgentaler decision left the nation without an abortion law upon which they could base a decision.

• (1720)

This was, as many people said, an open invitation to Parliament to deal with this issue. The government, however, did not respond despite calls for a new law from around the country. The Daigle and Dodd cases which we witnessed this past summer demonstrated just how serious an issue this has become. Cases such as this also help to shape our opinion as a nation on this fundamental, social and ethical question.

It is through the unravelling of such events that the federal government has been given an opportunity to introduce abortion legislation so that we can break free from the chaotic state of lawlessness which extends from coast to coast. This situation disturbs millions of Canadians who have written to their members of Parliament asking that Parliament enact legislation to protect the rights of the foetus from the moment of conception. The government has ignored the feeling that seems to prevail across the country.

The legislation at hand fails to define the rights of the foetus, thus the unacceptable nature of this legislation.

In July, 1988, members of this House were given the opportunity to participate in a multiple choice vote so that government could sense the mood of the House. It was thought that the results of such votes would be taken into consideration when abortion legislation was drafted. Of the five motions voted on at that time, the one that received the most votes was the most pro life and did not call for abortion on demand. The government chose not to introduce legislation to this effect and, instead, allowed the state of lawlessness resulting from the Morgentaler decision to prevail.

The next stumbling block proved to be Mr. Borowski's case. The government did not want to introduce legislation until the Supreme Court made its ruling on this issue of foetal rights. The climax of the ensuing state of lawlessness came with the Daigle and Dodd court cases of the past summer. The anticlimactic end of this saga came on November 3 when the government finally tabled its long–awaited legislation, legislation that I feel does not adequately address the problem at hand.

We have been presented with legislation which is, in effect, a compromise between two opposing forces, legislation which virtually changes nothing and pleases no one. The difference between this bill and the old law is simple. The federal government is now advocating abortion on demand; subject, of course, to the arbitrary decision of a medical doctor regarding its effect on a woman's mental, physical or psychological health. Gone are the days when a therapeutic abortion committee could objectively interpret a need for an abortion.

Abortion is a crime, an act that injures another human being at its most vulnerable stage in development. It is the intentional destruction of a human life, life that begins at the moment of conception with the fusion of the ovum and the sperm. At this time, the first cell of a distinct human being is formed and the colour of the child's eyes and the child's hair is determined. Cell division takes place within hours after conception. A heart beat is present at 25 days and the cerebral cortex at 33 days. Forty–five days after conception, the child's body is complete. At this point, the pregnant woman is

carrying a distinct human being, with arms, legs, fingers and toes which are visible by ultrasound.

Two months after conception, organs and body systems are in place. At this point, many women may not even be aware of the miracle which is taking place. At 12 weeks the movement of muscles and nerves are synchronized so that the arms and legs can move and the child is also sensitive to touch, heat, sound and pain.

It is difficult to believe that it takes only 12 weeks for a human foetus to reach such a level of development. At this time all of the body functions and parts that children will develop as they grow are present. When we learn that human development has such distinct stages, it is alarming to hear that 87.8 per cent of all abortions performed in 1986 were completed before the thirteenth week of pregnancy. The common belief is that a foetus is not viable until it reaches 20 weeks, but when its development is broken down in such a manner, one sees that this is not the case.

Such information is used in order to appease the sentiments of those who justify the act of performing an abortion before the foetus is viable. The survival of the foetus is threatened if full development is not reached. Abortion is an act that affects not only the life of the mother, but the life that the mother has created in union with the child's father.

What, may I ask, could be more tragic than to allow a human being with the capability of feeling pain and hearing the human voice and that has all of the body parts intrinsic to life outside of the womb to be terminated at will by abortion.

All abortions must be criminalized. Our criminal law is a reflection of who we are as a society. It defines the interests of our society that are worthy of protection and respect against those that are not. Laws which dictate such policy mirror our societal beliefs and values. I believe as Canadians we must demonstrate a fundamental respect for human life. As a result, I believe all abortions should be banned in Canada.

I realize that a statement of this magnitude will draw objections from various groups of people. There are those who will immediately respond with objections regarding health risks imposed upon a woman if she is forced to carry a foetus to full term. Is this a feasible objection given the medical and technological breakthroughs that we have witnessed in recent years? If health risks do present a problem, is it not part of a doctor's responsibility as a medical practitioner to make every conceivable attempt to save both of the lives that may be at stake?

We must also examine this from the perspective of those who advocate freedom of choice by making use of the argument that unwanted pregnancies pose a threat to a women's freedom. Indeed, an unwanted pregnancy does restrict the activities of a woman who is a member of the workforce. I am a strong supporter of equality, but I do not agree with those who feel that pregnancy discriminates against women and the equality for which they have striven to achieve over the years. I ask them, does equality mean taking another human life so that they may maintain their present status in society? I do not think so.

Abortion is certainly the problem at hand but as someone who opposes this criminal act, I believe it is the role of parliamentarians to examine the root of this problem and propose viable alternatives. The legislation that we have before us is not part of such viable solutions.

It is not a demonstration of our nation's fundamental respect for human life, but one that confirms the individualistic values which our society has adopted in recent decades. Most people today are merely concerned with the pursuit of their own self-interest without considering the effect their decisions will have on others. Freedom of choice does not necessarily mean a freedom to choose because of religious or legal reasons, but a freedom to make choices without considering the life that they have created and is growing inside them each day. This life is destroyed in many cases merely for reasons of convenience.

The underlying problem in this debate is that of unwanted pregnancies. Unwanted pregnancy is a fundamental problem in our society and abortion is not the cure for it. Canadians must act together to change society's attitudes toward unwanted pregnancies. As

parliamentarians we can get the ball rolling by examining the cause of such problems, one of which is the erosion of the family unit coupled with an increase in abortions and a decreasing birth rate. We must put an end to the dehumanization of the relationship between a mother and her unborn child by attempting to recondition society's attitudes in this respect. We should be enacting legislation that will raise public consciousness and attempts to put an end to the dangerous attitudes and habits we have developed in western society.

Many feel that wider access to abortion is the solution to the myriad of problems that a woman must face upon learning of her pregnancy. Indeed, the pregnant woman faces the challenge of dealing with psychological problems of both an economic and social nature. Society must be given the opportunity to provide economic and emotional support through the extension of existing counselling services and through the provision of more homes for unwed mothers. It is in the absence of adequate facilities such as these that women come to view abortion as the only viable alternative to their unwanted pregnancy.

We must enact social programs in order to combat the anti-family, anti-life attitudes that are prevalent in today's society. This legislation does not even mention provisions for the examination of such possibilities. It does not implement procedures that will encourage life. Instead, it makes it easier to put an end to life, a procedure that is becoming easier through the development of such drugs as RU 486 which makes abortion as simple as swallowing a pill during the first trimester of pregnancy.

All levels of society must work together in order to promote life and motherhood through education, support programs, housing for unwed mothers and improved day care and maternity benefits for those women in the workforce. It is with such considerations in mind that I cannot support legislation that will effectively grant abortion on demand. I do, however, want to see this bill proceed to a legislative committee where amendments may be proposed and hopefully accepted. As Parliamentarians we must take the opportunity that we have been afforded and examine this pressing issue that poses a threat to the very fabric of our society. We must explore alternatives and options for the pregnant woman.

• (1730)

Most important, we must also implement educational programs for our children so that they may develop respect for the greatest gift of all, that of human life.

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Madam Speaker, in rising to address the subject of reproductive choice I would like to put the issue into the context of tolerance.

Canadian society has long recognized the importance of us understanding each other's points of view, recognizing that there is room for differing points of view, that there is room for debate and discussion on important issues and, in particular, that it is important to be tolerant of our differences.

In this there is the recognition that we, as Canadians, support and respect others in their differences. This is the approach the vast majority of Canadians take with regard to most issues, including reproductive choice. Regardless of their personal view on the abortion question, the majority of Canadians feel it more appropriate to support women and the decisions they make rather than to force them, through criminal law sanctions, to follow a particular route. This tolerance is something we, as Canadians, should be proud of and should encourage. The intolerance of others who would have women subjected to their values is reprehensible. There should be room for dialogue and discussion, but not for coercion.

The Supreme Court of Canada agrees. Chief Justice Dickson words said: "Forcing a woman, by threat of criminal sanction, to carry a foetus to term unless she meets certain criteria unrelated to her own priorities and aspirations, is a profound interference with a woman's body and thus an infringement on security of the person".

I want to take a moment to state my position clearly. Women must have the right to make decisions affecting their bodies after consulting with whomever they wish. The state should not dictate decisions over this issue. As this bill contravenes that basic notion that women should have the right to control their own bodies, it must be rejected. The Supreme Court has also clearly stated that Canadian law does not confer the right to life on the part

of the foetus, and neither does it provide putative fathers with any rights over that foetus.

Consequently, the tragic circumstances of the past summer involving Ms. Daigle and Ms. Dodd have been addressed and no legislation is required to deal with that matter. Since the Criminal Code provisions were rendered unconstitutional there has not been any increase in abortions in Canada. The proposed legislation is unfair to doctors, unfair to women, and we do not need it.

I want to say a few words about the federal government's responsibility to show national leadership through the Canada Health Act. We have heard from ministers on the other side that they feel the criminal law power is the only way to approach this issue. The Minister of Justice, for example, stated:"Only by using the criminal law power can the federal government ensure a national approach to the issues of entitlement to abortion". He also said, "The bill does as much as it can to ensure that lawful abortions are possible in all areas of the country, including remote and rural areas".

This is clearly false and clearly misleading. What the government is really saying here is that it does not want to bring forward a comprehensive, all–encompassing national policy on reproductive health. The Minister of National Health and Welfare has said as much. The legislation does not deal with access at all. There is nothing here or in anything the government is proposing or plans to propose to ensure that a woman who seeks an abortion has equal access to the procedure no matter where she may live in Canada.

Without the quite legitimate use of the federal spending power and federal leadership, spurred on, I might say, by the great ideals of Tommy Douglas, Woodrow Lloyd and Allan Blakeney in my own province, and by New Democrats across the country, we would not have a national health care program.

For this government to say that the Canada Health Act cannot be used to address the question of accessibility is pure hypocrisy. In 1984 direction was given to the provinces regarding the nature of health care delivery. As a result, extra billing and user fees were ended, and a good thing too.

The Conservatives, then in opposition, voted for this proposal but now they want to take a hands–off approach. For once they should come clean with Canadians. They were prepared to talk about using the federal spending power to introduce a child care program, albeit an undesirable one, prior to the 1988 election. They broke their promise to Canadians then and they are reneging on their obligations now. The federal government has a clear role of national leadership in Canada's health care system and it is failing Canadians once again.

I do not have the time here to deal with the specifics of this argument, but the 1984 Canada Health Act provisions dealing with extra billing and user fees refutes the government's arguments about its inability to act through the Canada Health Act. Public administration, comprehensiveness, universality, portability and accessibility are the stated pillars of medicare. It is the federal government's responsibility to enforce these criteria.

So the Conservative government has reneged on this leadership role in dealing with Canada's health care system. This is unacceptable for Canadians generally with regard to health care and unacceptable for women with regard to abortion.

If you add to this the attacks in the Wilson budgets of 1986 and 1989, and now further threats on the part of the Minister of Health to attack transfer payments to the provinces for health care even more, it makes it clear that this government is reducing the federal government's commitment to health care in a very serious and major way.

Canadians will not forget this. What Canada needs is federal policy which sustains and supports women and families. It also needs a full–fledged strategy dealing with all aspects of reproductive health. We need to have federal leadership in the area of family planning, in the area of research into safe, effective contraception, and in the area of workplace flexibility so women have the opportunity to fulfil their major role in looking after children.

We need federal leadership in dealing with environmental and workplace reproductive health hazards. We need federal leadership in dealing with reproductive health promotion, and particularly we need federal leadership in dealing with the elimination of poverty which makes abortion an option for women in the most unfortunate circumstances. We also need federal leader-

ship in dealing with sexual assault prevention and we need federal leadership in access to abortion services.

Prevention is the cure for unwanted pregnancies but this requires both more effective contraception and education in sexual matters. Since the government is doing neither of these things effectively, indeed over the years it is reducing its commitment in these areas, its commitment to reducing the number of unwanted pregnancies in Canada and its commitment to the health of Canadian women must be questioned.

In relating my comments specifically to the bill at hand, Bill C–43 would recriminalize abortion and that is reason enough to be opposed to it. The bill threatens doctors with jail for performing abortions except in cases where vaguely defined health criteria are met. In certain aspects it threatens women with jail. The government takes no clear position on abortion in this bill. It first bans abortion and at the same time provides that if a woman can persuade a doctor that her health will be affected in terms of physical, mental or psychological health, the doctor may then perform the abortion requested.

Criminalizing abortion is not the answer. If the purpose of the government is to reduce the number of abortions, it clearly will fail with this legislation. If the government intended to increase the suffering of women and risk their health, then it succeeded. The bill also may very well be unconstitutional. For all these reasons, and in particular for not permitting women to make their own decisions over their own bodies, this bill must be defeated.

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address a very sensitive and difficult issue which has moral, ethical, religious, and often very personal meanings for every Canadian. I am referring, of course, to the issue of abortion.

The new legislation recognizes that abortion is a medical decision to be arrived at by a woman and her medical practitioner based on health grounds. Three principles guide the new legislation: one, balancing the woman's constitutional rights with society's interest in the foetus; two, ensuring that fair and reasonable access to abortion is not denied; three, ensuring that all abortions are performed by qualified medical practitioners based on health grounds.

• (1740)

The bill before the House is reasonable. It provides for the legal entitlement to abortion by the following means: the bill proposes to eliminate administrative impediments found in the old law and struck down in *Morgentaler* and a woman seeking an abortion is required to secure the opinion of a single medical practitioner stating that the continuation of pregnancy would likely be a threat to life or to health. General health grounds for permitting an abortion have been identified by the medical profession and by the courts as including mental, physical and psychological health.

The bill also requires that a medical practitioner's assessment as to the threats to life or health be rooted in generally accepted standards of the medical profession, and the new bill provides definitions as to the meaning of "health", "medical practitioner", "medical opinion" and "inducing abortion".

The proposed legislation comes under the Criminal Code because it is only through the power of the criminal law that Parliament can legislate entitlement to abortion on a national basis. I truly deplore the fact that the legislative measures that we are proposing involve the Criminal Code. But, as we have said on many occasions in this House, this is the only way to proceed at the national level if we want to enable Canadian women, in any province all across the country, to have the right to the services of this medical procedure.

I firmly believe Parliament should legislate with respect to abortion and that is why I am speaking today. I do firmly believe that the decision to have an abortion is a medical decision that rests with the woman, her physician, and her God; her beliefs, her morals, her standards. And yes, all abortions should be and must be performed by a licensed physician for it is a recognized medical procedure.

I support the Canadian Medical Association which is opposed to abortion being legislated under the Criminal Code or other federal laws. The physician will have the responsibility of making the medical decision on whether a continuation of the pregnancy would, or is likely to, threaten the life or the physical, mental or psychological health of the patient. The physician will have to make a decision on an individual basis according to accepted standards of medical practice. Could the physician be charged? Practically never, except, of course, under extreme circumstances. And the Supreme Court judgment made public last week to all intents and purposes

rules out third-party intervention. The unanimous ruling removed the legal basis for obtaining court injunctions to block abortions anywhere in Canada.

For most women the decision to have an abortion is one of the most difficult decisions they will ever have to make. It has implications for the woman, for the family and for all people, because most of us really hold deeply religious views. The decision requires careful thought and analysis.

Counselling is extremely important and I believe all women deserve to be informed, to be informed about the effects of an abortion and, more important, to be informed of all the means available to carry the pregnancy to term. However, once a woman decides to have the medical procedure, the abortion, it is her decision. Family life education is really truly necessary in the school curriculum right across the country. Young people must be taught about the values of life, of love, of sexual relations, responsibility, and understanding. I recognize that family life education is under provincial jurisdiction but surely today we can pledge time to teach our children and all people the responsibility of the human body, the responsibility of pregnancy, the responsibility of life.

Legislation is absolutely necessary and Canadians are demanding it. We can all do without the shocking display, the horror we all witnessed last summer and, of course, I am referring to the Daigle-Tremblay and the Dodd cases.

In a perfect world abortion would not be necessary. We all know, however, that the world is not perfect and that abortions are sometimes necessary. For this reason we must face the issue of abortion as best we can as individuals, as Members of Parliament and as a government. We must try to come up with a reasonable solution to this very sensitive and difficult issue.

I do not claim that Bill C-43 is perfect. I do want to say that we must rise above that which might divide us and seek common ground that is acceptable to the majority. Our most dependable guideposts are tolerance, understanding and maturity. I believe women, in consultation with their physicians, have the right to an abortion. It is imperative that every Canadian woman, wherever she resides, be entitled to these medical services.

I will support this bill in order to get it into the legislative committee where we can have serious consideration, deep thought and where perhaps there will be some amendments for improvement. This is the reason that I support the bill.

Mr. Réginald Bélair (Cochrane—Superior): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to add my comments on second reading of Bill C-43, an act respecting abortion.

Approximately two years have passed since the Supreme Court of Canada struck down the previous law on abortion as unconstitutional. The recent tabling of the legislation by the Minister of Justice shows serious neglect in waiting so long to bring forth this bill. During this period, 100,000 abortions have been performed in Canada.

There is no doubt that this issue is creating controversy since the proposed law straddles both sides of the issue. While it criminalizes abortion, it also permits a woman to terminate her pregnancy on the advice of a doctor. We are faced with a very sensitive moral dilemma. Indeed, I would like to quote from the speech of the right hon. member from Vancouver Quadra wherein he stated the following: "Speaking frankly, we will never reach a consensus on this issue in the House of Commons or in the country. We can reach only an accommodation at best."

I fully agree and I am sure my colleagues on both sides of the House share the same view. The right hon. member from Vancouver Quadra went on to say: "What happens if this legislation is defeated? First, of all, we are back to no law, so we are back to abortion on demand as we have now. If those who hold a strong pro-life position and want to defeat this law, and are successful, we are back to abortion on demand." We would be the only country in the world which does not have any regulation pertaining to abortion.

I am prepared to see this bill go through second reading and to a legislative committee. This would permit pro-life and pro-choice representatives and the medical profession to present their arguments and share with us their concerns.

• (1750)

I would like to take this time to point out some of the flaws in the legislation. This new bill places the responsibility squarely on the shoulders of the doctor whose final decision will be based on the generally accepted standards of the medical profession. However, there is no guarantee that all physicians in Canada would apply the same standards and criteria in assessing the health of a pregnant woman.

What if a doctor runs his practice like a business? Also there is no guarantee that a physician's moral and religious values will not influence his assessment of the need for an abortion. In my view, this places a very heavy burden on the medical profession. First, the doctor has the ultimate responsibility of the decision. Second, there is nothing to prevent the father of the child from challenging the doctor's decision and ultimately pressing charges of malpractice.

The bill does not address the issue of foetal rights. The government has chosen to exclude a time restriction which would ban abortion after a certain period in the pregnancy. I am deeply concerned with Madam Justice Wilson's comment concerning the permissible timing of abortion. She said: "The precise point in the development of the foetus, at which the state's interest in its protection becomes compelling, I leave to the informed judgment of the legislature, which is in a position to receive guidance on the subject from all the relevant disciplines. It seems to me, however, that it might fall somewhere in the second trimester".

In my view this statement is irresponsible and inhuman. At six months, premature babies are able to survive due to modern medical technology. I would never agree to an amendment which allows an abortion at such a late stage. It would be a most brutal attack on the weakest of human beings, the foetus, which is at the mercy of circumstances.

It is also unfortunate that the bill was not accompanied by counselling, programs addressing these issues would have provided alternatives to those who seek abortion as the solution for an unplanned pregnancy. To quote the Minister of Health: "There are 150,000 young, single, low-income parents in need of assistance. If we take away the economic reasons for abortion, we would ensure that children are brought into the world and properly cared for".

This statement is further supported by the Council of Bishops of Canada and I quote its president: "Moreover, we reaffirm that a new abortion law must be developed in the context of other policies and programs which address the social and economic conditions which contribute to abortion". What is being said is, let us not put a patch on the problem, let us try and minimize this last resort. I must reiterate again, let us have programs that will provide the people of this country with some alternatives.

I can only hope that a Conservative government will see its way clear on this matter and will institute programs which will give the woman an option and therefore give the right to life to the unborn child and the opportunity to reach his or her full potential. There is absolutely no reason in a country as rich as ours that some children are denied.

Mr. John E. Cole (York—Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, it is with mixed feelings that I rise in the House today to speak on the abortion legislation. I hope that everyone would agree with me when I state that there should never be a need for an abortion, that an abortion should never take place, because ideally, an abortion should never be required. Unfortunately, that is not the reality of the situation. We must accept the fact that we do not live in a perfect world. Regardless of our position on this most personal issue, we must resolve this situation to the best of our abilities within the framework society has laid down.

I believe there are two fundamental realities that must be addressed before we review the legislation itself at this stage of debate.

First, a bill must pass the test of Parliament. It must be designed and worded in such a way as to reflect and gain the support of the majority of parliamentarians. Without such consensus any law cannot be enacted or implemented. Second, a bill must be able to stand the test of the Charter of Rights. It must reflect the views of society without infringing on the rights and freedoms of individuals as outlined in the Charter. It must be deemed constitutional and therefore stand up under a challenge to the Supreme Court of Canada.

This government has shown strong leadership in drafting a bill that encompasses these democratic requirements. Although for many of us on both sides of this issue the legislation does not reflect our personal convictions, it is still a valid piece of legislation that warrants our discussion and our thoughts. As legislators and also

residents of this democratic society our personal views must often be tempered by the restraints inherent in this institution.

Yes, we can all take individual stands based on our sentiment and emotion and personal beliefs, but without consensus we will not accomplish anything except going back to square one without any valid legislation. Or we can reach a majority agreement, through compromise, that reflects both our individual beliefs and yet supports the legislation that best demonstrates the consensus in this country.

Concessions, no matter how unpalatable, may be necessary from all parties if effective leadership and direction is to be shown by the members of this House to the country. Any law dealing with abortion must protect the sanctity of life. It must recognize not only the rights of the living, but also of the unborn. In other words, in dealing with and recognizing the rights of the woman we must also acknowledge society's responsibility to protect those who cannot protect themselves.

The Supreme Court of Canada, in its decision on December 28, 1988, indicated that any federal policy or law on abortion should not deny Canadian women fair and reasonable access to abortion, should protect the constitutional rights of women to security of the person, should reflect, as a valid federal objective, the state's interest in the foetus and should protect the health of the woman at all stages.

As a result, this new legislation attempts to balance women's constitutional rights and society's interest in protecting the foetus, it ensures that fair and reasonable access to abortion is not denied and it ensures that any abortions are performed by qualified medical practitioners based on the physical, mental or psychological health of the woman.

A woman seeking an abortion under this legislation is now required to seek the opinion of her medical practitioner. The physician's decision to proceed with an abortion based on generally accepted standards of the medical profession must show that the continuation of the pregnancy would likely threaten her health or her life.

This recognizes that life begins at conception. I believe this legislation reflects society's interest in protecting the foetus, and yet at the same time it also recognizes the rights of women to maintain positive health. The term "positive health", as defined by the World Health Organization and adopted by our Ministry of National Health and Welfare, means: "a state of complete, physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". This also clearly reinforces the woman's constitutional rights to security of the person.

The woman, like the medical practitioner, must follow the legal requirements as stipulated in Bill C-43 which balances her rights with those of the foetus. Therefore, any woman performing a self-induced abortion or who obtains one outside of the medical profession will be committing an illegal act punishable by prosecution under the Criminal Code.

• (1800)

The potential threats facing doctors under the proposed law in my opinion have been greatly exaggerated. The police will not lay charges without valid evidence, and Crown officials will withdraw charges if they are frivolous. It is entirely possible however that, yes, some will try to abuse the law. But we must have faith that the vast majority of doctors in this country will respect the intention of this law. The inclusion of the abortion provisions into the criminal Code is welcome because as was said by law reform commissioner Joseph Maingot:

> The criminal law is our nation's fundamental statement of public policy—Ultimately, the criminal law is a mirror of what we are; it reflects our commitment, or lack of commitment, to human dignity and equality.

There are a number of critics who believe an abortion law is not necessary. I, however, disagree. The situation we found ourselves in last summer and the associated publicity as a result of the Supreme Court decision refutes that argument. A situation was created where the Supreme Court was forced to work in a vacuum, attempting to make a decision based strictly on its legal perspective and not that of society. It is our job as legislators to draft and implement legislation that is based on society's perspective.

There are those who have suggested that education and information regarding proper methods of birth control and research at the scientific level should be improved. This is something that I feel should and could be endorsed by the federal government through the Canada Health Act and would go a long way to assist society as a whole. This is an area that should be explored at the committee or report stage and could form part of the regulations and then be administered

through the Health Services and Promotion Branch of the Department of National Health and Welfare.

Once the legislation becomes law, if the Supreme Court of Canada cannot resolve cases before it to the satisfaction of the government, then perhaps at that time further amendments, if required, could be introduced to rectify the problems that it encounters.

However, I sincerely feel that the legislation is clear and concise enough for the courts to make clear judgments without any hesitation and without prejudice.

I personally do not believe the present legislation is strong enough to satisfy my pro-life views. However, the present legal void that we find ourselves in is totally unacceptable. We must reach a consensus before more lives are lost.

I am also terrified of the prospect of returning to the bad old days. We must not turn back the clock to a time when women's lives were threatened because they could not obtain a legal abortion. This once prevalent occurrence should be avoided at all costs.

I would support an amendment to this bill to protect the life of the unborn except where the continuation of a pregnancy would or would be likely to endanger the life of the female person. The rationale of such an amendment is that the unborn constitutes human life and that the only possible ground for ending this life is self defence.

Therefore it is my opinion that the present act will require amending in order to afford full legal protection to this life. I personally would have liked the legislation to be more restrictive. The term "health" could have been more narrowly defined.

I anticipate the opportunity to speak in support of this type of restrictive amendment to Bill C-43 at third reading. Therefore, given the democratic rules of this House, and by that I mean that amendments cannot be made until after second reading, I do at this time support the legislation even though it does not reflect my personal convictions because I know in due course I will be given the opportunity to persuasively present amendments.

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): I would like to take this opportunity to express my views on this very important matter.

[*Translation*]

I would first of all like to thank the hundreds of people in my riding of Ottawa Centre and throughout the country who gave me their opinion on this issue. Their letters and calls show deep convictions about the right to life and their feeling that the government must protect it. I am pleased that we can finally debate this complex and difficult issue and grant the wish of Canadians who have asked us to find a solution and bring forward legislation to fill the legal vacuum in which we now find ourselves.

I know, Madam Speaker, that the bill before this House was only tabled after long hours of hard work and painfully personal decisions. Although I am aware of the effort required to draft it, I am afraid that it ignores some basic problems raised in the abortion debate.

[*English*]

I had hoped the new abortion legislation would take a broader look at the social and economic factors that play such a large role in the abortion dilemma. Last year, for example, 65,000 women in Canada made the difficult decision to proceed with abortions. Why does a woman decide to have an abortion? The answers to that question are varied and complex, but I think it is fair to say that many abortions that take place in Canada every year might not have happened if the proper education and support systems had been in place.

Canada is a country renowned for its compassion. Our peace keeping efforts and our diplomatic initiatives have saved countless lives around the world. Our social programs have come to the aid of the disadvantaged and underprivileged within our borders. We must ensure this compassion reaches out equally to the unborn and his mother. We must take this compassion and the intense energy that has been focused on the abortion debate and develop a productive, preventive plan of action.

As a government we must take the challenge to prevent the attitude and situations that are now resulting in abortions. There is no doubt that unplanned and

unwanted pregnancies have been found to be an exceedingly difficult dilemma for a pregnant woman.

It may be the most devastating event in her life. What is happening is that many women take this step because they feel that they have no alternative—they are desperate and they have nowhere to go. It is our job as a society and as a government to provide that alternative. We must work to change the attitudes and situations which lead to abortion. It is the government's responsibility to ensure that our citizens have the income, the child care and the emotional support to effectively care for a child.

Educational institutions and health care agencies must share the family doctor's responsibility for providing advice and information on family planning. We need to look at the extent of funding and support being given to family planning services.

Are Canadian women being given all the facts? Are adequate services and support networks in place? If they are, are they accessible?

Counselling and family support services must be readily available and accessible to all Canadians in all walks of life. Each one of us in this House, as well as Canadians across the country, have different views on issues such as abortion and capital punishment. It is my belief that there is not a consensus on this issue, and that there will be no consensus.

Canadians, if they are given the opportunity to vote on this issue, would vote on the basis of their convictions, their beliefs, their upbringing, their education, and the values they hold. I know that in my riding, as well as across Canada, there are those who support the legislation and those who are opposed to it.

For me, while I understand there is no consensus on this issue, it is my responsibility to vote on this matter according to my conscience. During the last election and ever since I have stated publicly that I would be in support of legislation that protects the right of the unborn. Since this legislation does not seem to fulfil this commitment, I find myself compelled to vote against it.

Mrs. Louise Feltham (Wild Rose): Madam Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to address the House today on this most important issue. It is an issue which is of concern to all Canadians, but most specifically it concerns Canadian women.

• (1810)

Abortion is being perceived as an issue which divides Canadians. It should not be. We must as a nation show respect for individual decision-making in matters of fundamental personal importance. We must also seek to balance the vital interests of both the mother and the child by permitting an abortion only when the life or the physical, mental or psychological health of the mother is threatened.

As women struggle to develop their place in this modern and constantly evolving society, they are struggling to eliminate discrimination and to develop a set of legislative reforms which ensures this. Women's needs are being translated into protected rights. The right to reproduce or not to reproduce is a right which women recognize as fundamental to their dignity. Therefore, when formulating our legislation, we must listen to what women are saying and we must formulate legislation which will best serve the universal requirements of Canadian women.

The decision to proceed with an abortion is probably one of the most difficult any woman will be called upon to make. It is a decision which will have lasting ramifications on her life. The factors determining the decision are the result of previous life experiences, personal conscience and personal moral values. No two women will experience life in the same way. That is why a woman must enjoy the democratic rights afforded her in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms which allow her to arrive at her own decision.

Legislation in this issue of abortion is necessary to prevent further highly publicized and, for the participants, emotionally draining judicial confrontations. In a recent decision members of the Supreme Court unanimously stated:

> There is no foetal right to life contained in the vague wording of Quebec's Charter of Rights nor under the province's Civil code or the common law that prevails throughout the rest of Canada.

This statement re-emphasizes the fact that matters related to this issue should not be resolved in the courtroom. The courts will uphold the laws that we the legislators put in place. So when proposed legislation is being drafted it is essential to ensure that it reflects the greater public good and that it will withstand legal scrutiny. We must provide for Canadians a law which establishes a uniform national standard.

Abortions, when deemed to be necessary, should be accessible in every region and to all female citizens. Location and financial resources should not be factors in such an emotional and a personal decision. I am convinced that Bill C-43 will meet those requirements.

Each year in Canada, about 360,000 children are born and about 65,000 abortions take place. Over half of these abortions are performed on women under the age of 25.

This debate on abortion, by emphasizing the fact that so many abortions are performed on young women, may produce a positive effect. We know there is an urgent need to better educate our young people on the prevention of unwanted pregnancies. Our goal must be to reduce the number of abortions by concentrating on education and information accessibility. Counselling services, family planning services and information on contraception must be readily available to all Canadians.

The provision of advice and information on family planning and human sexuality falls to the family physician, but that responsibility must also be shared by the educational institutions and health care agencies.

Frank and open discussion on this issue will help to illuminate the dilemma and hopefully will result in positive advancements which will make abortions unnecessary.

The Canadian Medical Association is pleased that the proposed legislation recognizes that abortion is a medical act. It supports the concept of abortion being decided upon within the doctor-patient relationship. It does have concerns related to the issue of abortion which are also shared by many Canadians. The association is concerned that all patients should be provided with the option of full and immediate counselling services in the event of unwanted pregnancies.

Since the risk of complications of induced abortion are lowest in early pregnancy, early diagnosis of pregnancy and determination of appropriate management should be encouraged. There should be no delay in the provision of abortion services.

However, no patient should be compelled to have a pregnancy terminated. No physician should be compelled to participate in the termination of a pregnancy. A physician whose moral or religious beliefs prevent him or her from recommending or performing an abortion should inform the patient of such so that she may consult another physician. No discrimination should be directed against doctors who do not perform or assist at induced abortions.

Abortion services should meet specific standards in the areas of counselling, informed choice, medical and surgical procedures, nursing and follow-up care.

We should look to the areas of research and development in the health care field for advanced methods of contraception. Our goal should be to reduce that number of 65,000 abortions, not by restricting choice but by encouraging greater choice in contraception.

Organizations such as the Planned Parenthood Federation encourage choices by educating, promoting and supporting family planning. This organization recognizes that each community is different and implements programs sensitive to the varying needs of each one.

All children born into this world have a right to be anticipated with love. That is the hope, I am sure, of all of us in this Chamber. That is their fundamental right. How can we best ensure that this will be? We must utilize all the avenues that have been offered to us, through the knowledge we have gained over time, through our education and life experience, to bring in the fairest legislation possible for all Canadians.

If and when a woman is called upon to make this crucial decision, we must afford her the benefit of her knowledge, education and experience to make the right decision for herself and her child.

I would like to end my speech this evening by referring to remarks made by Justice Bertha Wilson on this issue upon rendering a decision in the Morgentaler case in 1988.

> Liberty in a free and democratic society does not require the state to approve the personal decisions made by its citizens; it does, however, require the state to respect them.

In summation, it seems to me that what Canadian women are asking for is the fundamental right to make a choice which is right for them on an issue which is a deeply personal and private matter. Should guidance be sought, it should be readily available to every woman through our health care services.

• (1820)

In a free and democratic society, all members of that society have their rights and their responsibilities. I have no doubt that the women of this country are fully capable of accepting their responsibilities as full and equal partners.

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the previous speaker for her remarks, which I think women will appreciate.

I rise today to summarize my opposition to Bill C–43 and to suggest steps that this government can take to lessen the need for abortions.

Recently I received a long and thoughtful letter from an Ontario woman who sent her views on abortion to all MPs. In it she said:

> There is nothing that you will ever do in life that will affect your life as much as becoming a parent, and it is irreversible. You can become unfat; you can become unemployed; you can become unmarried; you can even become unordinary; but you can never become unparented. It is not to be taken lightly or forced on anyone.

I strongly believe that women of Canada must have the personal freedom to choose to be a parent. In this way children will be loved and wanted. Hopefully, a woman and her partner will be able to provide the loving care and opportunities that children need to grow to maturity.

However, many women are not in a position to do this and for a variety of reasons may decide to terminate an unwanted pregnancy. This is a very personal and often a very difficult emotional decision.

If a woman decides on an abortion, access to safe medical procedures must be available to terminate a pregnancy as early as possible.

The Supreme Court decision last week on the Daigle case sends a strong message. Judges agreed that a woman has the right to choose whether or not to terminate a pregnancy. There is no basis in law to recognize the foetus as a person.

I will be voting against Bill C–43 because I am strongly opposed to recriminalizing abortion. I do not want the state interfering in a matter that is a very personal and intimate female decision, a reproductive right that should only require consultation between a woman and her doctor.

The medical profession already has health regulations and standards that apply to medical procedure. We do not need criminal sanctions.

Many speakers from my party have explained why we oppose Bill C–43, which is an amendment to the Criminal Code that prohibits abortion at all stages of pregnancy, unless a doctor decides that the continuation of the pregnancy would threaten the woman's physical, psychological or mental health. This bill reduces access to abortion by threatening doctors with criminal penalties of up to two years in prison unless vaguely defined health criteria are met. It ignores the real issue of unwanted pregnancy. We will see more court actions and third party interventions as a result of the bill.

Access is limited. Many healthy woman, and particularly young girls who my colleagues said are 50 per cent of those seeking abortions for a variety of reasons, may not qualify. They will be forced to lie to a doctor or go to a back–street abortionist.

I am sickened at heart by extremists who are so autocratic that they want state interference to curtail a woman from having an abortion. I feel that those who support criminal sanctions are victimizing pregnant women. Like Chantal Daigle's ex–boyfriend, some want to force women to continue unwanted pregnancies unless there is a health problem.

Doctors also are victimized and scapegoated. They are placed in the role of judge and face a jail term, and as a result may interpret health very narrowly.

Undoubtedly, many poor women will not have access to abortions, and healthy adolescents may not qualify.

This law is degrading, judgmental and intrudes on the rights and privacy of women. Why are women not trusted and respected to make their own decisions, if and when they want to have children? Why do women need to be controlled by a patriarchal society? Why is the focus all on women as if men had no responsibility for pregnancies?

It takes two to achieve an unwanted pregnancy and to cause the need for an abortion. If this law were to be applied equally under the Criminal Code, perhaps we should have an amendment that would require the prevention of unwanted pregnancies.

What are the responsibilities of men to their sexual partners? Should vasectomies be required in law unless a pregnancy is planned by both partners and fathers agree to support their progeny? This would be one way to eliminate abortions.

Of course, we do not want this kind of state interference to require sexually active men to be more responsible to sexual partners. However, too many men ignore the fact that birth control and responsible family planning are a man's responsibility, not just the woman's.

Mutual decisions to have a family result in wanted children. This should be society's goal.

This bill discriminates against women because it deals only with women's role in reproduction. In many ways it does not comply with international agreements to which Canada is a signator. For example, the UN Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women in Article 2(g) requires a "repeal of all the national penal provisions which constitute discrimination against women". We are creating a new provision under Bill C-43.

This convention and the UN Forward Looking Strategies, as well as the UN Population Plan Of Action, all make it clear that family planning must be available to all women. Yet this government continues to contravene these agreements by drastically cutting funds to Planned Parenthood.

If the government wanted to do something about abortion, it could ensure access. It could reinstate the funding for Planned Parenthood that it cut. It could perform research into safe, effective means of contraception. It could put the support services and programs in place that pregnant women and parents need to raise a child.

The only law we need is one to ensure access, not restrict access. This is not a matter for criminal law but for amendments to the Canada Health Act.

Abortion should only be a last resort. Society can do a lot to prevent unwanted pregnancies. Research by Planned Parenthood indicates that the provision of reproductive health services and sex education reduces the rate of teenage pregnancies. Clearly, not enough is being done in this area as research also shows that one in six teenage girls will become pregnant before turning 20. Although the government self-righteously insists it has raised funding to Planned Parenthood, this is misleading.

Planned Parenthood received $447,000 in 1979, and this was reduced to $139,000 in 1988, a paltry sum for such an essential service. I urge the government to further increase funding for Planned Parenthood and for community groups that provide family education and accessible contraception services.

Sex education in schools should be encouraged. The government should also re-establish a family planning division at Health and Welfare where there is only one full-time staff person.

The federal government must increase funding for research into reliable forms of contraception for men as well as women.

Health problems associated with IUDs and the pill are of great concern to women. Why has the government neglected this research which could prevent abortions in the future?

Although attitudes are changing, and I am very pleased many younger men in our society are sharing the joys and responsibilities of parenting, women still do bear the brunt of child rearing. Whether or not she has a spouse a woman is usually expected to fulfil the demanding task of caring for and raising children as well as working outside the home.

Child maintenance payments continue to be inadequate or nonexistent, and women are left to raise children alone and in poverty. Governments must enforce maintenance payments more effectively and ensure family incomes above the poverty line.

• (1830)

It is a national disgrace that one in five children are poor and that 150,000 kids use food banks each month. After years of studying government promises we still do not have a national child care program. We urgently need a child care system that is universally accessible, affordable, non-profit, and of high quality. We must also extend parental leave with UI benefits to cover at least 26 weeks. Family policy should be encouraged in the workplace so parents can spend more time with children, with flexible hours and family leave.

In conclusion, I implore all members to spend as much time next year as we have spent this year on this abortion

debate in order to promote policies that will reduce the need for abortion and programs that will support children and provide for their care.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ricardo Lopez (Châteauguay): Madam Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to rise in the House today and make my contribution to the debate on Bill C–43.

Madam Speaker, all Canadians were appalled last summer when they heard about the Chantal Daigle case on radio, television and through the other media.

I do not think anyone would want to go through an experience that must have been quite terrible, to see one's private life dragged through the newspapers and flaunted on television, especially a life as full of controversy and incidents as that particular one. I think we all agree we would not want to repeat that experience.

However, where we do not agree, and I think here our differences are almost irreconcilable, is on how to solve this problem.

I truly believe that the Bill before the House today does not deal with the problem. It would need a number of amendments before it could do so even partially. I would even go so far as to say that whatever we put into the bill, the problem will never be solved.

In fact, the problem is a social one. I feel that any bill that does not recognize this fact will never provide a solution, and quite frankly, it would be no more than an exercise in camouflage that ignores the real problem.

One paragraph of this Bill shows a tendency to criminalize, where it says that a physician who induces an abortion where there is no threat to the mother's health is liable to a maximum of two years' imprisonment.

Mr. Speaker, I do not think putting people in prison is the ideal solution, because it does not deal with the problem. Women will continue to have abortions, despite the restrictions we put into this bill.

So what do we need to tackle the roots of the problem? We need a family policy, supported by a tax policy. It is a fact that, be it unintentionally, our federal and provincial laws do not support the family and even tend to destroy it. Let me explain. As a married man with five children, financially I would be better off abandoning my family, because in that case, I could deduct alimony payments from my income tax. Personally, of course, I would never do this just to save a few dollars, but there are people out there who might do just that. So as I indicated in my example, and it applies to many other Canadians as well, our laws definitely encourage marital separation and the destruction of the family unit. And that is a sad comment on our society.

I have raised the subject on many occasions, and I intend to go on doing so until something is done about it. What is taking us so long to provide help for needy mothers? I have already talked about wages for women working in the home. Or it could be for a father working in the home, because some fathers stay home to take care of the children, because the mother has died or for whatever reason.

It seems to me that if we tackle the roots of the problem, it would be a lot easier to find a solution that is more humane for all involved. We would not have to take people before the courts, much less put them in prison, because that will never solve the problem. The fact that today, on the threshold of the 21st century, in a civilized country like Canada, we have no solutions at hand to restrict abortion and the destruction of the foetus and of our people and we have found no other solution but to put the doctor in prison, I think shows we are truly lacking in imagination. We will never be able to solve a social problem of this magnitude.

The fact is that no matter what we put into this Bill, a young girl or young woman in dire financial straits, and God knows there are many cases like that, will get an abortion regardless.

I have already suggested that in some cases abortion would be acceptable but only when absolutely necessary, as in cases of rape or incest or when the mother's health is at risk, and when I say her health I mean physical health, not mental or psychological health which, as you know, is very difficult to determine. Today, a woman could go to a doctor, feeling rather desperate. Her doctor would say: "Okay, in that case, since you feel depressed, whether" this is temporary or whatever, I will do an abortion.

Of course any woman who comes to such a decision will not go out and celebrate. If she comes to such a decision, it is because she is really hurt inside and does not know where to turn. We already know that; the doctor does not have to justify it.

So we might as well then have abortion on demand, because it comes to the same thing. But in the case that I just described, I see no need for the woman and her doctor to provide any health reason whatever. If the woman's health is threatened, if her physical health is threatened, if she is pregnant following rape or incest, in that case, I see no need for the woman or doctor to produce a medical document showing that her health is threatened. I was prepared to be more liberal than that in such a case and accept abortion on demand, perhaps with a certain time limit, because the bill before us sets no limit. In that case, it is up to the physician. Even if the foetus is eight months old, he can still perform an abortion. Nothing forbids it.

If we were to consider the problem first and attack it at its roots, we would have to change first of all our policies, our tax legislation, to make it less discriminatory or not discriminatory at all, because God knows it is discriminatory. Let us support families, single mothers, even married women, because they can sometimes be in equally difficult situations.

• (1840)

If we did that, Mr. Speaker, I assure you that the abortion problem would be reduced, if not completely, at least to a very large extent. That would be much more effective, instead of providing punitive measures such as sending the doctor or mother or anyone else to prison—that will not solve the problem. In a way, we are acting unconsciously, and for this reason, I ask my colleagues to think a little. I have already pointed out several times here some injustices that affect young people, especially in Québec, where those who are under 30 get only one third as much welfare as those who are 30 or over. This situation creates juvenile delinquents and repeat offenders whom I would consider victims rather than criminals. We must ask ourselves the question, Mr. Speaker. Since my time is up, I thank you for listening to me.

[*English*]

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, there is no need for me to remind the House of the deep anguish and soul searching the issue of abortion has created in the Canadian community. As we explore new ways to generate human life, the sincere fears and questions of community groups and individuals grow in intensity. At the same time, we are a nation proud of its steady movement toward a more equal partnership of men and women and a fuller commitment to the individual rights of all citizens.

For myself, I would like to go on record at this time as a citizen against abortion and seriously concerned for the protection of the human foetus. However, in spite of that deep personal belief, I am committed to serving all of my constituents as their elected representative. I must find, therefore, a more balanced position for my community as a whole.

Few of us could cast a vote for or against abortion and claim that our vote represents a clear majority of our citizens. In this case, it seems to me that to stand in Parliament absolutely for individual rights or absolutely for foetal protection is an heroic act that is all too easy. It fails to provide leadership to our troubled and divided communities.

If ours were an ideal community in which every child born was guaranteed the love, nurture and social support essential to happiness, if I were confident that every child born would be valued and protected by our social system, then I could stand here today confidently and say no to any abortion. But, it seems to me, the steady erosion of universal social support by the current government casts a deep shadow on the hopes for such a social climate. So I have no alternative but to search for balance.

The internationally renowned Canadian scholar, Northrop Frye, has written a great deal on the nature of our culture and our unique qualities as a nation. One very distinct image and attitude he describes is our obsession with the two-sided legend. He says we are always conscious of the double ledger and the need to find balance between conflicting values. While we have sometimes been ridiculed for this as being too low key, too middle of the road, we have built our credibility throughout the world on this willing sense of balance. Our successful history is one of compromise. We seek laws, institutions and expectations in which contrary yet mutually essential human needs and values are sustained in some acceptable and even pragmatic manner.

When history and generations of the future call us to account for our actions in this momentous social issue, we will not be judged by our heroic extremes but by our sensible balance of voices and value systems. If there was ever a need for this Canadian consciousness, this awareness of the double ledger, it is in regard to the difficult and crucial issue of abortion. At moments it may seem to we politicians more a double-edged sword than an opportunity for balance. Yet, I do believe that this

learned and sincere parliamentary body can find a way that will enable our society to move forward unafraid of more sophisticated knowledge, technology and challenges to the wonder of human procreation.

Recent landmark cases make clear the two sides of the ledger. On one side is the right to liberty, identified with human dignity and autonomy and the right to make fundamental personal decisions without state interference. On the other side, with as much validity is the public interest in the protection of the unborn. The Supreme Court has noted that there is a point at which the state interest in the protection of the foetus becomes compelling and responsibility for this protection falls to the legislature.

Let me remind this place once more of this additional burden. The most recent Supreme Court decision makes it very clear. It is this House and this House alone that holds "concern for the life of the foetus" in the cradle of its power to legislate.

I hold the current legislation up to the light of Northrop Frye's ledger and I examine its bottom line, as our current government likes to say so often. What angers me today is the lack of leadership and balance in this legislation. Bill C–43 clearly does not balance the beliefs, the fears and the genuine desires of Canadians. It is a mask of compromise rather than a genuine effort to integrate the two legitimate yet conflicting arguments on abortion. It declares abortion illegal in its text and then its qualifiers make abortion available virtually without restriction.

In the letter of the law it claims concern for the foetus and in its spirit it provides no protection for the foetus whatsoever. It unfairly places the full burden of responsibility on medical practitioners. From the mother's point of view, it makes a woman dependent on the idiosyncrasies of local community and provincial power structures.

Whatever balance the government claims it has established, it is an illusion. There is no evidence in this legislation that the public's concern for the welfare of the foetus has been addressed. This public concern which has clearly not been abandoned even by the Supreme Court of Canada, this other side of the ledger which must be balanced with the woman's right to individual choice, has not been given any sort of strength in this sly piece of legislation. Although the government will claim it is sufficient that abortion remains in the Criminal Code and that this context is enough evidence of concern for the unborn, this too is mere posturing rather than substantial recognition of public concern for the foetus.

The Minister of Justice has stood in this place and said that Bill C–43 creates a criminal offence. Then, soon after, he informed news reporters that the government was not going to prosecute. This is hypocritical legislation. The presence of this new legislation in the Criminal Code in no way provides a reasonable balance of public desire on the issue of abortion. It gives the impression of concern for the foetus without the substance of enforceable law.

I call upon this government to provide legislation that is truly a compromise and that addresses both sides of the ledger clearly and effectively. Even as I call for changes in this legislation, it strikes me how narrow and limited this approach to child birth and the renewal of generations will be.

How can we ask women to carry new life to fruition unless we are prepared to provide the social environment and social vision that value new life clearly and pragmatically? As long as this government continues to cut back on social support systems, to dare tear down the universal social welfare programs, and is more concerned for dollars than for people, women will be uncertain of wearing the mantle of child birth.

• (1850)

Who are we as legislators to speak on the issue of abortion unless we are prepared to take better responsibility for the basics of new life—food, clothing, shelter and child care? Yet this government has put the infamous deficit ahead of these essentials at every turn in its legislative agenda.

Can women really believe that this government cares deeply for the birth of another child? Can we really believe that this government has a commitment to families, to those who most need assistance in raising children? Let us not be foolish enough to believe that this legislation does anything to enhance the quality of life in our community. Let us instead demand that the government stop its obsession with the market–place and

its financial ledgers and turn its attention to the far more important ledger of social needs and responsibility.

In closing, I am prepared to take this government at its word only when I see it is practising this concern in its legislation for social support systems. When the government begins to take seriously the cries for child care, the desperate need for more shelter, more clothing, more food, the responsibility to assist the provinces in providing a better quality of life for the poor and the unemployed, then and only then will Canadians believe that this legislation grows out of true concern for the lines of women and children.

As it stands this legislation is an abdication of responsibility. It has failed to balance the public's concern for the unborn child with the need to assure the dignity and rights of women. It is, above all, promulgated by a government whose whole legislative agenda devalues those very universal social programs which guarantee quality of life for all children.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Monique Landry (Minister for External Relations): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak to Bill C–43, an act respecting abortion, as introduced by my hon. colleague, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada.

Our government was faced with finding a solution to a problem that touches the very core of the basic values of Canadian men and women. As with any legislation where personal attitudes and moral convictions are involved, we could expect a lack of consensus within our own society. We can make this a legal debate. We can make this a matter of conscience. We can make this a scientific debate. The fact remains that although it may be difficult to accept, abortion is a reality. We must therefore give it a legislative framework that gives women the right to use their own judgment, that offers women a measure of protection and finally, that is aimed at preventing abuse. It is in this perspective that the legislator tabled this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, I speak first of all as a member of this House and as such, I support the decision of a responsible government to deal with a difficult and emotionally charged situation.

A legal vacuum was created, when the Supreme Court concluded that Section 251 of the Criminal Code was contrary to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It was therefore up to the government to remove this contradiction by introducing legislation adapted to our times. The bill tabled in the House on November 3 is the result of solid thinking and reflects the wisdom of a government that is firm, fair and realistic.

If we look at the theoretical aspect, the legislation may seem inadequate. It is true that the subject is so emotionally charged that it creates controversy and makes discussion very difficult. However, the legislator was able to maintain the clarity and perspective required to consider the practical aspects and make abortion a medical act, subject to the rules of the profession: an act that arises from a decision made by a woman and her physician.

In tabling this bill, the government decided to avoid taking a stand for or against abortion, restricting its involvement to creating an objective framework for the act, which so far remains the best solution.

Second, I speak to you as a woman who, like many others, has acquired a measure of experience both in her personal and professional life.

Like any human being, I debate issues with myself and this helps me shape my opinions. I too have my own values and personal convictions and sometimes I call them into question when faced with realities that must ultimately be accepted.

Over the years, the status of women has evolved steadily in our society. Today we can say that women occupy a respectable place although they still have some obstacles to overcome.

Respect for personal choice is the very foundation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and all legislation must comply with it.

Abortion is not a choice between good and evil. A woman wants an abortion because she is torn inside; she sees it as a solution to a tragic situation.

Abortions, in many cases, result from a lack of external support and a feeling of rejection due to social prejudice. That is why I am convinced that the bill will enable a woman and her doctor to have a healthy dialogue. Together, they will have to decide how to deal with a problem which only they know in detail.

I am reassured by this legislation, Mr. Speaker, not only because it respects women's judgment but also because it protects them and is free of prejudice on an issue so closely related to social values.

I myself raised a family of four children. I was able to understand and intensely experience what motherhood and deciding to have a family mean for women. Based on this experience in my own family, I favour a situation and setting where women can develop and grow.

Society has evolved and so have women. Respecting women also means respecting their decisions, including what they do with their own bodies, in consultation with their doctor.

When I look at the past or compare us with the many countries to which my work takes me, countries which Canada helps, I say that Canadian society is doing more all the time for the equality of women in their individual and collective rights.

The bill before us today meets a basic need to respect individuals, to respect women and their decisions.

This respect, Mr. Speaker, must go together with our society's evolution, as women move towards greater autonomy. Will this bill settle everything? I sincerely do not think so. But that is no reason not to do something that will contribute to women's betterment and protect their basic right to decide with their doctors what is best for their physical and mental health.

If women have full rights in our society, legislators must be consistent with this great principle and enact it in legislation. This is just what we are doing today.

Mr. Speaker, as a woman and as a member of this House, I fully support the solution proposed in this bill. I recognize in it the leadership and tolerance which have guided our government throughout its term of office.

[*English*]

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that everyone in this House has faced the same problem as I have in dealing with the abortion issue and now, more particularly, with Bill C–43.

As a new member of Parliament, I can safely say that this particular issue has dominated my mail. I must say that I am pleased the matter is at least before the House so that we can finally deal with it and address the issue.

On a positive note, I think the bill has caused a great deal of hue and cry among the extreme positions on the issue. That, in itself, might be an endorsement for the bill. I believe that people in Canada are looking for an acceptable compromise, a compromise which deals with all sides of the issue and if you have both extremes upset, then maybe that is what this bill achieves, a compromise.

• (1900)

The Dodds and the Daigle cases this past summer have brought the issue home to millions of Canadians. It is an issue which affects everyone. I would hazard a guess that every member in this House knows of someone who has agonized over whether a person wanted or needed to have an abortion. It is an issue which affects all Canadians. Our role as legislators is to find a way to deal with this issue so that the constitutional rights of women are balanced with the rights of the foetus.

The question then becomes: "Does Bill C–43 achieve this objective?"

The bill is a negative bill, which neither protects the rights of the woman nor the rights of the foetus. The bill does not deal with many of the other surrounding issues involving this complex process, for I believe that we cannot just view this issue on the basis of abortion, but we must take a holistic point of view and abortion is really the final end of a very long and involved process.

As the Citizens for Public Justice said: "To introduce a pro–life amendment to the Criminal Code without social policy changes will not adequately protect human life. To give women legal right to abortion without social policy changes means that many women have few effective choices other than abortion. This is not a choice anyone would recommend."

In light of the recent decision in the Supreme Court of Canada, *Daigle vs. Tremblay et al* the court has found that under existing law the foetus has no rights until born. I must say, as a lawyer reviewing the case, I can follow the logic of the decision and the conclusion, but I cannot agree with the conclusion in the sense that I feel that we, as legislators, must make the necessary changes and correct the results of the decision that has been reached by the Supreme Court of Canada. For this reason, I

would have preferred a degree of foetal protection in this bill. This bill does not provide that protection.

This bill basically is an amendment to the Criminal Code which makes all abortions criminal except in a case where a physician is of the opinion that the woman's physical, mental and psychological health is endangered by the continuance of the pregnancy. In any other circumstance, it is a criminal offence punishable by up to two years, imprisonment for anyone to induce an abortion, including self-inducement.

I must also say that I don't believe that women embark on the decision to have an abortion lightly. As a man I cannot say for sure because I won't have to face that decision, but it must be a hard, gut-wrenching decision, which in most circumstances appears to the woman involved as the only alternative available.

Looking at the bill, one quickly sees that it deals with the issues on a very negative basis and shifts responsibility for the decision. I do have some very grave hesitations with the criminalization of the mother, and I do not feel that the bill should shift that criminalization to the physician. The physician is now faced with a situation where he can make a decision or come to an opinion that an abortion is acceptable treatment and then be subject to prosecution at a later stage.

The provincial Attorney General or a Crown prosecutor may hold certain views which may start that process and leave that physician subject to criminal prosecution. As a lawyer, I would have to say that in most cases I would advise a physician never to do an abortion on the basis of the bill because of the vulnerability that the physician faces. While it would appear in the Supreme Court of Canada decision that third parties do not have any rights to bring actions, there is nothing to stop the criminal process from coming to the fore and for a Crown prosecutor or anyone to lay an information or start that process which is obviously bad for the physician.

The other problem which the physician faces is medical opinion across the country on what will be mental, physical or psychological health difficulties will differ in the different areas of Canada. I believe that the psychological definition is going to be the hardest one to come up with from a medical point of view and that definition is not provided in the legislation. Therefore, a doctor is left to his own devices to define "psychological", and if he reaches the wrong conclusion could become a criminal.

Also, the bill does not provide equal access to women across the country. In effect, the legislation ducked that issue and put it in the hands of the provinces. Therefore, we will see unequal access to abortion across this country. We have seen that already under the existing law. In New Brunswick, for instance, there are regions within the province that perform abortions in certain hospitals and some that do not. We are going to exacerbate the situation by expanding that across the whole country with this type of legislation.

The Supreme Court of Canada in its decision said that foetal rights only arise once the foetus has been born. This requires us as legislators to step in and resolve that problem to a degree in favour of the foetus. The Law Reform Commission had recommendations. I know that a lot of groups were opposed to those recomendations but at least it provided a degree of recognition of the rights of women and the rights of the foetus. In my view, in this legislation neither rights have been protected.

The legislation by its negative effect also causes the woman, in effect, to lie. She must go to the physician if she wants an abortion and concoct a story. That is exactly what has happened in the past and that is again a most unreasonable way for us to force women to act.

As I indicated earlier, I believe that we have to look at this issue from a holistic point of view. To bring forward legislation which just deals with abortion and does not deal with the other sides of the issue is a very negative way to proceed.

A classic case that we see in society today is children having children. How do we deal with that situation? An abortion is the last part of that whole process. We have an obligation to look at day care, to look at the opportunities that are presented, to look at family planning and those associated issues, and to deal with things like sex education and contraception when dealing with younger women. The issue is not just one of abortion. All issues such as family, day care, and reproductive technology are involved and should be associated with this particular bill. For us to come forward with legislation which only

deals with one aspect is shirking our responsibility as legislators.

My view is that at this particular stage we really do not have any choice but to send this bill to committee, hope for some amendments that will put some of the things that each one of us believe are necessary into the legislation, and hopefully fashion a piece of legislation which does the job rather than leaving it the way it is now. At this particular stage, we must send it to committee. Hopefully we can come up with amendments, but I must say that if the bill comes back in its present form, I would have no choice but to vote against it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue (Outremont): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak to Bill C-43, and I hope that my comments will be useful to the legislator and to this country. My presentation will reflect my experience in the practice of psychology. I will deal with three points in the few minutes at my disposal.

First, I will explain my position on the issues and the bill before the House today. Second, I intend to discuss the duality and apparent contradiction between the individual and society. Finally, I will discuss an approach that in my view would make it possible to enforce the legislation with a heightened understanding for the new realities in our society.

Let me say, first of all, that I believe in life. I will not try to determine whether the foetus is a human being, and I will not agonize about the exact moment when the foetus is considered to be a human being.

My colleague, the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mrs. McDougall) raised the subject on Wednesday, November 8, at page 5725 in *Hansard*.

• (1910)

As was said before in the House, the purpose of this bill is to make abortion a medical act. This position is fundamental, and I welcome it. It is based on a definition of health, either mental, physical or psychological, and this definition is set within a social context. Mr. Speaker, the bill recognizes that the living foetus is not just an excrescence or a fibroma but quite definitely something different. I call this foetus a human being.

The Bill acknowledges this as well, since it is based on three guiding principles, the first of which is to balance the constitutional rights of the woman and society's interest in the protection of the foetus.

This principle indicates, in no uncertain terms, that abortion is not solely a private matter. It is also a matter that affects society and the public interest and hence it is a matter of ethics, whether social or religious or both.

The hon. member for Provencher (Mr. Epp) raised this question in the House and gave us an excellent answer. It seems almost impossible to dissociate social ethics from religious ethics. It is not any easier to dissociate the human spirit from its physiological counterpart.

Both Hippocrates and the philosophers acknowledged this fact. The modern scientist is no exception. The laws of nature, when they apply, always do so in a tangible, material world. Our laws are implicit in the matter that surrounds us. This is an accepted fact in both psychology and management.

The Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada said, and I quote:

> In a perfect world, abortion would not be necessary for any reason. We all know, however, that the world is not perfect.

We are human beings. We are finite beings, limited by our physiological and neurological equipment, and obviously will be for a number of centuries to come. The Minister of National Health and Welfare said there were few, if any, moral issues on which people agreed. He added that abortion was a disturbing issue for each and everyone of us because it seemed to force us to chose between two essential human values.

Mr. Speaker, no man is an island. He lives in an environment and belongs to a group. Therefore, he cannot make laws to please himself. That is why it is up to the legislator, with all his perfections and imperfections, to identify and implement standards. Finally, Mr. Speaker, I don't think this legislation is intended to let everyone do as they please or that it is a lawyer's paradise or that it puts the onus on the physician. In my view, people who say this are avoiding the issue.

Mr. Speaker, I now come to my second point. This bill merely recognizes two realities which exist whether we like it or not.

First, we have a woman. Second, this woman is carrying a foetus, a new being; she is no longer alone with her body. For this reason, she must deal with another reality called society.

In fact, two human beings form the basis of society. At the very least, they often provide all the elements needed to form a society, whether it is a cell, a group, a family.

We all know that living in a group or society raises many problems. Where does the freedon of one person begin and end and conversely where does the freedon of another person begin and end? Social psychology and the question it raises shed some light on this for us. Many say that this bill is aiming for a compromise. I do not think so. As I see it, the bill sets a standard for an inherent human problem: individual versus collective rights. In other words, the bill sets parameters so that two separate but interconnected entities can function and develop as harmoniously as possible. The individual depends on the richness of the group in order to stand out and find a way to excel.

Just as man influences his environment, it shapes his behaviour as much as it does his opinions, beliefs, attitudes and especially values. But if a society is to continue to envolve, individuals must be able to continue to assimilate its basic values.

Therefore the human being is always guided by an individual and collective vector, and his behavioural patterns are inspired by social prescriptions which themselves are tinted by factors of levelling and individualization.

It is in that sense that the feeling of belonging takes a connotation of development. Apparent dissonances such as group/individual, security/accomplishment, and levelling/individualization convey a message to the extent that one accepts that an individual alone cannot develop fully enough, or at least to the degree that his potential can be actualized.

What may seem to be theoretical, philosophical and useless in this debate, Mr. Speaker, is not really so because this problem underlies human, social and even moral values.

I repeat, Mr. Speaker, that I am satisfied with this bill, even though we may always encounter vile men, weaker women and physicians without strong conscience.

Even so, it is up to the institutions to step in and steer them back towards justice and equity, while keeping in mind both the individual and the group to which he belongs and from which he seeks guidance to sustain his own legitimacy and sense of belonging.

Mr. Speaker, I said that one cannot be independent without first having been dependent, and that the more independent one is the more one has to acknowledge one's dependence on others. I am no exception.

In the riding of Outremont which I am honoured to represent in this House, I have the privilege of listening to a wide range of opinions, and I can say that we find there the normal array of different positions. I must keep that in mind. If the citizens of the riding of Outremont have that right, it logically follows that their right becomes my duty.

One last point before I conclude. A little over a year ago I said to a journalist who asked me where I stood with respect to the abortion issue that I was pro-life. I went on to say, and I quote the newspaper article: "If we want a society to develop, that takes individuals. We must plant our own maple trees and see that they reproduce".

• (1920)

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that since the bill deals with a medical act and opinion and since neither the doctor nor the woman has all the relevant scientific information, it would be worthwhile for them to get the support and advice of professionals who could show them how to make the best decision.

And moral and religious convictions will finalize this process. Mr. Speaker, I am pro-life but I also recognize life in society requires flexibility.

[*English*]

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, it is with a sense of sadness that I rise to participate in the debate on Bill C-43, a bill to recriminalize abortion in Canada.

January 29, 1988, was an historic day not just for Canadian women but indeed for all Canadians. It was on that date that the Supreme Court of Canada struck down the criminal provisions dealing with abortion in a decision which stated that they were in breach of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Madam Justice Bertha Wilson, in her very eloquent reasons for judgment, stated that the right to reproduce or not to reproduce, which is an issue in this case is one such right under section 7 and is properly perceived as an integral part of modern women's struggle to assert her dignity and worth as a human being. Judge Wilson went on to state that section 251 treated women as a means, a means to an end which she does not desire but over which she has no control. She is the passive recipient of a decision made by others as to whether her body is to be used to nurture a new life.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, Chief Justice Brian Dickson, in his judgment on the Morgentaler case, said that forcing a woman by threat of criminal sanction to carry a foetus to term unless she met some criteria unrelated to her own priorities and aspirations is a profound interference with her body and thus violates security of the person.

[*English*]

In striking down the provisions of the Criminal Code dealing with abortion, the court recognized a number of very serious flaws in that legislation, flaws which frequently led to delays that put women at risk and increased the risk of complication. Indeed, Canada had the second highest rate of mid-trimester abortions of all industrialized nations. The requirements for therapeutic abortion committees clearly led to the kind of delays that, in turn, resulted in complications which could lead to health problems for Canadian women.

In addition, too often in this country we have seen destructive battles for the control of hospital boards based solely on the question of abortion because of deeply held feelings on the part of both those who oppose abortion and those who are in support of freedom of choice. Instead of hospital boards which are elected to deal with a whole range of health care concerns, under the old legislation we had hospital boards which too often were driven in a harsh and unrealistic way to respond only on this issue.

I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the dedication and the commitment of many women and men across this land in the struggle that culminated in the great victory for women on January 29, 1988 when the criminal law with respect to abortion was struck down.

I remember the role played by Grace McInnis. Grace McInnis, a former New Democratic Party Member of Parliament, served this country with distinction in a whole range of areas, was the only woman in the House of Commons who, when the provisions on the Criminal Code were adopted, stood up with dignity and courage and called for this decision to be left to a woman and her doctor, outside the purview of criminal law.

I think of my very distinguished predecessor as the spokesperson on justice for the New Democratic Party, Stuart Leggatt, now a judge in British Columbia, who fought long and hard to establish this principle. Many of my colleagues in the House today, and I single them out in particular, one being the spokesperson on the status of women, my colleague for Vancouver East has struggled so long, not just for freedom of choice, but for real alternatives for Canadian women to help reduce the number of abortions in Canada.

I think of the women from across this land who have struggled to establish free standing clinics to provide women with access to safe therapeutic abortions, Every Woman's Health Clinic in Vancouver, a clinic in Winnipeg, in Toronto, and those women who are seeking to establish a clinic in Halifax.

I think of Dr. Henry Morgentaler. Dr. Morgentaler has waged a battle of courage, integrity and in some cases doing time in jail to stand up for the right of Canadian women to make this basic decision for themselves.

I think of Chantal Daigle, a young woman from Quebec whose personal life was dragged across the front pages of the newspapers and television, and who was the victim of an act of judicial violence in my view by the Quebec Court of Appeal. I was in the Supreme Court of Canada for the hearings and I rejoiced when the Supreme Court reversed that decision of the Quebec Court of Appeal, that decision which allowed her boyfriend to tell her that she could not make this very difficult and agonizing decision for herself and who had admitted that, yes, he had beaten her but he had not left any marks.

Many of us had hoped that this government would recognize that instead of bringing forward new criminal legislation, what was needed were changes to Canada's health legislation to ensure equitable access across this

country and concrete measures to reduce unwanted pregnancies, and to assist women who want to keep their children but who, in many cases, are faced with a crushing burden of poverty.

That was not to be so. What did this bill do? While the Supreme Court of Canada in its judgment on Chantal Daigle has closed the door on civil injunctions, this Conservative government has opened the door to criminal prosecution of both women and their doctors. We in the New Democratic Party find that deeply offensive and we reject categorically recriminalization of abortion in this land.

Let us be very clear on this. This has been a long standing policy of the New Democratic Party. It is with considerable sadness that I have listened this evening to representatives from the Liberal party, including the associate critic on justice who indicated that they will be supporting this bill at second reading and agreeing to the recriminalization of abortion. Indeed, it is not surprising, given the fact that the Liberal leader himself in August of this year urged the government to bring forward new criminal legislation.

In introducing this legislation, the Minister of Justice has said that he has confidence in Canadian doctors and Canadian women. If he has confidence in Canadian doctors and Canadian women, and indeed he should, he should recognize that there is no need for new criminal legislation. Instead, we should be moving to ensure under the Canada Health Act access for women across this land. This bill does nothing whatsoever to assist those women in Prince Edward Island who were denied access; to assist the women in Newfoundland who have but a single doctor in St. John's, and when that doctor is sick or on holidays, they must travel to Montreal or elsewhere.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, this bill does nothing at all for women who, in many regions of Québec, have no abortion service and often Québec women must travel hundreds of miles to large centres; some hospitals refuse abortions for married women or those who do not use the pill or contraceptive devices.

• (1930)

[*English*]

So we should be looking at access and we should be looking, fundamentally, at alternatives. Instead of cutting back on funding for the Planned Parenthood Federation of Canada, we should be increasing funding, looking into the whole question of child poverty, into research into safe and effective contraception, to the removal of workplace and environmental reproductive hazards, to care for pregnant women and new mothers, to access to reproductive health services, including abortion services.

In closing, I want to say that these are the issues which we in the New Democratic Party believe should be addressed by this government. Every child must be a wanted child. Yes, I am pro-life. I support the life of those children in our society who are too often victims of poverty, the 150,000 children that line up at food banks every day. I deeply reject the suggestions that somehow we in the New Democratic Party are not in support of life. Indeed, too often those who attack us are concerned about life which starts at conception, but their concern ends at the birth of the child. I want to say that we reject the recriminalization of abortion in Canada and we appeal to this government to take steps to ensure that Canadian children live a life in which they are wanted and in which they do not live in poverty and that Canadian women are allowed to make this very basic and fundamental decision for themselves in consultation with their doctors.

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, since Bill C-43 has been made public most of us, I believe, have received considerable numbers of letters from constituents and from interested Canadians in all parts of the country.

It is interesting to note for the record that for completely different reasons we have received and continue to receive correspondence that expresses on the part of the writers a view against the bill. The view is expressed by those who belong to the pro-life movement, as well as by those who are on the pro-choice side of the issue. That fact creates a dilemma for the legislators. When you have two very articulate groups of citizens expressing their views on a very important social issue, it is then left, I suppose, to each one of us to draw our own conclusions as to what course of action to take

in an attempt to reflect as well as we can the views of our constituents. Believe me, this breakdown into two streams of correspondence in the mail makes the task arduous.

Nobody likes and nobody wants abortion. And at the same time, nobody wants to treat the mother as if she has no rights from the moment she becomes pregnant. There are rights that have to be taken into account for both the unborn and the mother. And one, I submit to you, does not exclude the other.

Therefore, if you approach the issue from this point then inevitably the legislators have to address the question of demand for abortion. It must be addressed in a manner so as to reduce the demand for abortion by approaching what I would describe the large middle ground of this issue between pro-life and pro-choice ideologies. There is a significant and very important middle ground.

I submit to you that it is not an either/or question. The question is how to deal with the situation so as to reduce as much as possible the demand for abortion and possibly eliminate it. The question is how to reduce the demand.

That subject has been developed in a four-pronged approach. It begins with education of the population at large by way of family planning and by way of education on contraception.

Second, it means dealing with young people providing them with a better teacher than just the experience of life. It means an understanding of how reproduction works, how the human body works and how to prevent the pregnancy.

Third, we come to the important aspect of the involvement of man. As we all know, no woman has made herself pregnant alone. Therefore, man should and must be helped to recognize his equal responsibility in all aspects of sexuality. In terms of decision making, he must be helped to recognize his responsibility also in obtaining and using contraception and also his equal responsibility in the handling of crisis when it occurs.

We must be perfectly clear that there is a desperate need in our society for support services. This issue cannot be treated in isolation from the vacuum that exists today in terms of support services. Therefore, the debate on the question of abortion must focus principally on this question. You need to have social and economic measures in place in the form of programs. And they must be available to people whether they are rich or poor. In specific terms they have to touch on housing, day care, counselling and on post-natal employment. The fact which has been brought to the attention of all parliamentarians over the years on a number of occasions is that poverty has been found to be one of the strongest reasons for abortion. That fact must be addressed.

• (1940)

I have outlined for you in the limited time available this four-pronged approach which, to my way of understanding the issue, is an essential policy that is needed if we are to discuss in an intelligent manner the question respecting abortions.

I am indebted to the British Columbia Teachers' Status of Women Journal of June of 1988 for having produced these elements. We must also ask ourselves what would be achieved by outlawing abortions. Would it prevent abortions, or would that drive those wanting abortions underground and make the practice one that is still with us but not necessarily in a visible form? The polarization of this issue is a matter of serious concern, and as parliamentarians it seems to me that we should resist stressing what divides us on this issue and stress instead what brings us together on a social issue of such importance.

We must, therefore, identify the viable solutions of this matter. Why create a conflict, I ask you? Why sharpen it? Why not instead diffuse it where possible and to the largest possible degree?

A lot has been said on Bill C-43. I wanted to put on record some views. I must tell you that in the knowledge I have of this bill tonight, if a vote were to take place, I would find it necessary to vote against it because I find it inadequate.

Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, while it may be difficult, if not impossible for me to offer any new perspective or original thought on the subject of abortion after the many thousands of words which have been spoken previously on this subject in this House, nevertheless, I do value this opportunity to express my own views about the issue, both in terms of my personal convictions as an individual and of my legislative responsibilities as a Member of Parliament.

In fact, I think it is extremely important to note these two very distinct aspects to the role of all hon. members in considering this matter of abortion. Perhaps it is only such a rare issue which is so unique to itself. Those considerations are not only how we feel about abortion within our own minds and consciences but also how we view our responsibilities as elected representatives to consider abortion on behalf of society, to reflect the common interest, to lead public opinion, to bring order out of confusion and, in short, to provide good government with respect to this most difficult subject.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I found that abortion is more than a difficult issue. For me, it shows the very need for a government decision. I personally have not only the problem of reconciling my own ideas with those of my constituents but also my great priority of helping create a law for good government. But in fact, in Canada, our constituents are extremely divided. According to the best estimates, approximately 20 per cent are truly opposed to abortion, another 20 per cent are for free choice and about 60 per cent are in between these two extremes.

[*English*]

To add further complexity to the decision which I and each one of us must make is the fact that the Supreme Court has struck down existing laws concerning abortion and since that has happened in the vacuum of any effective federal law, there have been lower court judgments in various parts of Canada which have brought sharply conflicting rulings and which have, over the past several months, created a sad spectacle of social confusion, intrusion of privacy, and embarrassment of individuals, all into full public view on our television screens.

There is little wonder then that in this House of Commons we are facing a continuing dilemma of a clear need to create law governing abortion and to provide legal and ethical guidelines for Canadian society. Yet being frustrated by the experience of the last Parliament, when I understand this House was unable to gain a majority on any one of a combination of resolutions and amendments put before it about abortion, it is in this context about an issue bearing all of the agonizing characteristics to be the most extreme of political considerations, that the government recently invited a number of caucus members to grapple with the subject to seek a resolution that would meet the test of three imperatives. First, a resolution that would be in the form of a law adequate to provide a clear legal and ethical reference for all Canadians. Second, a resolution that would receive the approval of this House of Commons by way of at least majority voting support by its members. Third, a resolution that would, in all likelihood, prove stable against any appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada.

As one of those caucus members invited to participate in these discussions, I feel it is worthwhile to share with all of my colleagues and my constituents the process of considerations which we pursued in arriving at, for the most part reluctantly I should say, the consensus which is generally reflected in the content of Bill C–43 now before us. Represented in the composition of our group was the complete range of views that undoubtedly exist among hon. members and, in fact, among Canada's population about the abortion issue, from strong anti–abortion convictions on the one hand to equally strong freedom–of–choice positions on the other, and with a spectrum of moderate views between those two extremes.

Convictions and positions were not easily sacrificed in the search for consensus. But as our discussions intensified to meet these three essential criteria, a gradual movement emerged toward the higher level of our responsibilities as legislators and to the compelling objective of creating a law to govern abortion that would meet all the tests. What we have arrived at, as expressed in Bill C–43, is a consensus that represents, as I have said previously, the true essence of politics, "The art of the possible", with respect to abortion.

There was full accord that a law governing abortion was an essential requirement for Canadian society. But it was not possible to reach accord in total opposition to abortion and it was not possible to reach accord in support for complete freedom of choice. This Bill C–43 was not the original position nor even the first consensus choice of the participants. Eventually, it did emerge as the one statement which we have come to believe will best provide a legal framework for a national position on abortion, while at the same time winning a majority support in the House of Commons to become law, and having the most likelihood to successfully withstand appeals to the Supreme Court of Canada.

This position was reached only after long and intense debate and only with politically responsible reflection on the part of virtually all members involved. I would readily call it a consensus but I would hesitate to describe it as a compromise in the traditional sense of that word, because it does express some important principles which make it, in my view, a distinctive and contemporary Canadian legal statement.

What does Bill C–43 really say? Well, for me, it clearly seems to say several important things. First, it says that abortion is fundamentally illegal in Canada and that protection of the foetus from conception until birth is a basic priority. It says that the health of the mother is also a priority, be it physical, mental or psychological and may take precedence over the foetus if judged to be necessary in the opinion of the woman's doctor.

It does not purport to render a decision about the legality of any specific abortion, but rather places the onus for that judgment in every case upon the doctor as he or she may be licensed to practise medicine under the laws of each respective province. It says, by implication, that the selection and approval of facilities where an abortion may be performed will similarly be at the judgment of the doctor within generally accepted standards of the medical profession in the province or provinces in which the doctor is licensed to practise. It also seems to say by implication that the payment of medicare benefits for abortion procedures will be in accordance with federal–provincial medicare agreements within the province or provinces in which the doctor is licensed to practise medicine and in which the abortion is carried out.

• (1950)

In terms of the broad public debate with which the abortion issue has been seized over the past many months, Bill C–43 does implicitly address the value and dignity of life, both of the foetus and of the mother. As proposed, Bill C–43 clearly states the principle of protection of the foetus from the moment of conception until birth. It does so by making it illegal to induce an abortion unless the mother's health is threatened. It also does so by excluding any reference to a gestational period of time. Therefore, I believe that Bill C–43 does clearly state fundamental respect for life from conception which is a deeply held conviction for a large number of Canadians, perhaps for most of us.

At the same time, Bill C–43 recognizes the priority of the woman's own health and her right to obtain an abortion if her health is threatened either physically, mentally or psychologically. I realize that this is a broad definition of health, subject to the professional opinion of the woman's doctor, and in practical terms will ensure that abortion is accessible on a reasonable and equitable basis for all women where it is required.

Essentially, the proposed law recognizes that abortion is a medical decision and places the onus for that decision on the qualified medical opinion of the doctor in consultation with the woman. The criminal responsibility for abortion decisions has been transferred from the woman to the doctor.

I think it is worth stating that even in so–called circumstances of free choice, the woman ultimately would have to gain the approval of a doctor to have the abortion. So freedom of choice is never really absolute. Also I have become convinced that most of those who support freedom of choice as a right do not necessarily or even generally support abortion as a principle.

Considering all of these factors, I remain convinced that Bill C–43 is the best possible resolution and perhaps the only right one for this very difficult issue. Not only do I feel that way because it is my first duty as a parliamentarian to help create an effective law on this subject but, coincidentally, Bill C–43 as it is now proposed does reasonably reflect my own moderate position on the matter as I have previously and consistently expressed in public.

Perhaps my previous views bear repeating at this time. I would like to say that one year ago during the election campaign of 1988 I expressed the view that abortion was a difficult decision to be made by a woman in consultation with her doctor. If the question arose in my own daughter's case, I would encourage her to bear the child. Ultimately, however, I would be prepared to accept her decision with love and respect, whatever that decision might be, subject to the professional opinion of her doctor.

In closing, we as parliamentarians and legislators must address ourselves to a consensus which will provide for most Canadians some basis for social order and tolerance among conflicting views, if not for reconciliation of

those views. I believe that over time Bill C–43 will prove to fulfil such purposes and I encourage all hon. members to give it their support.

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased this evening to be able to address the House on the subject of Bill C–43. I think it is fair at the outset to indicate to the House that I do not feel I can support this bill.

The main reason is that I do not believe the bill accomplishes the goal that I think it should have set out to achieve. It uses the same framework as the previous abortion legislation contained in the Criminal Code before the Morgentaler decision. That old framework, going back many years, in which our society attempted to prohibit or curtail abortions, was based on what I think history shows was a profound ignorance of what happened inside the womb.

The generations which preceded us had very little knowledge of the intricacies of child development in the womb and afterward for that matter. As a result they tried to resolve the messy problem of abortion by targeting the mother and the abortionist. At this stage in our history I do not believe that we have any more excuses. We have no excuses not to recognize precisely what happens in the womb and the various stages of development of life.

It is my view that we should not be prohibiting abortions based on who the mother is, or who the father is, or who the doctor is, or what they think at the time. We should be dealing with the issue of abortion because of who the foetus is. I want to suggest that the foetus, this will not surprise anyone here, is in fact the genesis of all human life. It is the genesis of all of mankind here on the planet today. I believe in our society what this government should be recognizing is that genesis of life and the protection to which it should be entitled.

We continue to learn more every day about how life is formed and how the human body takes shape. The study of genetics is a major field of study and experimentation today. I believe that that particular field of study is related to the way in which we deal with the issue of abortion. I am not suggesting that a statute or a bill proposal now would be able to deal with all of the issues. I recognize that a royal commission has been created for the purpose of studying several of those issues.

I do fear how our society will deal with issues such as the human mutant, created unintentionally or intentionally, and I believe that that issue should be dealt with in the same framework as the human foetus should be treated in our law. I believe that all of our laws should reflect this and I believe that our Charter should reflect this. The use of the Criminal Code to deal with protection of the foetus is anachronistic and it is based on ignorant concepts of just how human life begins.

I believe our law should be protecting the foetus. However, the current proposal does only two things. First, it sets out to criminalize the conduct of a mother, or a doctor, or an abortionist, and then it creates an exception to that criminalization, which really provides in the end result no protection to the foetus. Last, the bill fails to articulate for society the role of society in ensuring that birthing and parenting are properly regarded as essential elements in the health and well–being of our country. I do not believe that removing the foetus from the womb at any stage and disposing of the foetus as we customarily dispose of our normal refuse accomplishes any of these goals for our society and I think it is crucially important that we recognize this at this stage of our history.

• (2000)

I feel that with this bill, I and that portion of humanity which may still be in the womb are still awaiting a bill which will accomplish these goals.

Mr. Willie Littlechild (Wetaskiwin): Madam Speaker, thank you for this opportunity to address Bill C–43 on abortion. This is a matter that is extremely difficult for me because I feel it is very personal for each individual and that I should not be advancing my own views on this issue. At the same time it is important to relay my constituents' views on issues of their concern and this is the first occasion to convey those concerns on abortion.

Allow me to present three aspects: First, an overview of Bill C–43 as we understand it; second, some concerns that arise therefrom and third, my own position regarding Bill C–43.

This is indeed a controversial issue but we need legislation without further delay. This proposed legislation pays heed to the Supreme Court's opinion on abortion. In the January 1988 decision the Supreme Court of Canada reminded us as federal law makers that any policy or law on abortion, first, could not deny a

woman fair and reasonable access to abortion, second, must protect the woman's constitutional right to security of the person and, third, would reflect the state's interest in the foetus. Finally, it would have to protect the woman's life.

Bill C–43 achieves all of these objectives to some extent in its attempt to accommodate both sides of the debate. Unfortunately it will not be possible to satisfy both sides. The Supreme Court also recommended that Parliament secure a medically sound opinion as to the meaning of life or health. The proposed legislation now provides a definition as to the meaning of health. Section 287(2) states that health includes, for greater certainty, physical, mental and psychological health. Perhaps consideration ought to be given to a more narrow definition, to help define mental and psychological or, in the alternative, certain guidelines could be included for the doctor to use in his assessment process.

This bill reflects the fundamental belief that abortion is a medical act, one that requires consultation between a woman and her doctor so that valid health grounds can be established, thereby respecting society's interest in a foetus. However, this may give a doctor an absolute discretion in making a decision. It is his opinion that is decisive to the issue of termination of pregnancy.

Opinion has been defined in Section 287(2) as an opinion formed using generally accepted standards of the medical profession. It is unclear, however, what generally accepted standards of the medical profession are and who will overlook the medical doctors' practices to ensure these standards are being adhered to.

There is no enforcement mechanism or review of this opinion. If a review of doctors' practices were put in place perhaps the interests of the unborn would be better protected. Some have argued that the unborn is protected by the criminal sanction imposed but this is after the fact. There does appear a need for clearer guidelines to be given to the doctor so he can carry out the intention of Parliament, which is to achieve a balance.

If I may digress for a moment to a personal perspective, as a native Indian my upbringing has had a significant bearing on my own views of life. We view life in all forms to be very important. Human life is to be honoured and respected as a gift of the great spirit. It is a gift for which we are to be very thankful.

In conclusion, although it does not fully protect the unborn, the passage of this bill at second reading is imperative. It is imperative so that we are all afforded the opportunity to move to committee where I hope to see more clarification or improvement in substance.

Therefore my position, one of pro–life, is to support passage of Bill C–43 at second reading. We need legislation with which to work and I look forward to amendments that may improve the proposed legislation. The full process of Parliament must be executed for this very vital issue.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak against this bill. It is a bill that is wrong in principle and it is a bill that will be hurtful in practice. I believe very strongly that in the final analysis the decision to terminate a pregnancy or, to put it the other way around, the decision to carry a baby to term, must be that of the woman alone. For the state to interfere with that decision is profoundly wrong in principle. For that to be adopted by this House, an overwhelming case in principle and in practice must be made, and no such case has been made.

I address the House as a New Democrat. Our party's position is clear. Our leader last night put our position on record very eloquently. I speak as a Canadian and as a father. I believe that life is sacred and that we must treat life with great respect, but I believe that this bill does not do so, that this bill will not protect unborn babies or the foetus. This is a bill, to put it very bluntly, which is designed to protect politicians.

I speak as a Christian. I believe that life is the gift of God. But I believe in the final analysis that the complex decision that must take place in balancing the act of creation with the reality of creation must be made by the woman. That decision cannot be made by a doctor, that decision cannot be made by parliamentarians, that decision cannot be made by lawyers or judges. It must be made in the final analysis by the woman involved and it will be made by the woman involved whatever law this House adopts.

Canadians have varying degrees of views on what is moral in this area of abortion. Some would say, as we have heard in the House so far, that virtually no abortion could be described as moral. Others would accept it perhaps in the case of rape or incest; others would say if the life of the woman is endangered; others would say if the health of the woman is endangered. That decision about health can be defined in different ways; physical,

mental or psychological health. Others would say that it is moral to have an abortion if in the final decision that pregnancy would be unwanted. There are these different views and no law can capture that range of different moral views on this very difficult question.

This bill encapsulated one view which is that it is moral to have an abortion if the health of the mother, as defined by physical, mental or psychological health, is at risk. But that is not a view which is universally shared in this country. Therefore, apart from anything else, this bill will not work. It is wrong in principle and it will be wrong and hurtful in practice.

The church to which I belong, the Anglican Church of Canada, has spoken out on this issue. Many faithful Anglicans have taken different positions. The church itself is, as it describes it, cautiously in favour of the bill. In my view that position is wrong, and the reservations which the Anglican Church has are more powerful than the reasons it advances for the bill.

• (2010)

Let me deal with a series of specific flaws in this bill. First, it reverses the onus. It says than an abortion is unlawful unless certain circumstances are met. That puts the onus on the defendant to show that the defendant is not guilty of an offence.

Second, by having the law turn on the opinion of a doctor the bill then becomes open to challenge from every kook and every nut who wants to challenge the individual decision of that doctor. Every doctor is going to have a somewhat different view of what is involved in the medical health of the mother in a particular case. Not only do we have a law which is open to challenge from whoever chooses to challenge it, but we also have a law which will be widely inconsistent in application. A law which is inconsistent in application is a bad law.

There is no requirement in this law that where an abortion is lawful a hospital must perform it. There is no guarantee of access to a lawful abortion and that is why the Supreme Court struck down the other law. This law will not stand the test which is why I say again it is a law not to protect the foetus, it is a law to protect politicians who must band together to try to fend off attack.

This is an occasion not for compromise on principle, this is an occasion for a principal decision by each individual legislator in this House. This bill offends the decision of the Supreme Court in Canada by making abortions in the early terms of pregnancy illegal in certain circumstances. It alters the doctor–patient relationship. In every other case the doctor offers an opinion to the patient and the patient decides in the final analysis whether to accept the treatment and the recommendation of the doctor. This turns that relationship on its head. It puts the doctor in the controlling position. Doctors in this country should be standing up in force against this legislation and this House should not put doctors in this position.

This bill invites doctor shopping. There will become known in the community doctors who take a broad view of the language of this bill. There will be doctors who take a narrow view. In communities where there is only one doctor, who may take a very narrow view, women will be deprived of a right which they have in other communities of Canada.

Finally, this bill fails to meet one of the underlying fundamental requirements of any criminal law which is that it reflects the broad consensus in the society. There is no consensus around the moral provisions of this bill and that, among other reasons, is why the bill will fail.

I want to refer the House to the words of Madam Justice Wilson. She said:

> This decision (of having an abortion) is one that will have profound psychological, economic and social consequences for the pregnant woman. The circumstances giving rise to it can be complex and varied and there may be, and usually are, powerful considerations militating in opposite directions. It is a decision that deeply reflects the way the woman thinks about herself and her relationship to others and to society at large. It is not just a medical decision; it is a profound social and ethical one as well. Her response to it will be the response of the whole person.

Those are wise words, Madam Speaker, words which this House must take into account. She said further on the question of religion and conscience:

> Accordingly, for the state to take sides on the issue of abortion, as it does in the impugned legislation by making it a criminal offence for the pregnant woman to exercise one of her options, is not only to endorse but also to enforce, on pain of a further loss of liberty through actual

imprisonment, one conscientiously-held view at the expense of another. It is to deny freedom of conscience to some, to treat them as means to an end, to deprive them—of their "essential humanity". Can this comport with fundamental justice?

The way with which this issue of abortion must be dealt is not to put it back in the criminal law. The Supreme Court of Canada has now laid down the grounds that under existing law the foetus has no legal rights. The foetus may have moral rights. That is for each individual to determine. But the foetus has no legal rights and in that regime we can then move to begin truly to protect children in our society, to protect women in our society, to protect life in our society.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Charles DeBlois (Montmorency—Orléans): Madam Speaker, like most of the previous speakers, I rise in the House with some trepidation to speak to a subject of this complexity. In the riding of Montmorency—Orléans, in the rest of Canada, in the rest of the world, in our caucus and I would even say within the Supreme Court itself, if we bother to read the comments of individual judges, we can sense a number of different reactions to the abortion issue. It is a very controversial issue. I even did a survey in my own riding which showed that, like in many other communities, 70 per cent were against abortion and pro-life while 30 per cent favoured a far more flexible approach and some went so far as to prefer no legislation at all. But people do want Parliamemt to show leadership.

Last August, *La Presse* published a CROP poll indicating that three out of four Quebecers wanted the Parliament of Canada to pass legislation. And tonight, I think we are showing leadership by debating Bill C-43.

Madam Speaker, I feel some trepidation because I have a degree in theology and for 25 years, as a pastor in the Catholic Church, I worked hard to promote respect for life. I am sure you realize that this evening, my role is a different one, and that as a legislator, my task is no longer the same. And since the people in my riding, as in so many ridings in Canada, have been permeated by Catholic and Christian culture, I think it would be interesting to read the advice given by the Canadian bishops in 1966 to Christian legislators. The bishops said the following, and I quote: "The norm—a Christian legislator must make his own decisions. The norm for his activities as a legislator is not primarily the well-being of a religious group but the well-being of society. Religious and moral values are indeed very important to good government. However, these values influence political decisions only to the extent that they affect the common good. Members of Parliament have temporal duties. They can vote, and in practice they often do so in accordance with the Church's teachings because what the Church defends or approves is often closely related to the common good. However, bear in mind that the common good should always be their sole reference."

That is the principle that will guide my comments tonight, and in this connection, I may add that the Leader of the Official Opposition in the National Assembly made a very apt comment which reflects my own position, when during the election campaign he told someone who was going on about respect for life that one person's religion should not be made everybody's legislation.

The day after the referendum, Mr. Trudeau, the former Prime Minister of Canada, said: "Democracy is based not only on the views of the majority but also on the expression and inclusion of minority views".

• (2020)

So what guides me personally in my work as legislator and as Member for Montmorency—Orléans is the quest for a legislative measure which will restore some sense of respect for life, which is a great value, a legacy of civilization which must be protected from birth to death. Even in the case of older people respect for life is also very important. It is a sacred principle.

But at the same time it is the development of our civilization, I would say a development of the knowledge of the rights of women. In that respect the charters of human rights throughout the world have made us more aware of its importance, and I would suggest that on that point the Catholic Church has a long way to go to give women the place that righfully belongs to them in the management , I would say, of their structure and their organization.

To end on this note, a theologian whom I greatly admire, Mr. Durand, said, and I quote: «Coercion is contrary to moral standards.» Far from me to seek to impose my moral standards, either through coercion, or by legislative force, or by obstruction, or by depriving

fellow citizens of social and medical services. I simply want to express my deep and personal conviction. I lived in Quebec during the 40s and 50s when the word was "believe or die", and in my pastoral activities, while promoting and suggesting the great values of the gospel to my congregation, I always tried to show tolerance and I was one of those who enjoyed meeting with divorced people, it did not matter to me. If you believe the lesson of the gospel, the Church welcomes you.

I think that as legislators in this House we ought to be tolerant. I am fully aware tonight that we must legislate within narrow limits for the Supreme Court would never accept a bill which would condemn abortion outright. This is something we must realize and tell our people. Otherwise, the Supreme Court would rule that such a bill goes against the right of women to the security of their person as was emphasized by Chief Justice Dickson. But there is the other side of the coin, the respect for life which is a real value, something which Justices Beetz and Wilson emphasized, adding that the interest of the state is to safeguard a minimum of control.

I feel, therefore, that Bill C–43 introduces an interesting element, the fact that the medical profession will have to decide. It is an interesting notion. Judging from a number of speeches here, I had the feeling that physicians are nothing but robots and automatons; yet, we are all well aware of the tact the Canadian Medical Association maintain very high standards and that most physicians I know are respectable people who do not decide lightly to carry out an operation, either to terminate a pregnancy or in any other area. I suggest that we should rely on the professional competence and quality of Quebec and Canadian practitioners. Whatever the position Parliament may adopt and it is a very pragmatic view, in my pastoral work I had personally to interview women who had decided to seek an abortion and I tried to reason with them, but when a woman has made up her mind, she will go ahead no matter what Parliament may decide. In this connection, a legislation which would be too stringent would favour affluent women and make it possible for those who can afford it, to have their pregnancies terminated wherever such services are available.

Therefore, we need a legislation which provides a balance between— A legislation is not an ideal in life. We are aware that the law forbids us to kill, but I wonder if life would be worth living if our purpose was simply not to kill at any cost. We are here to set up a framework within which the respect for life is proclaimed as a principle, abortion is forbidden unless a qualified physician agrees it is justified.

This being said, Madam Speaker, I would like in conclusion to make a very important point. It seems to me that the abortion legislation now before us must be examined in the light of the need for a much more comprehensive family policy. In that respect, I very much appreciated the speech made by the Minister of National Health and Welfare, who listed a number of projects that hopefully will be announced in the shortest possible timeframe to help enlighten Canadians. I am referring especially to young people. Of the 70,000 abortions performed each year in Canada, half involved women under 25. In that respect, whether in the area of family planning or tax measures for families on child care, I for one hope that we revive as soon as possible what we had on the Table before Parliament was dissolved before the election, so that families once more are given support and that we go to the root of the problem. I cannot believe that there is a single Canadian woman were she to enjoy physical and psychological health, and financial means, who would even accept to have her pregnancy terminated. It is my hope that this government will compliement this abortion legislation with a series of measures to ensure that families, pregnant women and girls can have all the financial, moral and psychological support they should expect from the state.

[*English*]

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey—White Rock): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak again on this subject, having spoken on it just about 18 months ago. I would like to make several points that are important to me and I think maybe are important to a broad spectrum of our society.

First, I would like to say that there are two reasons for this debate. The first is that any civilized society must make a statement about what it values the most, what is normal, what is orderly. If we are to be a civilized society, that is the nature of civilization. We speak to order, we speak to value, we speak to norms.

The legislation we are debating today prohibiting abortions except in certain circumstances is making a statement about life, it is making a statement about what is normal and wholesome and orderly, and it is doing it by implication because it does not address those factors. It is making a statement about sanctions. But in speaking to sanctions this bill is saying that in the ordinary course of things it is normal to give birth; it is extraordinary to ask for an abortion. It is normal to want to give life, it is normal to be exuberant at the thought of birth and exuberant at the thought of reproducing ourselves. That is normality. It is extraordinary to have an abortion. In fact, the Supreme Court itself in its language of January 1988 called abortion an extraordinary medical procedure.

We are dealing with sanctions. As in all of life, while we are permitted to do almost anything, the law speaks to those sanctions which we find repulsive and we will not tolerate in a civilized society. Because we are speaking to sanctions in this legislation it underscores the normal, the accepted, the value of life.

The second reason we are debating this bill now is because the Supreme Court has asked us to. It said in its Morgentaler decision that there are two important factors about abortion. One is the protection of women and the second is the protection of life. It threw out the old abortion legislation because it did not properly protect women. It needed to throw out that legislation because if women are to have protection it cannot be seen as being uneven across Canada. It cannot be arbitrary, nor can it be illusory. Therefore, the Supreme Court was absolutely correct in rejecting the former legislation.

In pronouncing its judgment it also asked Parliament, almost begged Parliament, to make a definition of the value of the foetus. I quote Justice Wilson on page 26 of her judgement as follows:

• (2030)

"I believe that the main objective advanced to justify a restriction on the pregnant woman's Section 7 right is the protection of the foetus. I think this is a perfectly valid legislative objective."

Justice Dickson in the majority decision states at page 38:

> Like Beetz and Wilson, I agree that the protection of the foetal interests by Parliament is also a valid governmental objective. It follows that balancing these interests, with the lives and health of women a major factor, is clearly an important governmental objective.

Beetz goes on to state at page 43 of his judgment: "Accordingly I believe that the state's interest in protecting potential human life exists throughout pregnancy."

On page 4 he makes this statement: "The primary objective of Section 251 of the Criminal Code is the protection of the foetus. The protection of the life and health of a pregnant woman is an ancillary objective. The primary objective does relate to concerns which are pressing and substantial in a free and democratic society in which, pursuant to Section 1 of the charter, justify reasonable limits to be put on a woman's right."

The Supreme Court has asked us to make a statement about worth. This legislation, by stating that the foetus deserves protection from conception to birth, makes a statement about worth of that foetus, of that unborn child.

It speaks to intrinsic worth. It does not depend on external factors like viability, or potential, or becoming a productive member of society. Those are externals. The worth of the unborn is intrinsic. It does not depend on those externals. Any gestational approach implies or suggests some level of expendability, a graduated level of worth.

Sooner or later, unfortunately, when we introduce those kinds of graduated values, it becomes reduced to an economic unit rather than the intrinsic value of becoming a productive member of society—will that person fit, will that person be able to earn a living, will that person be dependent? It comes down to economic values.

The irony is that for centuries women who have been angered at their subjugation at the hands of a male dominated society have rebelled against values that put extrinsic worth on them rather than intrinsic worth. For years they have tried to make the point, and have done it successfully, that they have value in themselves, not because they are housewives, lawyers, or doctors, but because they are people the way anyone else is.

If that is true for women, is that not true for the unborn? Should we perpetuate the notion that life has extrinsic value rather than intrinsic value?

This legislation is important because it states clearly that life is important from conception on, and everybody has worth regardless of the age at time of conception or time of senility. It is not the value we put on them that makes them valued.

It is time for us to be building an ethical climate that will provide security and sanctity for the unborn from the moment of conception.

I want to read, in closing, from an article in a publication entitled *Christianity Today*. It is an article written by Tim Stafford on October 6 in which he states, referring to *Roe v. Wade*, and I ask my colleagues to bear with me:

> The discussion had been about where to draw the line among tragic choices; the justices erased the line completely and said there was no room for further discussion.
>
> Anti-abortionists may someday have reason to remember this lesson, if they gain the power to stop abortion by fiat. As we have seen, restricting abortion works best when it is based on a wider consensus about the value of life. The first centuries of the church gained this consensus through centuries of witness. They spoke passionately against abortion as a part of their faith. They also suffered for their faith. Ultimately their faith triumphed and legal changes followed.
>
> By contrast, the 19th century though it passed anti-abortion laws seems not to have built a strong, public consciousness of the humanity of a foetus.
>
> Ethicist Stanley Hauerwas touches on this issue when he notes the frustration of anti-abortionists who fail to convince their opponents that a foetus is a human being. He says that more than logic is needed and continues:
>
> Christian arguments about abortion—have not merely failed to convince: they have failed to suggest the kind of "reorientation" necessary if we are to be the kind of people and society that make abortion unthinkable—Even if [we succeed politically[, our success may still be a form of failure if we "win" without changing the presuppositions of the debate.
>
> That is what Christians in the first three centuries managed to do. They changed the world, not just the law.

I would say, Madam Speaker, to the many people out there who are concerned about this issue that we are facing an ethical morass more than a legal morass. I was watching television the other day and I heard Carmen McRae sing a song and the recurring line was: "Your gentle touch has made me strong".

I would say to those anti-abortionists out there who are carrying placards and chaining themselves to fences: put away the chains, put away the placards, and get a little closer to people. The confrontation separates us. If we could get close enough to embrace and to comfort, rather than to confront, then maybe we could begin building the kind of an ethical consensus that would make a stronger abortion law possible and give the kind of protection to the unborn that all of us hunger for.

This legislation speaks to life. We want all of society to cherish the life that we propose here.

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak to this bill, a bill that addresses an issue of the hearts, of the minds and souls of people. It is an issue in which we find very strongly held points of view on both sides.

There are those who would believe that this bill answers neither side of the question. It does not fully satisfy those who believe in a pro-choice point of view nor obviously, if one has just listened to our colleague, those who believe in a pro-life point of view. This is not the time in our society when one can afford to hold to one's personal conviction, which I would respect and hope that others would respect. I think it is a time to find a kind of compromise.

The question is: Does this bill answer the compromise that is required? I am still not very sure. I am still not 100 per cent comfortable with this bill.

This bill does respond to the jurisdiction question; it is a federal jurisdiction. It does define the act as a medical procedure. For that I am very pleased, for in the definition of a medical procedure it defines itself properly in the potential for access across this land. The question as to whether or not full access will be made available is one which I think will have to be looked at very carefully in legislative committee.

• (2040)

That women should have to consult their doctor, a medical practitioner, I believe to be sound. I believe that you do need to consult. The decision as to whether or not you wish to terminate a pregnancy is not an easy decision.

In fact I would suggest that the only time I would ever really enter into a very serious argument with colleagues who have a different point of view from mine is when they tell me that this act is one that a woman would undertake as an act of contraception. I find that to be very offensive. It is not an act of contraception. It is a very difficult emotional decision, one that is not easily taken. I would suggest that anyone who thinks otherwise has either never been pregnant or has not got very much

heart or is very hard minded in his or her own point of view.

I would suggest that being able to take an informed choice is very important. I would think being able to talk to a medical practitioner is helpful. I also believe it is very important that one have the best of health and the best of medical practice when a decision is taken, if the decision is taken to terminate her pregnancy. I believe the ultimate decision is that of the woman, but I do believe that she needs help and guidance. I trust the woman and the medical ethics of our medical profession.

The reservations I have about this bill and the reason I will vote to send it to legislative committee is that there are some issues that must be carefully examined. I do not know the answers, but I do know that there are concerns in this bill.

I believe that it needs careful scrutiny. I believe we must hear from the medical profession. I believe it must be checked to see if it will withstand a court challenge. I believe there are women who have to be heard.

While I support the full right of women to choose, I am well aware of the fact that others do not agree with this point of view. Because there are deeply held divisions in this society, there are no easy answers.

I would have preferred no law. When one lived through this past summer and saw the degradation and the stress that two cases before the courts underwent, the cases of Barbara Dodd and Chantal Daigle, one realized that there must be some form of legal format. Therefore, we cannot afford a country that is going to have 11 different laws and no sensible approach to this very difficult situation. The uncertainty is more than I think this society can withstand again. We certainly do not want that humiliation once again.

I am not happy that it has gone into the Criminal Code. I want to make very sure with legal counsel in legislative committee that there were sound reasons that it could not go under the Canada Health Act had it been amended. I understand and I accept the minister's perspective, but I would like to hear it once again.

I would hope if it absolutely must be recriminalized that we can find the mechanism through the Canada Health Act to ensure that access will be afforded all women who take a decision, and not lightly, to terminate their pregnancies and to ensure that it can be met in every province and every town where this request is made.

I would suggest to you that there are a series of rights that come. With those rights come personal responsibility on behalf of the individual woman to make an enlightened decision early in her pregnancy. Equally there is the responsibility of the state to provide the means for a woman to take that decision, knowing that her society truly cares for her child, truly cares that these children will be brought up to be productive, well informed, well nourished, intelligent young people.

Our society has far from demonstrated that caring to date. We do not have the kind of support system or the *cadre politique familial* that we need.

We are in desperate need of a look at how we handle children in our society. There is violence against children, rape, incest, lack of decent food, lack of proper housing and child care. There is a lack of the kind of incentives that would help a woman make that enlightened choice.

I say to you that while rights and responsibilities go together, it is not only for the individual woman making that decision. It is not only for the individual doctor who is helping and counselling her. It is also for those of us who are legislators to determine what are the highest priorities in society and then direct those funds. It is not the death that is important. It is the life of these children.

I would suggest to you that we see this new law in the light of the concerns and constraints that many of us are expressing around this particular issue and that we try as best as possible to find the medium, the middle line. That road will not answer all our concerns. I am definitely one who would prefer a woman to be able to make that decision in an enlightened way and be solely responsible herself.

Those of you who feel that there should be no option, that life begins at conception and there are no other choices, will understand that we as legislators have to find something that will answer that need. We all live in a very pluralistic society today. We all come from very different backgrounds, upbringings and personal perspectives. For a woman who is about to make a choice, we must respect that choice but find the cadre in the

legislative perspective that will best meet her need and that of our society.

I have certain disappointments with the bill. There are certain aspects of the bill that I find acceptable. For goodness sakes, let us start to think about sex education in the schools. Sexuality is part of our humanity. We have to find a way to share the responsibilities of that sexuality, if it has to be through teaching in the schools because the parents cannot do it properly or teaching in whatever way or with whatever medium. It is important that they understand.

I would like to suggest that while I am pro-choice I find the best answer to meet the differences in our society will be the best response possible.

As one would say, as Canadians it is the best that is possible in a world of all possibilities. I will certainly vote to send this bill to a legislative committee.

Mr. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence): Madam Speaker, I must compliment you on your ability to listen attentively to the entreaties of all hon. members on the issue before this House, Bill C-43, what Canadians have come to regard as the abortion legislation.

I daresay that that ability must surely be taxed. I wonder whether in fact you are at all not unlike so many of our citizens, or even some of our colleagues, as argument, as philosophy, as emotion and, yes, even rhetoric buffet one's faculties from intervention to intervention. It calls up respect for the various positions explained by so many members who go through the tortuous ordeal in an effort to find a path so right, so true, so appropriate for a Canadian society that is, and for a Canadian society that is becoming.

Many colleagues have attempted the juridical approach to the question noting along the way that jurisprudence reflects social convention often following in the footsteps of accepted practice and rarely venturing into the realm of groundbreaking, in effect reflecting, and I quote a previous member, "things as they are and not as they should be".

It has been difficult to take umbrage with arguments of colleagues. They have been thoughtful and deliberate. They have been respectful of the need to be tolerant, I daresay, to the point of being obsequiously courteous to those whose arguments have been in diametric opposition to their own. Perhaps this is so because we all have a basic premise from which we launch ourselves in this debate. That premise, no matter what it is, is today faced with a dilemma as hon. colleagues espouse one position or another on the bill.

• (2050)

Examine if you will for a moment the consequences of voting no to this bill and carrying the vote. In so doing I might remind colleagues that of a most moving speech that I heard from an hon. member yesterday, a minister of the Crown, who reflected some, I beleive, widely held views, pointed to the "failings", the "deficiencies" and the "incompleteness" in this legislation, and still felt that a yes vote was required because the alternative to this bill was no law at all. No law means that those who advocate abortion on demand carry the day. Those who oppose this bill on the grounds that it is virtual abortion on demand are faced with a dilemma. I am such a one.

If we vote yes we accept in principle that abortion is undesirable. We acknowledge that anyone who wants one can have one, a medical practitioner accepting. Yet, there are no procedures imposed on the medical practitioner, no definitions of conduct, no guidelines of practice, no mechanism for adjudicating that practice.

In a word, the government has accepted that the question of abortion is merely a medical matter between a woman and her doctor. That is not what the government was encouraged to do when the Supreme Court struck down the old abortion legislation nearly two years ago. That ruling confirmed, perhaps positively I daresay—I hope positively—that women have universality of access to medical care.

It called on the government and Parliament to determine by way of legislation the rights of a foetus or unborn child, the extent to which those rights are equal to those already born, when those rights may take effect, whether and when the rights of the pregnant mother take precedence, and, if and when society or the state has an interest in the development of life in its foetal stage.

That ruling called on the government for leadership. It has shown none in this bill, nor has it heeded the call to be pro-active and to define life in a context different from that which is current, that is to say, one that sees no alternative to unrestricted abortion on demand. And

even, almost perversely I daresay, its caucus members, or some thereof, ask for support for this piece of legislation on the grounds—and in my view it is a little bit too clever by half—that, and I quote them, "the alternative will be the absence of any signal that there is any regard for the value of human life".

Government logic has abdicated the obligation to deal with life to the convenience of debating the issue of abortion and, I might add, in isolation of factors and social issues and policies that make abortion the attractive alternative to birth for many women.

Many hon. colleagues before me have detailed the lack of education on sex and on birth, the societal conditions that breed irresponsible sexual practices, carnal violence and disrespect for the dignity of women. They have spoken of the lack of affordable, accessible day care facilities and of the cost of raising a child by a single parent under the burden of increasing taxation or cutbacks in programs of a social support nature.

Other eloquent members have regretted the government's inaction in the face of the disintegration of the bulwark of social harmony and productivity: family cohesion and the values that emanate from it, that is, a sense of responsibility, a degree of compassion, a modicum of respect for others, mutual support in moments of crises and a long-term approach to actions and consequences.

Rather than show leadership on the question of life and on the quality thereof, the government has contented itself with casting the issue in the context of abortion, a context which invariably favours the rights of those who are present against those who are silent, a context which too often is seen as purely a woman's issue with the unfortunate consequence of pitting one gender against the other, a debate which attacks the contribution of someone like me as improper on gender, religious, cultural or legal grounds.

If we are what we have become as parliamentarians, then can the contribution to such a debate like that of this humble elected member, who is a married father of four, Christian Catholic, an educator and administrator in a constitutionally recognized separate school system which used to teach the family values of which I spoke a moment ago, an elected representative of the people with the vested authority to promote the best interest of society, be so summarily dismissed? I say no.

We have all come here as parliamentarians to identify and define those values and conventions which distinguish Canadians and to legislate for conditions where these values and conventions are given nourishment to make our society a paragon of harmonious productive social interaction.

Yet with Bill C-43, on so fundamental a social issue the government abdicates to the medical profession its moral and legal responsibility to make decisions regarding life and/or abortion. It requires the provinces to pay for the services consequent to that decision of retaining the right to apply legal sanction under the Criminal Code in the event, unforeseeable today, that a doctor might be unable to satisfy the most generous of guidelines, that is, his or her own personal judgment.

No, our government has an obligation to present legislation that shows purpose and suggests direction. As parliamentarians we, too, then can discharge our obligation to debate the merits of that direction and a means to its realization. Regrettably this Bill C-43 gives us neither.

It asks us to debate legislation that inadequately deals with consequences. Bereft of vision it deprives us of the opportunity to address causes and goals. As such, it represents no compromise. It represents no solution. It is unworthy of support.

Mr. Doug Fee (Red Deer): Madam Speaker, I have listened with great respect to the words of the previous speaker, the member for Eglinton—Lawrence. I thank him for them.

I also listened with great respect and admiration to the two speakers who preceded him. I would like to compliment the member for Mount Royal and my colleague, the member for Surrey—White Rock who spoke before her. From separate sides of the issue, they both gave sound, reasoned arguments. They are both to be commended on the strength and obvious sincerity of their presentations. It is a privilege for me to add my thoughts and words on this sensitive and emotional issue.

Each time one of us rises in this chamber to speak on any legislative change we accept a serious responsibility. While speaking we should always remain true to our own personal principles, but at the same time we should be

representing the views of those who elected us. We have to balance a requirement to provide leadership with the responsibility to represent the electorate.

Each of us puts a degree of thought, discussion and research into each and every topic that comes before us. I can think of no other issue that has come before this House in the time I have been here which has required the degree of thought and serious soul searching than the moral question of abortion.

To achieve political solutions to the complex and controversial problems that come before us it is often necessary to accept compromise. On this issue, however, views are held so strongly and opinions are so galvanized that many of the people we represent are, because of personal convictions, unwilling or unable to compromise their position or their belief. The same is true for many of the members who sit in this House.

• (2100)

Bill C–43 is by necessity a political answer to a moral question, and as a political answer represents a compromise and moral values are not subject to compromise.

My own personal and deeply held values are that life is sacred from the moment of conception right through until natural death. We do not have the right to murder. We do not want to take upon ourselves the right to take life from the elderly, the infirm or the mentally disabled. Rather we generously provide for their well–being through our envied system of social programs. We seek to enhance the quality of their lives and I question whether this bill does enough to protect the life of the unborn.

The bill does set a moral guideline, but I do not feel the definition of health is strict enough to dramatically reduce the number of abortions actually performed in this country.

Outside this House, and I appreciate that I have not heard it included in the debate, there are some who say that abortion is a women's issue and that men should refrain from commenting. I cannot agree with that. To deny men a voice is to perpetuate the myth that men have no responsibility for pregnancy. I do not accept that.

There is an unfortunate trend in this society of ours. On this and many other issues we ignore the requirement that we should all accept responsibility for our actions. As Canadians we have legislated and protected our rights, but if this society is going to continue to reflect the values upon which it was built, we have to understand and accept the fact that responsibility must precede and overshadow rights.

We are all too willing to demand our rights. Yet, at the same time, we are far too reluctant to assume the responsibilities that go with those rights. On this particular issue, it is essential to recognize that every sexually–active person should accept responsibility for his or her actions. Bill C–43 is an attempt to balance the rights of the mother to life and health with the rights of the unborn child.

In considering those rights, I cannot help but think of the uproar that would come if a newborn baby were discarded by its parents. I would suggest that there would be countless offers of support for such an infant. Canadians from coast to coast, regardless of their income level, religion or walk of life would open their hearts and homes to help and provide for that infant. I cannot comprehend how all those same people would not show that same degree of compassion and sympathy for the unborn.

At the same time, there is another side of the issue that we cannot overlook. When we talk of compassion, we must also be compassionate toward the mother, the woman with an unwanted pregnancy. We who advocate life for the unborn have a responsibility to provide not only compassion but also economic, social and cultural support for that mother. We must provide her with choices, choices other than abortion. We have to enhance an adoption alternative. We should be willing to provide her with economic and moral support so that we encourage and enable her to continue with an unplanned and unwanted pregnancy.

It has been said by almost everybody in this debate that abortion should not be accepted as a form of birth control. In excess of 65,000 therapeutic abortions were performed in Canada last year. This is far too many. Abortion has become a far too commonly accepted procedure.

We also have to accept the sad fact that no law is going to stop abortion completely. A law cannot change the

human heart. It is not going to achieve what society is unwilling to accept. Attitudes and values have to change. Those attitudes and values are formed not in legislation but in our families, our churches and our communities.

Bill C–43 does make a very important statement. It recognizes that life is sacred from the moment of conception and that it does not gain value with age. It sets a moral tone which says that Canada does not condone abortions and because it recognizes that life is sacred from the moment of conception, it should be protected, the only exception being when the health of the mother is threatened.

In a perfect world there would be no need for a law, but our world is far from perfect and Canadians are demanding a law. They will not tolerate another series of court challenges similar to those we have seen in the past year. On the 293 of us in this Chamber falls the responsibility to set a standard for Canadians. Yet within this Chamber and within Canada there is no unanimity. There is no clear consensus as to the perfect law, so we have to compromise. We have to decide whether Canadians will accept a compromise and whether those who hold to either side of the question in this House will accept a compromise.

My decision has come down to two questions. First, is no law better than one that is less than perfect? Second, what is the purpose of the law? With regard to the first question, we have seen what no law can do. I do not want to see a repeat of last summer's series of court challenges, nor do I feel will Canadians accept a decision from us that allows a repeat of those challenges.

More important is the second question. What is the purpose of the law? I have said, and I would hope everyone would accept, that we cannot legislate morality. We cannot change individual values through legislation. What we can do with the law is to set a standard. Beyond that, we must encourage our communities, our churches, our families and individual Canadians to take responsibility for influencing moral values. Although this legislation will not change what is within a person's heart, it can enforce the need for reflection and emphasize the seriousness of action.

It has been stated by some that the bill will restrict a woman's access to abortion. Those on the same side of the issue as myself fear that in reality the definition of health is too broad and there would be too few restrictions.

We need to set a standard and this is not the law that I would prefer to see. I support a more restrictive definition of health. I have decided after much soul–searching that I will vote for this bill on second reading. Further to that, I will also be urging those who truly love life to encourage others who share that love to help provide support with compassion for those with unwanted pregnancies, to help provide choices for them other than abortion.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Madam Speaker, I begin by regretting that those of us who participate in the debate at this time in the process have only 10 minutes. I truly feel that it would take me about three hours and 10 minutes to explain everything that there is in my own mind about this issue. Regardless of what I have to say tonight, it is bound to be somewhat truncated, incomplete and therefore inarticulate.

It is also the case that I wish all of the debates that we have in this House were of the quality which we are having on this particular issue. I do not want to use up too much time on this, but this is the kind of debate that those of us who participated in the McGrath committee process had in mind for a wider range of issues in the House. Although, frankly, I do not know if I could stand it if we had a lot of debate like this, because this issue is so very, very difficult. It is certainly an issue which has caused me personally no end of personal and intellectual hell since my first election campaign in 1979.

There was a time when I would have wanted to support this bill. It contains elements of what, at one time, I thought would be close to a solution. I used to say to some of my friends when we were talking about this, that what was needed was a form of decent hypocrisy when it came to this issue; that what we needed was something which was pro–life in substance and pro–choice in practice; that most Canadians were concerned not so much about the number of abortions that were taking place but about the preservation of certain values and about the preservation of the notion of their being value in unborn life. To a certain extent, this bill does that. In fact, it was described by the hon. member for Kitchener the other day, as being pro–life in substance and pro–choice in practice. It is in that respect that I

wonder why so many pro-life members have decided to vote for it but I think I understand what they are doing.

• (2110)

I have arrived after much travail at a view that regards the use of the criminal law as unacceptable with respect to the regulation of abortion. I said this last summer, it is not something that I am saying for the first time, whether we like it or not, the criminal law is an instrument of power and an instrument of coercion. After much struggle I have come to see that much of what this debate is about is power. It is about the power relationships, if you like, between women and men; between women and society. The use of the criminal power in this case, regardless of whether it is ever used, represents a continuing offence against what so many women regard as their rightful self-consciousness as an individual person when it comes to this kind of intensely private decision.

I think the use of the criminal law is inappropriate in this case. I would have hoped that some other way could have been found. I continue to believe that many of the abortions which will be chosen, either in the context of this law if it is passed or in the context of there being no law, will be the wrong choices. I do not think that choices just by virtue of the fact that they are free choices are therefore the right decisions. But I have come to the conclusion that these right or wrong decisions have to be taken by the women involved and not by doctors and not by the state.

I could sum up my position by saying that I think the pro-choice people are right, in many cases for the wrong reasons. I have found much of the rhetoric and many of the assumptions underlying the arguments of the pro-choice position to be faulty and to contain assumptions which I reject, but as a policy, not as an inalienable exalted right, I believe that this is the way that we have to go at this point in history.

Having said that the pro-choice people were right in many cases for the wrong reasons, I also think the pro-life people are wrong for all the right reasons. Many of the things they say are values which all of us here want to uphold. Where we disagree is about whether or not those values can in fact be upheld in the way in which they want them to be upheld, through the power of the criminal law.

The law is not just a force, it is also a teacher. So I accept the argument that when we are talking about law we are talking about values. But we can give a signal about the value we put on unborn life, on children and on families in so many other ways. We can do it by not trying to de-index family allowances. We can do it by a massive attack on child poverty. We can do it in a myriad of different social and economic ways. We can send signals to perspective parents that life, in this case unborn and then young life, is something which we value. Presently, we do not send out those signals very well at all.

I might have been persuaded because I have long advocated a compromise. But, as you can see, I have changed my mind. I might have been more tempted if the compromise had provided an anxiety free period. That is to say, some period in which there might have been a complete pro-choice policy moving to a more restrictive approach in the latter part of the pregnancy. However, I am convinced, because I have had a good look at the CMA guidelines and other medical regulations, that abortions in the third trimester after viability are very rare indeed. And they should be. If it ever came to my attention that this was not the case then I would be the first one to argue that there ought to be some sanction against that practice. Yet, there just does not seem to be any evidence that there is a need for that kind of interference at this point.

One member said, and I agree, that we should never be in the situation where, in one wing of the hospital we are striving to save a premature baby and in the other wing of the hospital we are, by virtue of whatever policy we adopt, condoning the termination of the life of foetuses which are at the same stage as those who have been born prematurely.

This is where I am after 10 years of very, very difficult thinking about this. I retain my willingness to be critical of the arguments put forward by both sides in this debate. I think that in many cases, unfortunately, both the pro life and the pro choice positions have been presented in a way which is so symptomatic of our times, as a kind of instant quick-fix solution to problems which run much deeper.

The pro life forces, particularly those who operate from a religious perspective, want to have a world without sin. It cannot be done. Many of the pro choice forces want to have a world without guilt. That cannot be done either. We can have a world in which the privacy, the dignity and the intimacy which women deserve in these kinds of decisions is respected.

In the absence of the government coming forward with a bill that really tries to address some of these very difficult issues, particularly issues which I think will have to be addressed down the road with respect to early-stage abortions, when technology permits us to make more choices, not just about whether or not to have a child but what kind of child to have, questions which are not being addressed in this debate and will have to be addressed by people on both sides, sooner or later—

In the meantime, the government having failed to do that, but having succeeded in doing what I think the hon. member from Victoria said so well in coming forward with a bill to protect politicians, something under which a majority of us could huddle for protection from the various groups that have such strong opinions on this, my only alternative is to vote against the bill.

• (2120)

Mr. Ross Belsher (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I rise to take part in this debate with mixed emotions. I feel relieved that we are finally seeing legislation introduced on abortion, but I must say that it saddens me deeply that at this juncture in what we believe to be our highly evolved society, we need to be debating whether we should have legislation that provides guidelines for abortion. In my view, and in the view of the majority of my constituents, there is no question guidelines are needed.

In my home province of British Columbia there are 26 abortions for every 100 live births. Yes, guidelines are needed. All members of this House, and in fact most members of the Canadian public are aware of the controversy that surrounds this issue. In fact there have been a great number of court cases involving abortion.

The most recent case that has been decided comes from the Supreme Court of Canada. As members will know, it is the Chantal Daigle case. Although decided on August 8, the court has only recently provided us with the reasons for its decision. Once again, the main message of the court comes through loud and clear. That message states that the responsibility lies on our shoulders. We, the legislators, must take action. The court does not exist to make law. There is no government by judiciary in Canada. The Supreme Court has not ventured into the realm of making law, but to its credit leaves that to the members who are gathered here. Now we are doing just that.

I am aware that there appears to be a great movement to block any action on this important issue. Once again, common sense is not so common. Nonetheless, that movement is, to my understanding, a vocal minority. The silent majority, whom I believe share my concern, are tired of waiting. They elected us to the House of Commons to take action. That is what we are doing. Some say that Bill C-43 returns us to what we had before the 1988 Supreme Court decision on Morgentaler. Some say that we will have abortion on demand. I disagree. There are three points that must be made clear.

First, by introducing a law that provides guidelines for abortion, the government is indicating that the state has an interest in the foetus.

Second, by avoiding a gestational approach, the government is recognizing that life begins at conception. If this were not the case, then the state would have no reason to regulate abortion.

Third, and most important, I believe that this legislation will stand up to a challenge in the Supreme Court of Canada. The ability to stand up to a court challenge is essential. We presently have no legal guidelines for abortion because the Supreme Court found the previous law to be unconstitutional.

The present situation of no regulation has been recognized as unacceptable. It is tantamount to anarchy. To enact a law that would subsequently fall, if challenged, would be irresponsible as it would simply result in the present anarchic situation. I find the present situation of no legislation to be unacceptable. We need a law to protect the unborn. This bill is that law. It is a step in the right direction. This is true for several reasons. It recognizes that life begins at conception. There has been no attempt at negotiating this point. By avoiding the gestational approach, the government is saying that a foetus, the unborn, is protected by the state and by the law from conception onward.

Because life begins at conception and the state has an interest in that life, the method which exists to unnatu-

rally terminate that life, namely, abortion, is being controlled. This control has not been introduced in a vacuum. On the contrary, the government has learned that the Supreme Court will strike down any unconstitutional laws. Therefore, the government has provided for the rights of the woman by allowing abortion in the cases of physical, mental and psychological threats to the woman's health. This is consistent with the Charter. It does not coerce a woman to bear children under penalty of law. At the same time, it does not allow the woman to have access to abortion on demand. The balance that is apparent in Bill C–43 is consistent with our Constitution. It is not contrary, and if challenged, I believe it will not fall.

I am here in this House today at the behest of the electors of Fraser Valley East. It is only fitting to make reference to the prevailing feeling that exists in my constituency. The people of Fraser Valley East are overwhelmingly on the side of the unborn.

When I stood for election in 1984 and re–election in 1988 I did so on a highly visible platform that included among other things a pro–life component. My beliefs were not secret. The electors of Fraser Valley East knew my record on the issue of abortion. They were well aware of the position I would take and they knew the reasons why. I was not then, nor am I now, a one–issue politician. I made a commitment to influence policy. They accepted that commitment. They knew that I would not change the world. The commitment was made and it has been kept. My constituents know me and they know my position. They voted accordingly and here I am. What is it that they think on this very important issue? Like myself and many other members in this House, they think that life begins at conception. They believe that life is sacred and although concessions are part and parcel of politics there can be no compromise on these principles.

Church and state are separate. The state must be all things to all people. This is what we must hold true if we are to have the understanding and tolerant society we say we desire. This involves being true to certain underlying principles that make the existence of the state possible. Among those principles of tolerance and understanding are the principles of the preservation and sanctity of life. This is true regardless of religion or the absence thereof. That is why it was so important that this bill did not take the gestational approach. The gestational approach is simply indefensible. It draws an arbitrary dividing line between life, which is worthy of protection and life, which is not. It ignores a primary function of law, the protection of human life. There can be no compromise on the principle of when life begins. The foetus is protected from conception and that is evident in this bill.

In politics and in a plural society we realize that concessions must be made. Reality tells us that compromise is necessary.

The oft–quoted example of the British parliamentarian, William Wilberforce, and his 17–year struggle to abolish slavery stands as testimony to the need and indeed the efficacy of compromise. I might point out that it is compromise on the means not the end. The principle must remain intact.

A gestational approach is unacceptable because it would betray the principles of recognizing that life begins at conception and that life is sacred. This principle has not been compromised and that is why this legislation is a positive step in the right direction. That is why I can support this bill and believe that my constituents, although they might not be completely satisfied with this bill, would accept it. Like William Wilberforce I am willing to fight the good fight for my principles.

Although I can support this bill I do have reservations. I believe the bill would be more effective with more demanding definitions of the kinds of health risks that merit access to abortion. But it is at committee, or report stage, when we must try to strengthen the provisions of this bill and propose suitable amendments.

We need a law to protect the unborn. Having no law is unacceptable because I believe that life does begin at conception. Bill C–43 recognizes this fact. This recognition is the only reason that I can support this legislation. It is for this and the aforementioned reasons that I support this bill and I encourage other members to do likewise. The legislative committee must study this piece of legistative and report back to this House.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

• (2130)

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

THE BUDGET—REQUEST FOR BUDGET WITHDRAWAL—REQUEST FOR MINISTER'S RESIGNATION

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Madam Speaker, on April 28, I raised questions in the House with the Minister of Finance about the budget leaks. That was a long time ago. Since then charges were laid and the *sub judice* convention has been applied by the Speaker for the time being. I want to respect that. However, I want to use the opportunity here to make a very important point about the way in which this government sees its responsibility.

What I want to point out through the answers we have received to questions on a number of subjects over the last few months is that the government no longer assumes any responsibility for its moral conduct, for the proper administration of the public affairs, or for the proper discharge of the duties of ministers. The government is not prepared to give any indication of how its own responsibilities are discharged, except in one way, and that is to say if members on this side of the House have any evidence of wrong-doing we should go to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

In other words, the conscience of this government has disintegrated and declined to the lowest level of behavior in the country. If it is criminal behaviour, it has nothing to say about it. Its colleagues are to be presumed innocent until proven guilty. In the meanwhile, if we have any evidence that any of them is breaking the law, we should take that to the police.

Mr. Boyer: It sounds reasonable to me.

Mr. Kaplan: Well, it may sound reasonable to the members opposite, but I understood when this present government was elected that it would operate at a level, not only which would be beyond reproach, but which would also appear to be beyond reproach. Ministers would not only behave according to the highest moral standards, which are much higher, by the way, than the standards of the criminal law, and they would appear to operate by them.

I took that to mean that when a minister or a member of the House came under a legitimate cloud of suspicion that the minister or the member would do the honourable thing while matters were being investigated, and not necessarily only those on a criminal basis. It could well simply be a breach of an undertaking, or conduct legal but unbecoming a member of the government. In that connection, I think that the public administration of Canada has deteriorated enormously under this government.

I asked about the budget leak and whether there was a state of sloppiness existing around security in the preparation of the budget. I was not necessarily talking about criminal behaviour. I did not know whether a crime had been committed in the way in which the budget was prepared and the level of security that was applied to it. I was simply asking whether the standard of security in the operations of the Queen's Printer, under the responsibility of standards which cover a number of ministries, were adequate. That is a simple question. It is not asking for a criminal investigation. The answer that I got on April 28 was: "Investigations are being conducted, Mr. Speaker, and it is entirely inappropriate to comment on them in this House". That was the answer on April 28.

Today I read a Canadian Press release, reported in nearly every newspaper in Canada, including *The Globe and Mail* which states:

> Budget leak investigation ended.
>
> The RCMP has concluded all its investigations into the leak of Finance Minister Michael Wilson's budget and does not plan to lay any more charges.
>
> Federal Solicitor-General Pierre Blais told reporters—

—(that he did not know whether the investigations were still under way).

> But Sergeant Pierre Belanger, an RCMP spokesman, said—" We have no evidence of any wrongdoing. No charges will be laid".

The excuse for not answering my question, and I quote again from *Hansard*: "Investigations are being conducted, Mr. Speaker, and it is entirely inappropriate to comment on them in this House."

Well, I never accepted that answer. Even if I had accepted it, the validity of that answer expires today, November 22, 1989, because according to the RCMP, investigations are now concluded. So I want to ask the representative of the minister the question that I asked which could not be answered as it was answered back in

April when the excuse was given that criminal investigations were under way, as if that had everything to do with the question I was asking.

Will the minister confirm that a state of sloppiness existed around the security in the preparation of his budget? On the basis of that sloppy security, will he tell us whether he will recognize his responsibility for it?

Mr. Benno Friesen (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Madam Speaker, first let me point out that the member began his remarks by saying that the Speaker has ruled that this subject matter is *sub judice*. In fact, the Speaker has made two rulings on that. I would have hoped that a former Solicitor General would respect that. It is still *sub judice*. Nothing has changed and it remains that way.

I do recall, however, that when the member was Solicitor General, he passed an order in council which empowered the government in peace time to release prisoners from penitentiaries who had been convicted of a criminal offence in order to make room for political prisoners who had not been convicted of any offence. A man who passes that kind of an order in council has no authority to talk about morality.

Mr. Kaplan: You are insane. I passed no such order in council.

Mr. Friesen: Emergency planning orders. You know that. You admitted it in the House.

CANADA POST

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiaq):

[*Editor's Note: Member spoke in Inuktitut*]

[*English*]

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity tonight to return to the issue of the northern air stage parcel subsidy which I raised in the House on October 27.

For the past several years going back at least to the 1970s, Canada Post has been delivering food stuff and other goods to remote communities in certain provinces and the Northwest Territories. It has been delivering these goods at a rate which is much lower than air freight rates. This service is known as the northern air stage parcel subsidy.

This service means that northern residents can purchase basic groceries and other essential goods at prices that, while still much higher than what the goods would cost in a southern Canadian city, are still much cheaper than goods delivered under commercial air cargo rates.

Previous governments subsidized Canada Post for providing this service with an annual funding allotment. They did so in order to fulfil an important public policy goal and social objective. Previous governments wanted residents in the northern and most remote parts of Canada to have access to fresh produce, fruits and vegetables and other basic groceries and goods throughout the year at reasonable and affordable prices.

The current Conservative government has abandoned this social policy objective. In 1986, without consultation with northerners, it decided to phase out the subsidy. Since 1986, the subsidy has declined by $1 million a year. The government's intention is to eliminate the subsidy totally within 15 years.

Because the subsidy has been reduced, Canada Post has decided that it must raise the northern air stage parcel rates by an average of 32 per cent. Eighty–five communities in the Northwest Territories and the northern parts of Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan will be hurt by this increase. Twenty–three of those affected communities are in my constituency in the eastern Arctic.

A letter from Arctic Co–Operatives Limited to the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, and the minister responsible for Canada Post, says the rate changes will have a devastating effect on the people of the north.

• (2140)

According to the Arctic Co–operatives, this increase means that a case of bread, now $21.49, will increase to $41.30. A case of baby's powder formula, now $13.41, will increase to $41.30. A case of Pampers, now $25.65, will increase to $56.10.

In the community of Broughton Island a loaf of bread now costs $3.45. After the increase, that same loaf of bread is going to cost $4.49. A head of lettuce now costs

$4.27. After the increase that lettuce is going to cost $5.55.

Would the members of the government and the officials of Canada Post like to pay almost $6 for a bunch of celery? What about $5 for two pounds of carrots? Even with their high salaries they would find it difficult. For the people in these remote northern communities where unemployment rates are 50 per cent and higher and most people are on fixed incomes, these prices are absolutely beyond reach. People will not be able to feed their families properly. People, including children, are going to go without. There will be health consequences and severe emotional and financial hardship and stress placed on families. These will be the results of this callous and heartless government position.

On November 2 I attended a meeting with officials from Canada Post, Indian and Northern Affairs, Health and Welfare and the hon. member from Abitibi. Also at that meeting were representatives from northern Indian and Inuit communities and groups. The meeting ended with a request from aboriginal representatives for a moratorium of one year on the proposed rate increase.

Late that evening, Canada Post issued a press release postponing the implementation of the increase from November 13 to January 31, 1990. Between November 2 and January 31 consultation is to take place with affected parties to minimize the impact of the increase.

The following day, November 3, I questioned government ministers about the postponement and was told that a working group would be set up to deal with the issues. Since that day, November 3, I have been trying to get more information on this working group. As of this afternoon, no one could tell me who is chairing the group. For almost three weeks Canada Post and Indian and Northern Affairs have been fighting over who will take the lead role. Canada Post does not want the lead role. It says Indian and Northern Affairs should have it. Indian and Northern Affairs does not want this responsibility. It says the program is Canada Post's.

Since the departments cannot agree on who will lead it, the study group is not yet officially established. Since it is not officially established, it has no terms of reference. The terms of reference will be worked out when the group meets. When will it meet? No one knows because it has not been officially established. Will there be representatives from the affected northern communities? No one can say because it will have to be discussed when the group meets and no one knows when that will be.

Due to this infighting we have already lost about three weeks of the three months that were supposed to be used for consultation. Who suffers from this delay? Not Canada Post, not Indian and Northern Affairs. But the people of the north.

Three months is too short a time to begin with. Christmas is coming and not much work will get done during the Christmas season. The postponement it seems is just an executioner's delay. Canada Post appears determined to proceed with this increase. It says it cannot continue to provide the service at current rates because of the cut-back to the subsidy.

An acceptable solution will not be found by January 31 without clear and precise political direction from the ministers who are involved. The proposed increase must be stopped, not merely postponed. The government must reverse a decision it took in 1986 to eliminate the subsidy. This increase is not justified. We have had no roads built in the eastern Arctic which would enable us to bring in our groceries more cheaply than by air; our frozen waters will not permit year round shipping. We will not accept a situation where we can have fresh fruit and vegetables during the summer months only when the ships can come in.

The government has no major economic development plans for the eastern Arctic which would increase employment and incomes. With all the tax increases over the past few years and the new proposed goods and services tax scheduled for 1991, northern incomes and standards of living are being further set back, and to put an increase of 32 per cent on basic groceries and foodstuff is absolutely intolerable.

I urge the Ministers of Indian and Northern Affairs, Canada Post and Health and Welfare to go back to their cabinet colleagues. Tell them that you did not realize how devastating this increase would be upon the northern people. Tell them the subsidy must not be eliminated, that it must be maintained at a level that will not result in Canada Post increasing its rates.

Tell them that children, single mothers, elderly pensioners, and unemployed youth will suffer the most. Ask them if they are truly willing to reduce the deficit on the backs of these people whose only offence is that they live in the north. Ask them to please put people ahead of profits.

Mr. Patrick Boyer (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member for Nunatsiaq has outlined the problem very clearly and he has also discussed tonight what appears to be a problem in getting on with the solution to the problem.

Several points have to be made. First, the role of Canada Post must be to provide delivery services across this country. Beyond that, when we get heavily into social policy, that rightly falls to other areas. I noted in the conclusion of the member's remarks, when he was talking about the impact of this decision with respect to the northern air stage rate increases, that this was going to be on the backs of the elderly, single mothers and so on.

I understand the concerns. The member speaks very eloquently about them, but I do not believe those are matters that fall within the ambit of Canada Post and they are much more correctly dealt with under other government programs. That is the reason that a joint or interdepartmental committee has been proposed. Two months remain before the rate increases go into effect. I would hope that is time enough for all the interested parties to get together. The hon. member says that time has already gone by before this committee has found which table it is sitting at and who is going to be bringing down the gavel as chairman. I submit to him and to those he represents that already since this announcement was made by the government on November 2 there is a delay in the increase until the end of January. This is to provide time for consultation with northerners so that those in the north and others have an opportunity to get their suggestions and proposals together. I am sure that his intervention in the House tonight is going to accelerate the process of getting that committee struck and I do think it will also be an opportunity for some of the uncertainty about this to be clarified.

I know the hon. member speaks on all his examples in graphic terms specifically about the increase of items at the retail level. In fact, the proposed rate increase will be applied of the basis of the per kilogram weight and whether that translates into the price increases that have been described in the House tonight is something that is going to have to be reviewed by this committee.

The issue is an important one. The reality of northern distribution of goods and services, and this is not through a service that is like the distribution of parcels normally through Canada Post but the special operation of northern air stage, is a unique service for a unique part of Canada. That is why the government has held back on the effort to try to have the post office in all parts of Canada from coast to coast pay its way and be responsible in delivery of services to people but with all Canadians, wherever they live, paying their fair share. It is never easy, but I hope with the co–operation of the hon. member and certainly the impetus that he has given tonight to get this interdepartmental committee moving that we can get a good result in a balanced way.

• (2150)

TRANSPORTATION OF DANGEROUS GOODS/EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Madam Speaker, I rise following a question which I put on October 25 to the Minister of State for Transport. It deals with the transportation on B.C. ferries of hazardous materials and, in particular, PCBs. This issue was first raised in August by the President of the B.C. Ferry and Marine Workers Union, Lee Cochrane. It had come to the attention of the union that PCBs and other dangerous goods were being carried on B.C. passenger ferries, and that this was happening without any inspection to see whether the regulations were being complied with.

It emerged that, in fact, the Department of Transport had imposed restrictions and conditions on the transportation of dangerous cargoes on passenger ferries 18 months ago. But it also was quickly conceded by the regional people that, in fact, they did not have the staff to see whether the conditions were even being complied with. There was apparently no requirement being placed on terminal agents and others to ensure that when a truck carrying a dangerous cargo or PCBs came on a B.C. ferry that the regulations were being complied with. No notice was being given and nothing was happening to see that these very detailed lists of conditions were being met.

When I asked the minister about this back toward the end of October, the minister's reply was that we have great conditions, we have checked them all out and the conditions and restrictions are adequate, which of course, missed the point. The point was not the adequacy of the conditions. The point was the adequacy of the enforcement of the conditions.

The matter then got raised in the Auditor General's report, because as it happens the Auditor General was digging into this very situation. In his report this year he came through with a devastating attack on Transport Canada for precisely this point and others, namely, that there was not sufficient staff to inspect dangerous cargoes on ferries.

What we are looking at here is trying to prevent a disaster before it happens. This is not a partisan issue. This is one which I am sure the department is as concerned about as we are on this side of the House. What we have here is a failure on the part of Treasury Board and others in government to ensure that personnel resources are available to inspect and ensure that these regulations are being maintained.

One would have thought after all that the department would have got the message. Just the other day I received a letter from the Minister of Transport, and the minister replies finally to my September 15 letter. I received this in my office on November 1, 1989. In this reply all we got was the same old stuff: "I must emphasize that the conditions imposed were more stringent than those required by the IMDG Code or the Dangerous Goods Shipping Regulations. The Canadian Coast Guard is enforcing all such regulatory requirements." That is just not true. It is not enforcing the requirements.

What I would ask the parliamentary secretary to do is to at least acknowledge an understanding of the problem and assure the people of Vancouver Island and those who travel on B.C. Ferries—and this issue probably applies to other ferries across Canada, but we know it applies on the coast—that the government understands the problem, that the problem is grasped by the department, that there is some plan in motion to try to get the necessary inspection resources in place, that the government is going to inform B.C. Ferries staff, or require that they be informed before these shipments take place, and that there is going to be some system of inspection. The Auditor General said that the only inspections that take place are kind of annual inspections. The ferries and others are warned they are coming and that is all that happens. But there are no unpredictable spot visits.

You have had notice of this. What we ask is that the department at least acknowledge this and say that something is going to be done. In the meantime, lift the permission. No hardship is going to occur if for a two or three-month period permission to transport on passenger ferries is lifted because there are other ways of getting dangerous goods back and forth from Vancouver Island. They can be carried on non-passenger vessels.

So please, we ask, that you at least acknowledge the problem and give the people of Vancouver Island some assurance that this matter is going to be dealt with.

Mr. Ross Belsher (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to address this House on the important issue raised by the hon. member for Victoria on the adequacy of the Coast Guard program to ensure that dangerous goods are safely carried on passenger ferries.

First, let me state that the health and safety of the travelling public remains a top priority of this government. With this in mind, Coast Guard inspection procedures are constantly being reviewed to ensure that marine transportation of dangerous goods in Canadian waters are effectively and efficiently controlled and monitored.

In his report, the Auditor General made specific references to the dangerous goods inspections, procedures currently being employed by the Coast Guard on vessels of either Canadian or foreign registry. The transportation of dangerous goods by any mode is subject to very strict regulations. Under the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act anyone transporting dangerous goods in defiance of the act is breaking the law.

The transportation of packaged dangerous goods by ferry is regulated by both the dangerous goods shipping regulations made under the Canada Shipping Act and the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act and regulations.

The Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act and the regulations address the classifications, marking and documentation requirements, while the dangerous goods shipping regulations address the stowage and segregation of dangerous goods aboard the ferry.

The Auditor General has noted in his report that we do investigate and conduct inspections on ferries when some specific concern exists and random inspections are also conducted.

The Coast Guard also conducts training courses for senior officers and shore management officials to ensure a full and complete knowledge of regulatory

requirements, including particularly reference to the types of dangerous goods prohibited on passenger ferries and those other dangerous goods that may be subject to stowage restrictions. In addition, Coast Guard inspectors are available to provide advice and guidance to ferry safety supervisors.

The department will continue to work closely with other jurisdictions to continue to improve upon the safe transportation of dangerous goods. It should be pointed out that the Auditor General stated that the Coast Guard's mandatory inspection of safety features, regulations and examinations of mariners is well organized and well carried out.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 9.58 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, November 23, 1989

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

[*Translation*]

VACANCY

LAURIER–SAINTE–MARIE, BY DEATH

Mr. Speaker: It is my duty to inform the House that I have been notified of a vacancy in the representation in the House of Commons for the electoral district of Laurier—Sainte–Marie, in the Province of Québec, following the death of Jean–Claude Malépart. Accordingly, I have addressed an official order to the Chief Electoral Officer for the issue of a new writ of election for the said electoral district.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

ORDER IN COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

TABLING AND REFERENCE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Justice I am pleased to table in both official languages a number of Order in Council appointments which were made by the government. Pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 110(1), these are deemed referred to the appropriate standing committees, a list of which is attached.

* * *

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table the responses to several petitions pursuant to Standing Order 36(8).

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

* * *

STRIKING COMMITTEE

PRESENTATION OF TWENTY–FOURTH REPORT

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the twenty–fourth report of the striking committee.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

* * *

PETITIONS

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure, indeed an honour, to present a petition, pursuant to Standing Order 36 and certified correct by the Clerk of Petitions from a number of people from Kamloops, British Columbia, who point out their reasons why they are opposed to the government's goods and services tax and feel that it will bring very serious economic hardship to so many families in the area. They are asking the government to stop proceeding with this goods and services tax and go back to the drawing board in an effort to come up with a real tax reform package that is fair and just to all Canadians.

• (1110)

RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition on behalf of a number of people from all parts of Canada, including western Canada, Ontario, Quebec, Newfoundland, Alberta and Saskatchewan, who point out that one–sixth of all Canadian children live in poverty today. The percentage of children living in poverty is increasing year by year. In some provinces the figure is as high as 26 per cent of children living in a condition of poverty. They are urging the Parliament of Canada to support Private Members' Motion No. M–254 which calls upon the Government of Canada to negotiate with the provinces to provide a comprehensive bill of rights for children.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I have another petition, again from western Canadians who have filled out a petition questioning the judgment of the government in its decision to curtail or reduce VIA Rail passenger service. They are asking the government to reverse that decision and actually reinvest adequate money into VIA Rail so that we can provide a first-class rail service in Canada as virtually every other western industrialized nation is doing.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present petitions on behalf of the constituents of Lambton—Middlesex, in particular the Alvinston-Watford-Bothwell area, who are objecting most strenuously to the goods and service tax because of what it is going to do to their communities and the services provided.

VIA RAIL

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from the same area objecting strenuously to the discontinuation of VIA Rail services to some areas of Canada and the stringent cutbacks that are being imposed on Canadians who depend upon the railways as a viable alternative to highway congestion and airport delays.

I am honoured to present these petitions on behalf of these constituents of Lambton—Middlesex.

ROUGE VALLEY

Mrs. Pauline Browes (Scarborough Centre): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to file with the House of Commons today a petition that is entitled "Help Save the Rouge". Many members of Parliament have heard about the Rouge Valley in the northeast section of Metro Toronto, 5,000 acres. It really has been quite a miracle in that this 5,000 acres is still in a wildlife wilderness state.

The petitioners are asking that it remain so. This land is 80 per cent owned by the province of Ontario. The petitioners are asking that this endangered wildlife and wilderness be saved in the national interest. They join with the royal commissioner, the Hon. David Crombie, who has stated that the Rouge Valley should be protected as a natural heritage park. The mayor of Scarborough, the federal Minister of the Environment and the Save the Rouge Valley system organization have all expressed that support. They are calling on the Government of Canada to work with the Government of Ontario to establish the Rouge River Valley as a Canadian heritage land or provincial park.

[*Translation*]

OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Charles DeBlois (Montmorency—Orléans): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I too have the honour to table a petition which has been deemed correct as to form and content by the clerk of petitions. This petition was signed following an information meeting on the Finance Minister's proposed goods and services tax and 27 petitioners from all municipalities in my riding point out in particular that the Conservative Government has prided itself in cleaning up the public finances and firmly attacking the serious problem of Canada's debt and deficit. They also say that the Conservative Government does not intend to mortgage Canada's future and leave future generations with a country that could not even afford to meet its people's basic needs anymore.

For these reasons, the petitioners humbly ask Parliament to quickly pass the federal sales tax reform proposal that will be submitted to it by the Hon. Minister of Finance.

[*English*]

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiaq):

[*Editor's Note: Member spoke in Inuktitut.*]

[*English*]

Mr. Anawak: Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of presenting, pursuant to Standing Order 36, two petitions, one from the community of Hall Beach in my riding and one from Lake Harbour, also in my riding.

One must understand that when I present these petitions, my riding consists of three time zones. Therefore, when I present these petitions from different parts of my riding it does not mean that they are within blocks of each other. It means that they are miles apart. At the same time they are all objecting to the proposed goods and services tax.

EXTRADITION

Mr. Doug Fee (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege this morning to present three petitions that have all been certified correct as to form and content pursuant to Standing Order 36.

These petitions are signed by residents mainly from the city of Red Deer and the town of Innisfail. They ask that their names be added to the approximately 90,000 other Canadians who have called upon Parliament to revise the laws of Canada relating to extradition to allow the Minister of Justice to order the extradition of alleged or convicted criminals at any time after their apprehension in Canada, even during their period of incarceration for crimes committed in Canada.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, I too have some petitions which I am honoured to present. It relates to the GST, the gouge and swindle tax that this government is trying to shuffle through here.

The people of Spanish Room are outraged with this tax, as are the people of St. Jets and La Poile, all in my riding, and Harbour Breton. The people of Grand Bruit do not like this tax. In Ron Connor East they cannot stand for it. In St. Veronica's they are signing petitions and mailing them out to me.

In Burgeo they see what this tax is going to do to them. In Boxey, Petty Fort, Garden Cove, in Burin, in the head of Bay d'Espoir they are against this 9 per cent goods and services tax, as they are in Grey River and St. Lawrence and St. Alban's, Velorme, all over the riding of Burin—St. George's. The petitions come in, dozens and dozens of them. St. Bernard's, English Harbour West, Bortier, Burin Bay Arm, Garnish, Rose Blanche, Red Harbour, Grand Banks. Even people in Whitburn—not quite in my riding—but people over in other ridings are getting into the act. Lewin's Cove, that is in my riding. St. George's, Francois, Milltown.

Mr. Merrithew: Time.

Mr. Simmons: I am only using a word or two on each petition. I can present them individually if the minister would rather.

Mr. Merrithew: Don't waste your time.

Mr. Simmons: These people, I say to the minister, are not wasting their time. They are hoping that somebody over there is still listening. Port aux Basques, they are against this goods and services tax. In Black Tuck Cove, Port aux Bras, Isle Lamorts Marguerite—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Could I ask the member to please conclude.

Mr. Simmons: Mr. Speaker, I was trying to save the time of the House. Instead of presenting these petitions individually, I was reading a name from each petition. If the Speaker would prefer, I can present them separately.

Francois, they are against it. That is one group that I would like to table.

I have another group here who are also against this goods and services tax. In the Codroy Valley, Channel Port aux Basques.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member has been here for a long time, longer than I have and I think he knows that what he should do is summarize briefly the petitions.

• (1120)

Mr. Simmons: Mr. Speaker, I thank you Sir. I am summarizing in the briefest possible terms. I am using no more than than the name of a community for each petition and I shall do it as quickly as I can, Sir.

Isle-aux-Morts. Mr. Speaker, these petitions I would like to table. I would like to table some petitions against the goods and services tax from the good people of Baie d'Espoir, Stephenville, and so many other communities. Kippens. I think you get the idea, Mr. Speaker, that all over the riding of Burin—St. George's in every single one of the 158 communities there are people by the thousands who are outraged absolutely by what the government is trying to ram down their throats.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the hon. member for presenting petitions today.

Mr. Simmons: In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, a total this time of around 4,400 people have put their names on those petitions and I hope somebody over there is listening.

EXTRADITION

Mr. Al Horning (Okanagan Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise today pursuant to Standing Order 36 on behalf of 3,412 constituents of Okanagan Centre who ask Parliament to revise the laws of Canada relating to extradition to allow the justice minister of Canada to order the extradition of alleged and convicted criminals at any time after the apprehension in Canada, even during this

period of incarceration for crimes committed in Canada. The total of these petitions now stands close to 100,000.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour and duty to present to this House on behalf of a number of constituents of mine, St. Louis, Domremy and Hoey, my neighbours, and a number of people from the city of Saskatoon, who humbly sheweth that the tax that is being suggested by the government is going to be difficult for them and is going to impose on them considerably during the next few years.

They call upon the government to reject the current proposal of a goods and services tax and put in place a broad tax which would be fair to all the ordinary citizens of Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, this morning I have the honour and the privilege of tabling 12 petitions, the first of a series, from people who humbly pray and call upon the government to cancel the proposed legislation on goods and services tax.

This tax will cause serious hardship and is unfair to low- and middle-income Canadians.

[*English*]

The rest of them are objecting strongly to the tax that will be hidden from Canadians and will be applied to virtually every single purchase they make.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, perhaps because they did not have a chance to send them to their own members, I have petitions here from residents from Saint-Hubert, Candiac, Senneville, and from all over the South Shore, the Laurentians, the Eastern Townships, and several ridings on Montreal Island, including my own, Saint-Laurent—Cartierville.

These petitions are tabled pursuant to Standing Order 36.

[*English*]

Mrs. Diane Marleau (Sudbury): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour, the privilege and the duty of submitting to you today 15 petitions from the people of the riding of Sudbury. This is not the first time I have presented such petitions and I can assure you that they keep coming in. I have at least 30 names per petition for a total of approximately 400 names just today.

These people are extremely concerned with the proposed goods and services tax and they ask that the government reconsider imposing this tax on Canadians. They are extremely worried about the impact of this tax on their day-to-day activities and whether they will be able to continue these activities.

They are extremely concerned with the fact that the tax will apply to their heating bills. As you know, we are somewhat north of here and it is cruel to impose a tax on something as vital as heating.

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, today I have the honour and privilege to present a petition signed by hundreds of residents of Hamilton Mountain who add their names to the approximately 25,000 that I have already brought to Ottawa. These petitioners have spoken out overwhelmingly against the government's proposed 9 per cent goods and services tax. They believe the tax is unfair and that it places an unnecessary additional burden on low and middle-income Canadians.

These petitioners humbly pray and call upon this House to reject the 9 per cent goods and services tax proposal.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present two sets of petitions today pursuant to Standing Order 36. The first is signed by 1,200 students of St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. This group petition includes signatures of residents of the Town of Antigonish and the county.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to ensure that VIA Rail service, serving the students of St. F.X. is not eliminated. Hundreds of these students use the train as an economical and efficient means of transportation to their respective homes in the area and there is no substitute for that existing service. The Halifax-Sydney passenger service is necessary for these students to

pursue their higher education; bus service cannot accommodate their large numbers. The town and country residents have the same strong concerns over the impending loss of this service to citizens of the town and surrounding areas.

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Second, I have the honour and privilege to present petitions on behalf of over 1,200 petitioners from Canso, Nova Scotia, which is also in my riding. These petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to intervene, as and where necessary, to protect the livelihood of the fish plant workers of Canso who are faced with the possible closure of their main industry, the National Sea Products fish processing plant.

This plant employs over 700 workers from Canso and surrounding areas, including 140 trawler workers. The effect of closure will be devastating not only to the residents of the town of Canso but to all of Guysborough county.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Robert E. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): Mr. Speaker, last but not least, I have a petition containing several hundred names of residents of communities along the right-of-way of the Esquimalt-Nanaimo railway system who are petitioning Parliament to call upon the government to maintain the existing VIA network, upgrade VIA equipment and guarantee VIA sufficient support to carry out its mandate to provide passenger service and, in particular, these constituents are referring to the service on Vancouver Island.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of a number of farmers from Saskatchewan. These farmers are concerned with the direction in which this government is moving in respect of agriculture in this country. They are particularly concerned over the future of orderly marketing and supply management. They are calling on the government to reinstate oats under the jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board and for the Wheat Board to provide not only oats but barley with the same protection that wheat now has under the Wheat Board Act.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, Question No. 145 will be answered today.

[*Text*]

AMENDMENT TO THE CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

Question No. 145—**Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East):**

Is it the intention of the government to introduce an amendment to the *Canada Elections Act* to grant urban voters the same right to "swear in" at the polls on election day as is now enjoyed by rural voters and, if so, on what date?

Mr. Murray Cardiff (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): The government is committed to making voting easier and more accessible to Canadians. In June of 1982, the Government introduced legislation (Bill C-79) which included provisions to improve enumeration procedures. No consensus could be reached to allow this and other important amendments to the Canada Elections Act to be made prior to the last election.

On November 15, 1989 the government announced the establishment of a commission of inquiry to make recommendations on changes to be made to Canada's electoral laws.

The enumeration process will be one of the aspects of election procedures which will be examined by the commission.

[*English*]

Mr. Cooper: I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question as enumerated by the parliamentary secretary has been answered. Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed from Wednesday, November 22, consideration of the motion of Mr. Lewis that Bill C–43, an act respecting abortion, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

Mr. Bob Wood (Nipissing): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this debate. This is a critically important issue, an issue which we as legislators I am sure have all had to struggle with. How can I discuss abortion when this is really not an abortion bill? This government has brought in legislation, Bill C–43, which it hopes will address these problems. Bill C–43 does not address the problems, Bill C–43 certainly does not correct the problems, and Bill C–43 fails the fundamental test. Therefore it must not be passed.

• (1130)

Let me deal with some of the arguments I have been hearing from both sides. The first argument is that at least now we have some legislation, inadequate as it is. It is better than having no legislation which of course is the equivalent of abortion on demand.

Let us pass this bill and get it into committee where we can make some changes. We should draft the amendments. We should approve them and incorporate them into the legislation. However, before it receives Royal Assent, we should send it to the Supreme Court on a reference to test it against the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

It is the duty of the governing party to bring forth legislation. It is also the duty of the Opposition to challenge, correct and refine this legislation. It is also the duty of this House, then, to pass or reject the proposed law. It is also the duty of Parliament to legislate. What this government has done is bring forth a neutral proposal without substance.

The proposed new abortion law has as its overriding objective the balance of interests, the rights and interests of women and society's interest, in the protection of the foetus. This legislation does not realize this objective. This legislation really satisfies no one, not those who oppose the termination of pregnancy or those who prefer choice as to whether or not to terminate a pregnancy.

The proposed legislation is contrary to this decision. It invites any third party to press criminal charges against a doctor or a woman if there is evidence that an unlawful early termination was performed; that is, an abortion that was performed without first ensuring it was in the best interest of the woman's psychological, mental or physical health.

The question of the rights of the unborn child also must be addressed. This legislation does not address this issue. If you will remember Joseph Borowski failed to assert foetal rights because there was no longer an abortion law upon which to base a challenge. The proposed legislation does not address the rights of the unborn child. As we discuss the rights of the unborn, let us attempt to remove God or religion from the argument for a moment. If we remove this from the equation, the greatest thing still left to us is life.

Even the most radical secular person, the most hedonistic person in the world, must struggle with the fundamental questions of when life begins, when life ends, under what circumstances life can be ended and when life must be protected. What authority protects this life? Is it legal? Is it medical? Is it the church, or is it a combination of all these elements?

As a society, what protection do we extend to the lives of the helpless? What protection do we extend to the lives of the dying? What protection do we extend to the aged? Better still, what protection do we extend to the life of the unborn? We must look at life in all of its phases.

At the very least, even if some scientist or theologian states that in the early stages we cannot discern human life, the full potential of human life is indisputably there. That to my mind on its own should demand some respect and caution. At the very least, the potential for life exists and should unequivocally be respected.

I think all you have to do is visit your aged mother or grandmother and kiss her tenderly or give your spouse or your friend a warm hug, take a child's hand or let an infant grasp your finger and look into his eyes, all the time remembering that the only difference between the very oldest and the very youngest is only time. Their humanity has not changed.

This legislation is about life but fails to deal with life. This legislation is deficient. Providing the doctor will accept the reasons concerning the health of the female person, physical, mental or psychological, the doctor can terminate the pregnancy.

A doctor can terminate the pregnancy from the moment of conception to the moment prior to birth. That is what this bill implies. There are no guidelines; there are no rules. This government has evaded its responsibility and shifted the onus to the medical community.

As a layman I have great difficulty understanding the medical community. On the one hand we see premature births using every available means to sustain life, the doctors using every new advancement without questions of cost to save the life of a premature child. In the same instance, perhaps in the very same hospital, they are terminating the life of an unborn child. Moreover, to augment the deficiencies in this bill, there is no precise definition of the health reasons that would allow the termination of a pregnancy.

This legislation attempts to marry two incompatible positions: that abortion should be illegal and punishable by imprisonment while at the same time available to all Canadian women based on the value judgment of the physician. There is no development of the concept of the unborn child, no requirement that the unborn child has rights which must be respected. This bill fails in this respect.

I listened with interest a couple of days ago to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and the Minister of State for Indian Affairs and Northern Development who both have diametrically opposed views, yet they both said they can support this legislation; another inconsistency from the very people who proposed Bill C–43.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate. The Hon. Member for Charlesbourg.

Mrs. Monique B. Tardif (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity this morning to speak to Bill C–43. I will divide my speech into two sections. First, I will consider this legislation in my capacity as elected representative of the residents of the vast riding of Charlesbourg and as a legislator here in the House of Commons, and second, as a woman and mother who believes that family and children are part of the fundamental values of our society.

When I look at the positions that have developed among the people of my riding, I realize they are not much different from those taken by Canadians as a whole. There are people who are stubbornly pro life and pro choice, but most of the representations I received contained a request that the federal government act responsibly and fill the legal vacuum created by the Supreme Court's judgment in January 1988.

In the spring of that year, those of us who were sitting in the House will remember the splits that developed among members when a motion proposing three legislative options was tabled in the House for debate. Although it was to be a free vote, and despite the fact that the debate was long and intense, it was impossible to reach a consensus on one of the three options or on any of the many amendments that were presented.

At the end of this debate, many members believed that new abortion legislation would no longer be necessary. They were soon forced to reconsider that position, however. This summer, day after day, Canadians were headed to what I would call a macabre exposé of very personal problems on the front pages of our information media. This public airing causes people in my riding to reconsider their position and that the government should intervene to give this country legislation that would not be too permissive but that would nevertheless reflect Canadian realities in this respect.

• (1140)

Bill C–43 before the House today was not the result of a mere whim. It represents many hours of study, consultation and analysis to ensure that the proposed legislation reflects the benchmark established by the Supreme Court and based on the dictates of the canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Mr. Speaker, what strikes me in this Bill is that it recognises the health aspect. It also acknowledges that the decision is up to the woman and her doctor. Furthermore, the bill's objective is to balance the constitutional rights of women and society's interest in the protection of the foetus.

All these measures lead me to believe that the new legislation will pass the test of the Supreme Court, that a consensus will be reached in this House and that the bill will become Canada's new legislation in this area.

In a debate that is often emotionally charged, I must say that as a woman and a mother of four children, it is much harder to put one's personal convictions into perspective. Of course, I do not think abortion is necessarily the only solution. I believe that abortion should always be considered as a last resort and that women should have access to all the support they need to make such a difficult decision. It is easy to talk about abortion, whether we are pro-choice or pro-life, and it is easy to make decisions for others in hypothetical situations. One has to experience these situations, however, to realize that making this kind of decision is extremely difficult and that at this point, we need people who can give advice.

If I were to comment on the suggestions made by my colleague at National Health and Welfare, for instance, I think I would have to say that it is extremely important to ensure that all cases come before a doctor. I also think that we must have in the community people who have certain values and are able to provide advice, help and support.

Sometimes when I see demonstrations by people who are solidly pro-life, I wonder whether it would not be more useful to channel all that energy in to giving support to the people who need it.

I think that our society needs more compassion and more love, and that these fundamental values are essential if we are to make any kind of progress. People in these circumstances are often in financial difficulty, they need help and they should be given that help.

When I look at the bill, I think we have achieved a certain balance, and I must say that as a Member of the House of Commons and as a woman, I agree with the proposed measures and I intend to vote for Bill C-43 on second reading.

[*English*]

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I am rising to speak on this debate for a few minutes this morning because the debate taking place in the House over the last few days is perhaps one of the most important in terms of human values that we will have in this Parliament for some time to come.

The preamble of the Constitution of this nation states that Canada was founded on principles recognizing the supremacy of God and the rule of the law. I accept those principles, but I further believe in the sanctity of human life, and I will work and fight to protect the rights of unborn children.

The law, however, that was intended to provide protection to the unborn was struck down on January 28, 1988, but interestingly enough not by a unanimous decision of the court. Since Parliament is the only body that can enact legislation to protect the lives of unborn children, we as elected members of this institution have a responsibility to bring forward a law that is workable and practical but at the same time protects unborn children.

The recent voter survey conducted by one of our colleagues in the other place reveals that 59 per cent of Canadians were not aware that there were one million abortions approved in Canada since 1969. Most of those were paid for by medicare. Yet 66 per cent of those surveyed believed that life begins at conception, while 73 per cent of those considered an unborn child at any stage a human being.

If we then consider the results of the survey, first that life begins at conception, that an unborn child at any stage is a human being, then of course the current status of this issue is nothing more than a wanton disregard for human life.

The medical legal protection of foetal life dates back to the Oath Of Hippocrates, 460 to 377 BC, which predates the birth of Christ. This oath states: "I will give neither a deadly drug to anyone who has asked for it, nor will I make a suggestion to this effect. Similarly, I will not give to a woman an abortion remedy". I have to suggest to this House today that if this proposed legislation, Bill C-43, goes through, it flies directly in conflict with that Oath of Hippocrates.

The letters I have received on this issue are running 50 to 1 against abortion, but there are three in particular that stand out above all others. These are from doctors in my constituency. I want to read excerpts from them into the record today. I quote the first doctor:

> I would encourage the defeat of this legislation in order to obtain more effective legislation which will protect the rights of the unborn child and ultimately the health of the mother. There is conclusive

evidence that the action of abortion has serious health consequences on the mother as well, and we need to give consideration to their well-being also.

Another letter states:

The government which fails to protect the lives of the people within its care, no matter how young or old, is a moral failure. The institution has been established to assume some degree of moral authority. The Canadian government demonstrates this in regard to many human rights by making laws against murder, assault, racism, et cetera, and by promoting equality for all Canadians. Is a request for the protection of life too much to ask of one's own government?

The third letter states:

I am writing to express my concern over the lack of protection in Canadian law for the life of unborn children. Abortion at any stage of pregnancy is the deliberate killing of an innocent human being. To say that this is a woman's right to have control over her own body totally ignores the reality of fact that there are two or more lives involved in a pregnancy. A woman has legal rights over her own body but she (and all society) has a moral obligation to protect the helpless being in her womb.

At this time we are seeing the tragic spectacle of women—fighting through the courts to have her unborn child destroyed although she is now at the stage of pregnancy when the child, if born, could probably be saved.

Other abortions differ only in that the baby generally would have no chance of survival.

I urge you to fight in the House of Commons for a law giving total protection to the unborn.

These three doctors—two of them are family doctors from my constituency—who took the time to write on this issue before us today have said it all and probably much more eloquently than I did. Their depth of knowledge, their respect for human life and their moral principles must reflect the feelings of thousands of Canadians across this nation.

• (1150)

When we examine this bill before the House today, we find that it really creates no legally imposed delays or obstruction to obtaining a legal abortion other than the necessity to consult with other doctors. Of course, if the first doctor does not agree, you would go on to others, hoping that you would find one who would. In fact, this bill as it sits before this Parliament today is not far from being abortion on demand.

I fully realize that this bill is at second reading debate and that debate is on the principle of this bill. Therefore, in the parliamentary process it will go on to committee, to report stage and then on to third reading. I want to call on the government at this point either to bring forward amendments or to be receptive to amendments of members of this House that will provide protection to unborn children.

As I indicated earlier, there are two or more lives involved in a pregnancy. While I clearly accept the exceptions to save the life of the mother, this bill does very little to save the lives of unborn children. At this point in the debate I believe that I would be remiss if I did not remind members of the House that it is stated in the preamble to our Constitution that we believe as Canadians in the supremacy of God.

The Bible itself mentions repeatedly—and it is on this Bible that we as members took our oaths—in Genesis 4:1, Jeremiah 1:5 and Job 33:4, children in the womb. A child conceived in the womb develops in the womb and is born from the womb.

Therefore, if we accept the supremacy of God as stated in the preamble to the Constitution, then we in turn have an obligation to accept the teachings of the Bible. Consequently, we must also accept the fact that a foetus is a child or a human being and as such this nation has a duty to protect unborn children, to preserve their right to be born and to enjoy the rights and obligations of human beings.

As those of us in this House realize, those of us who are older, life itself takes on a new meaning. I as a farmer never cease going out in the spring of the year to the fields and the pastures. Life is all about us. We see the birds, the animals, the new growth, the trees, the grass and the flowers. There is a sense of nearness to one's Creator, our Creator who said: "Suffer the little children to be brought unto me."

This debate is about human life. We are debating human life, the lives of unborn children, and I ask members of this House to consider the lives of these unborn children above all else.

Mr. Geoff Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to reaffirm and to expand on remarks I made in this House on this topic last year.

After that court decision in the Morgentaler case I canvassed my constituents to seek their opinion as to three possible courses of action. The first would be to permit abortion only when the mother's life or physical health was in danger. The second would permit abortion without restriction. The third choice would permit abortion without restriction during the first 16 weeks and

thereafter, only where the mother's life or physical health was in danger.

Some 64 per cent chose option one; 9 per cent, option 2; and 24 per cent, option 3. The clear majority of the people in my riding believes that abortion should be allowed only if the mother's life or physical health is endangered. Indeed more women respondents than men supported that position.

It happens that I agree with the majority of my constituents, but even if I did not I believe that where there is a clear expression of opinion within a constituency and, in the absence of party discipline, a member ought to respect the wishes of his constituents.

As a Christian and one whose personal philosophy is respect for the basic worth of the individual, the sanctity of human life and the primacy of the family in our society, I believe that, in so far as is possible, every human life from conception should be given a chance.

This latest chapter in the abortion debate began in January of last year when the Supreme Court in the Morgantaler case struck down Section 251 of the Criminal Code on the grounds that the procedures deprived the pregnant woman of the right to security of her person under Section 7 of the Charter. Since that time Canada has been without a law.

The government attempted to fill the void in July 1988 with a compromise resolution based on the gestational approach. This proposal along with five others ranging all the way from classic pro-life to pro-choice was debated and voted on, all six questions were defeated in this House, and Canada was left without a law.

In March 1989 the Supreme Court rejected the Borowski appeal because Section 251 had already been struck down. When the judges refused to rule on the rights of the unborn in the abstract, they indicated again that it was up to the legislature to make law.

Then came the Dodds and Daigle cases in the summer of 1989. The media spectacle accompanying these cases made it obvious that we could not continue to live in a state of lawlessness. It is up to the federal government to exercise leadership in filling this void.

The division of legislative powers under our Constitution is such that the only area under which the federal government has the appropriate authority is the criminal law. If this issue is not dealt with under the criminal law, then it must devolve to the provinces with the prospect of more chaos. Consequently, the government has brought forward this compromise, Bill C-43.

Last week the Supreme Court in the *Daigle v. Tremblay* case noted that the courts have consistently concluded that to enjoy rights the foetus must be born alive. The court went on to address the matter of a potential father's rights and concluded "that no court in Quebec or elsewhere had ever accepted the argument that a father's interest in the foetus which he helped to create could support a right to veto a woman's decision in respect to the foetus she was carrying."

In short, the courts are saying that for a foetus to enjoy certain rights before birth or for a potential father to exercise any possible rights, there must be substantive legal reasons. There must be legislation—a decision taken by legislators based on social, political, economic, and moral choices.

Here we are again in November 1989 revisiting this issue, an issue which Parliament failed to resolve in six free votes in the summer of 1988, an issue which the courts have clearly indicated belongs to the people of Canada as expressed through their elected representatives, an issue on which Canadians in all walks of life are divided, an issue on which individual Canadians are sincerely and honestly at odds with each other.

It is important that all Canadians understand the procedure involved in dealing with Bill C-43 which the government has proposed as a compromise to end the current state of lawlessness. Bill C-43 makes it an offence to induce an abortion unless the procedure is done by or under the direction of a medical practitioner who is of the opinion that if the abortion were not induced the health or life of the female person would likely be threatened.

We are currently debating this bill at second reading. Under the rules of this House no substantive amendments as to the content of the bill are allowed at this stage. Members will vote yes or no. If they vote no, the bill fails and we revert to a legislative void. If the answer is yes, then the bill goes to a legislative committee composed of 15 members from all sides.

The legislative committee can hear witnesses, receive submissions, propose and vote on amendments, and then report the bill back to the House where it will be voted on. This is called report stage. At report stage members other than those on the legislative committee can also propose amendments. Obviously there will be amendments and there will be opportunities for members to vote on these amendments at report stage.

At the final stage, third reading, there will be further debate and an opportunity to vote for or against the finished product. Bill C–43 does recriminalize abortion. Bill C–43 does reject the gestational approach. Bill C–43 presents a health standard in determining grounds for ending unborn life. That is important because if the day ever comes when we as a society arbitrarily measure the value of life by its stages, we are on a very slippery slope.

• (1200)

Bill C–43 is opposed by pro–choice people who want no law at all. It is equally opposed by pro–life advocates who would restrict abortion further. Indeed one such pro–life advocate said to me that this bill is worthless, it would be better to have no law at all. With respect, I disagree. It is the pro–choice advocates who want no law. It is the New Democratic Party that wants unrestricted access to abortion. I cannot and will not support that position.

Therefore I intend to support this bill on second reading in order to get it to the legislative committee. This will allow for witnesses and for amendments and for the possibility of changes which might improve the bill. I believe it would be wrong to defeat the bill at this stage. To do so would not only deny the opportunity to work on the bill and to improve it but would also return the nation to a state of lawlessness.

Clearly we must have a law. We have laws to regulate the speed of vehicles and where they can park. Surely it is not too much to ask for a statement as to the validity of life itself, a law that reflects our beliefs, that a living being is involved and that life has value regardless of its stage of development. If it is easy and straightforward and acceptable to terminate life near its beginning, then is it any great leap forward towards ending life at other stages in circumstances where there may be inconvenience or cost? What comfort will there be for the elderly, the handicapped, the sick and, ultimately, for those who see things differently from those in power?

What is it that separates our society from past totalitarian regimes? Surely one characteristic is that of reverence and respect for life, whether at the beginning or near the end or indeed at any stage.

In closing I want to touch on a couple of peripheral issues. One relates to demographics. Declining birth rates and population trends indicate that Canada will not be able to sustain its present population, let alone increase it, without immigration. By the year 2015, if present trends continue, there will be almost as many Canadians 55 years of age and over as there will be in the 25 to 54 age group. This projection raises serious questions about our ability to pay for pensions or medicare or care for an aging population. Ironically, every statistic points to the need for a policy to promote and encourage a higher birth rate in this country.

I do applaud the establishment of a royal commission to examine the implications of the new technology available to human reproduction as well as the economic ramifications thereof. I would have preferred that the mandate be widened to encompass not just the host of questions surrounding reproductive technology but also those of euthanasia, suicide and all issues of intentional intervention in the human life cycle. The sanctity of human life runs through all of these issues.

Finally, I want to commend members on all sides for their participation in this debate. I have listened intently to their positions, some quite opposed to mine, but all sincere and all reflecting the profound challenge before us; to address an issue in which the views of virtually every individual Canadian differ in some degree, some irreconcilably.

Members of Parliament can do only that which is possible. Sometimes, indeed most of the time, we arrive at compromises. The result may not be what we would have preferred as individuals but it is the best that we can do collectively. Whatever happens, there must be every effort made to assist and improve adoptive processes. Whatever happens, we must encourage efforts toward greater understanding, heightened awareness and, most important of all, individual responsibility.

Mr. Robert E. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak against this bill. The reason I am speaking against it is that while it appears to support the pro-choice position that insists that the question of abortion is a matter between a woman and her doctor, in fact it is exactly the same position that was taken in the previous abortion legislation which was overturned by the Supreme Court. This legislation leaves the decision not up to the woman but up to the doctor. A woman may attempt to choose a doctor that supports her viewpoint on abortion but, in fact, the doctor has the final decision on whether that woman should carry a foetus to term or should have an abortion. That is precisely the question that the Supreme Court dealt with in Morgentaler and struck down.

Essentially it is a repeat of the legislation that we had a few years ago where the government set up in the Criminal Code a therapeutic abortion committee that was appointed by hospitals which performed abortions. What this legislation does is reduce the number of people on that committee from three to one. It still leaves the decision as to whether an abortion can be performed up to the doctor rather than the woman herself. That is the problem with this legislation and that is the reason why I intend to vote against it.

This legislation, in my view, is anachronistic and atavistic. It is based on the idea that the reproduction functions of a woman have a third party interest in them. In the past the husband or the father saw the woman as a chattel, as a piece of personal property. Our laws considered a woman to be a chattel of her husband or father. In a modern pluralistic society which recognizes the rights of all individuals, this type of primitive, atavistic belief simply cannot prevail and I am surprised that it is being restated in this legislation.

The decision with respect to abortion should be a decision solely of the woman in consultation with any doctor, medical person or other authority that she chooses to consult. I must reiterate that the decision itself should remain with the woman involved and not with the doctor.

As I said, there was a time not long ago when we considered in our legislation and in our society that women where the chattels of their fathers until such time as they became the chattels of their husbands. It has only been within the last seven decades that women have had a right to vote in this country, to exercise the same right in politics that males in our society have exercised for hundreds of years. Women have only had the right to vote for the past seven decades.

It has only been within the past four or five decades that women have been considered persons with respect to their rights before the law. Our society has not advanced very far from a very primitive view of women, and the legislation that we are debating today is actually a return to that primitive view of women as chattels of their husbands or their fathers. But there is a bit of a difference in this legislation in that the government appears to be nationalizing the interest that the husband or the father had in his chattel and making it an interest of the state in the reproductive functions of women. I do not believe that is a right, proper and democratic thing to do in a society such as ours.

The decision to proceed with an abortion, as other speakers have indicated, is not an easy decision for anyone to make. I can recall when in my family we were looking forward with hope and expectation to the birth of our children. As our children go into high school and university and begin to select a career we continue to look with hope and expectation upon their prospects for the future. It is very enjoyable for parents to be able to do that. But that is not a privilege that all parents in our society enjoy.

To some parents, and especially single parents who are living in poverty or living in difficult circumstances, the possibility of having another child is looked upon with horror. In fact, it is an expectation which causes the family to lose hope for the future and in some cases it is just considered another mouth to feed in a poor family that has difficulty feeding the children they already have. It is an extremely difficult prospect for some of those families to face. Those families feel that in our society they have absolutely no alternative.

The American Medical Association polled all of its members a few years ago and asked what the major medical problems faced by different groups of their patients. The major medical problem facing teenage girls was pregnancy and the second was acne.

• (1210)

So it is a serious problem facing children in both Canada and the United States. When we consider that the major concern of teenage girls who go to physicians is pregnancy and the second one is acne, we are dealing with a serious difficulty in this country. When a teenage girl becomes pregnant she does not look on that with the same hope, expectation and excitement with which the rest of us look upon that prospect, she looks at it as something that is going to interfere with her schooling, destroy her career and, in fact, destroy her life as she chooses to live it. It is an extremely difficult prospect for that teenage girl to face.

Doctors are not necessarily all that sympathetic. They may adopt a very narrow view of what constitutes psychological, mental and physical health. That teenage girl will be dependent on the doctor to make a decision as to whether her career is going to be destroyed, whether her school is going to be interrupted, or if she is going to be facing a career which involves poverty, low wage levels and a dead end. So it is a serious problem.

But, in spite of that, no one faces the prospect of having an abortion with anything but extreme concern. As I said, most of us in this room look forward to having children with hope, expectation and excitement, but many people in Canada see it as a terrible prospect which will destroy their future. They look upon abortion in the same way because, having the understanding that the process to create a human life has already been put into effect, no one likes to terminate it, even with all of the terror with which it is anticipated.

This legislation does nothing to help people address that prospect. It does nothing other than give the potential to recriminalize abortion and make the abortion extremely difficult for the women who have to face that prospect.

I find that strange because there are many things that this government could do in order to make abortion the less desirable choice. This is the government that has cut back on assistance to family planning organizations in Canada. This government refuses to fund the availability of birth control information and birth control apparatus to people across Canada.

I think there are three ways that we could reduce abortions in Canada without recriminalizing it. One is to make birth control information and apparatus widely and freely available so that abortion is not an option to be considered. The second is to make access to abortion available to everyone in Canada in the event that that birth control apparatus fails. The third and most important is for this government to reverse its policies and to start supporting families financially and socially so that the prospect of raising children in Canada is not a horrible one of poverty and abuse but one in which you can raise children free of poverty in happy surroundings and with a prospect of a great future. That should be the object of the government's policy to reduce abortions in this country.

Mr. René Soetens (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to speak on Bill C–43. Abortion is a very difficult issue. Over the last year I have received numerous communications from my constituents. Abortion was raised by many people during the last election campaign as I travelled throughout the riding knocking on doors to encourage people to consider electing me as their member of Parliament. During that process I heard from those who represented a very solid pro–life position. I heard from those who represented a very solid pro–choice position. I also heard from those who fell somewhere in between. Consistently I was asked my views on abortion and I was very clear in my position to my constituents on several points. I said that I felt that abortion should not be available on demand and that abortion should not be available simply at the call of an individual, but that I would accept that abortion should be available for specialized circumstances and I had some examples of that.

That answer satisfied neither the pro–life people nor the pro–choice people, but that was my personal feeling. I did say to my constituents that this bill would be a free vote in the House of Commons, as was promised by the Conservative Party, and that I would give my constituents ample opportunity to reflect and to advise me of their wishes as to how I should vote on this issue. I did say to them that I would not necessarily be bound by every specific representation because you can appreciate that if you get 160,000 representations you cannot satisfy them all.

I made the point of meeting with as many people in my constituency as possible and they included the Knights of Columbus in Whitby, various pro–choice people, organizations from Whitby and Ajax, various right–to–life groups from Whitby, Ajax and Pickering and individual

citizens. I have an open-door policy in my constituency and if a resident wants to meet with their MP I am available and I will discuss the issues. I do not necessarily need to know in advance what they want to talk about. I had people through my offices who told me in advance that they wanted to discuss abortion and others who simply made appointments and we discussed it while they were there.

I have received many submissions from my constituents on this issue. I did promise my constituents that I would canvass them and learn what they had to say as a group on this particular issue. This I did and I would like to share with you some of the things I learned from them.

In a householder that I sent out early September I asked my constituents many questions on the issue of abortion. They responded with almost 3,300 responses. In fact it was 3,299 at the point when this particular summary was prepared and I think it is probably representative. I have received some additional responses since I prepared these numbers but clearly my constituents have an opinion on the issue of abortion and I would like to share that with members here today and maybe in this way you can appreciate my position on this.

I asked about 17 questions on abortion. The first question I asked was whether the government should pass a law dealing with the issue of abortion. Without asking them to say whether they were for or against or anything else, I asked whey they wanted the government to act on this issue. Eighty-seven per cent of the respondents said yes, and I am happy to say that the government is in fact doing that.

The second question was whether the government should ban abortion outright. The question was very clear, very specific. It said that under no circumstances would an abortion be allowed. My constituents again responded; 19.7 per cent said yes. Of course there is a corollary to that question and that is whether we should legalize abortion on demand for any reason at any time. Thirty-two per cent said yes.

So there you have the view of my constituents. Half of them have said that it is either yes or no completely. The other half came in with the answers to the balance of the questions.

Because I felt that my constituents should have the opportunity, as I did, to feel that maybe there are some circumstances where an abortion should be available to the individual, I asked a number of questions on that side.

• (1220)

For example, I asked whether my constituents believed that abortion should be available to a victim of rape. Four times as many said yes as said no. Did my constituents believe that abortion should be available to a victim of incest? Four times as many said yes as said no. Should abortion be available when the health of the mother is involved? Sixteen times as many said yes as said no. Should abortion be available if there was proven circumstances that there was a deformity with the foetus? Three times as many said yes as said no.

I also asked various questions relating to the gestational approach because in September, without knowing what the legislation was going to say, it was thought that maybe the legislation would allow abortion based on a gestational approach. I asked my constituents whether abortion should be available in the first eight weeks without question. Eighteen per cent said no, 14 per cent said yes. As to whether it should be available in the first 12 weeks it was 20 per cent no versus 13 per cent yes. At 16 weeks it was 22 per cent no, 9 per cent yes. At 20 weeks it was 24 per cent no. It went all the way up to 28 weeks and it got to 25 per cent no.

Very clearly, as my constituents have indicated by this response, they were not interested in a gestational approach and I note that the bill does not have that. Of course I was not aware that it was not going to be in the bill, but my constituents have clearly indicated to me they did not want me to support a bill that included a gestational approach.

I also asked my constituents whether both parents have the right to input on the decision on an abortion. I do have responses from both males and by females to my survey. I can tell you that they consistently agreed all the way through until I came to this question. More men thought they should have input in the decision of

abortion, that both parents should be involved, than did the women. The women very clearly said that it was not the decision of both parents. Although the men felt clearly that it was not both parents' decision, they did feel a little more strongly on this issue.

Family finances was discussed. I asked whether abortion should be available for family finances if there was a problem in that area. Again my constituents said no. I asked whether abortion should be available if the mother was mentally handicapped. The answer was clearly yes.

There was a question about the age of the mother, whether abortion should be available because of the age of the mother. I left the interpretation of that question to the view of the respondent. Clearly they said no, that should not influence the availability of abortion.

Very clearly my constituents have put some rules in place. They have suggested to me that I ought to support some legislation. I can only conclude that this bill in fact does what my constituents have asked me to do. I will be supporting this legislation because I think it goes a long way towards what my constituents have indicated to me very clearly. Personally I might prefer a little more tightness in the bill but I will be supporting this bill because that is what my constituents have indicated they want.

I thank you for the opportunity to present to you the views of my constituents and my personal view on why I will be supporting this legislation.

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, ten minutes is a very short time to deal with a very complex and difficult question, so I will try to be brief.

I intend to vote in favour of the motion that Bill C–43 be read a second time. I shall do so not because I like this bill in its present form, but because I believe that Canadians abhor the current legislative vacuum. They want legislation that will protect the unborn adequately. They want a law based on the principle that abortion is socially and morally unacceptable as a birth control device.

The bill now before the House is deeply flawed. It is vague and ambiguous in many crucial respects, however the bill gives us a starting point. It can be amended in committee. If we refused even to give this bill second reading and to send it to a committee, as parliamentarians we may have lost an important opportunity to fill this legislative vacuum. If we throw out this law now, we may be for a long time without a law. So I will vote to allow this bill to go forward to the committee stage. There it can be clarified, strengthened and improved.

I urge the Minister of Justice to give the legislative committee that will consider Bill C–43 ample time to hear expert testimony, to obtain clarification of various provisions and to formulate amendments to improve the bill. I would urge too that the government permit ample time for members on all sides of the House and all sides of this debate to express themselves in this debate and, most importantly, that contrary to common legislative strategy we be given notice well in advance of the timetable for this legislation. Let us not deal with this as a partisan matter.

There will be much for the legislative committee to do. The bill is short but there is much in it that requires clarification. Perhaps the provision subject to the widest scope for interpretation is the portion of subsection (1) of revised Section 287 that makes it not a crime for a medical practitioner to induce an abortion if, in his or her opinion, the abortion were not induced, the health or life of the female person would be likely to be threatened.

Subsection (2) proposes for greater certainty that health means physical, mental and psychological health. Also, it defines opinion to be an opinion formed using the generally accepted standards of the medical profession.

In the background information accompanying this bill we are informed by the government that based on majority reasons for judgment in the Morgentaler case, permitting an abortion if the psychological health of the woman is threatened is constitutionally required.

We are also informed in the background information that while the bill does not specifically refer to eugenics, rape, incest, socio-economic welfare, or other reasons for seeking an abortion, these factors could be included in the determination of health if their effect was to threaten a woman's health.

These explanatory notes do not provide much guidance to medical practitioners, to women seeking an abortion, or to Canadians generally as to what circum-

stances will allow a doctor to induce an abortion. They raise as many questions as they answer.

There are inherent risks and stresses in every pregnancy. However, modern medicine combined with the facilities available in most Canadian hospitals means that these risks and stresses can be controlled to such a degree that few Canadian women need fear lasting damage to their physical or even psychological well-being as a result of carrying a baby to term.

Indeed, as far as psychological health is concerned, there is evidence that an abortion may cause long-term negative effects. Should we expect qualified medical practitioners to deny virtually all requests for abortions under this bill if it becomes law? Is that the purpose of the bill? If a woman in robust health receives an abortion by a qualified medical practitioner under this law, should the casual observer conclude that section 287 of the Criminal Code has been violated? Is that what the government intends? Would it be the responsibility of such a casual observer to bring such a practitioner to justice for violating the Criminal Code? Just how would this be done?

Alternatively, is the provision relating to health to be interpreted as meaning that if a woman merely claims that her health will be threatened in some way by carrying the baby to term, a medical practitioner may agree to the abortion provided that performing the abortion would not, in his or her opinion, endanger her health or life?

Setting aside the difficult case of eugenics, rape and incest the claim might be that due to her "socio-economic circumstances" her health, physical, mental or psychological may be threatened, in which case the medical practitioner will be required to determine whether that was merely an excuse or a legitimate claim.

• (1230)

The explanatory notes provided by the government suggest that socio-economic circumstances would qualify as grounds for abortion if they threatened a woman's health. There are those who argue that socio-economic circumstances on their own would be sufficient justification for an abortion. If the government agrees with that view and intends that socio-economic circumstances be grounds for an abortion, this should be clearly specified in the bill as an additional reason for permitting an abortion. Obviously, if that is to be the effect of the bill, I shall vote that this bill not pass this House.

I am not insensitive to the socio-economic difficulties which many women, in particular single mothers, face. These difficulties call for positive action on the part of governments. They call for progressive day care legislation to enable women to participate in the workforce without compromising the care they give to their children. They require more determined enforcement of legislation regarding child support so that fathers will contribute their share to the financial needs of children. They require education on family planning. Abortion is not a remedy. It is not a solution. This bill does not address these difficulties.

What is required is far more than simply a law to put abortion back into the Criminal Code. What is required is a comprehensive policy designed to bring down the number of abortions, whether legal or illegal, in Canada. This goal would be sought by education, by reducing the number of unwanted pregnancies, by support for adoption, by progressive workplaces with pay equity and day care programs that recognize the contribution of child-bearing women, and abortion legislation is a necessary part of that program.

If we were at third reading stage, I would vote against this bill, but this is only second reading stage. I abhor the legal vacuum which has persisted in this country for almost two years. We must make an honest effort to get a good law on the statute books. It may be possible to amend this defective bill at the committee stage between second and third reading. For example, it may be possible to strike out the vague, imprecise reference to the health of the pregnant woman. I hope so, because if the defects of the bill are not corrected by the committee to which it is sent, I shall vote against the bill at third reading.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Marc Robitaille (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak to Bill C-43, an Act respecting abortion, since I am sure you will agree this is a very important and very delicate subject for Canadians and for the people in the riding of Terrebonne, which has not escaped the heat of this debate.

As you know, there has been a great deal of debate and a lot of controversy about this very important matter, which on some occasions, proved to be very divisive. All this makes for an extremely delicate and, above all,

controversial issue, depending on whether one is pro–life or pro–choice.

Mr. Speaker, despite ideological differences, recent events and especially what happened last summer have shown that as legislators we must act responsibly, show leadership and play our role as elected representatives in this House.

How do we define that role, Mr. Speaker? I think it was our duty was to introduce a bill that, while considering two main realities, would provide a legal framework that respects the individual rights and freedoms recognized in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and also considers Canadian society's interest in protecting the foetus.

Mr. Speaker, this balance is not easy to achieve. However, as the Supreme Court said in the Morgentaler decision, the rights of one party should not necessarily be exercised to the detriment of the other party. You will agree this leaves us with very little room to manoeuvre. If we really want legislation that is constitutionally acceptable, in other words, that passes the test of a legal challenge before the Supreme Court, I believe it is imperative to respect this balance and, above all, to resist the temptation to give it a pro–life or pro–choice image, which would have the effect of destroying this delicate balance.

Bill C–43 makes abortion a medical decision that a woman and a doctor make, based on health reasons, health being defined as physical, mental and psychological health.

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, this bill recognizes that only the woman will make the decision to terminate her pregnancy, a decision which clearly is not easy for a woman to make. It is a very difficult decision and as for any medical procedure, this decision will be subject to a physician's diagnosis, as is now the case anyway, Mr. Speaker. Someone asking for a surgical operation or medical treatment must submit to a doctor's diagnosis.

The bill also states that abortion is a medical procedure which must be performed by a qualified medical practitioner. Personally, I am satisfied with that because it will criminalize illegal abortions, those which are performed outside the legal framework, and this can be considered protection for women.

Mr. Speaker, the foetus is also protected because the decision must be based on health reasons, not frivolous reasons or any reason at all, but on health reasons.

This new legislation will be part of the Criminal Code. This raises the whole issue of "recriminalizing" abortion. Certainly it would have been preferable not to do that, but what credibility would a law have without penalties for those who break it, in a country where Parliament can regulate abortion at the national level only through the Criminal Code! Let us make it clear that abortion is not being made a crime to the detriment or on the backs of women; rather, physicians will have to comply with the law.

In my opinion, it would have been preferable not to legislate in this area, but Canadian society does not see it this way and we are here to represent all the Canadian people.

This bill is not intended to, and will not, change the personal opinions of one and all, nor will it change deep convictions, people's moral convictions, whether for or against abortion.

The day after this law takes effect, Mr. Speaker, those who are deeply pro–life will remain pro–life and those who are deeply pro–choice will remain pro–choice. In any event, Mr. Speaker, I would be completely opposed to a law that would impose one set of moral values instead of another or to the detriment of another. Who am I, Mr. Speaker, to say that a woman who wants her rights respected is wrong? Or that someone who attaches very great value to the life of the foetus is not right?

When I was elected to Parliament, Mr. Speaker, it was not to become unduly involved in the personal moral values of my constituents and people in general. It was certainly not to impose anything on anybody in that regard, especially not my own point of view.

This issue touches on the deepest moral convictions of each and every one of us and I am not here to play the role of a religious leader, which I would refuse to do in any case. My role as a member of a legislative body is to put in place a balanced legislative framework which will avoid unnecessary suffering and I intend to play this role fully, Mr. Speaker.

I must tell those who would be tempted to use legislation to reduce the number of abortions in Canada and to use it restrictively to limit access to abortion that they are wrong. Never will we achieve that result with a law on abortion. All we need do is implement a coherent

family policy, enhance the role of mother and father, urge Canadians to acknowledge that the birth of a child has tremendous social value, and then I am sure that fewer women will opt for the ultimate resort—abortion.

• (1240)

Besides, Mr. Speaker, restrictive legislation would amount to nothing more than a temporary way out. Just as the old act was thrown out by the court, a more restrictive piece of legislation would probably suffer the same fate for the same reasons. So it is imperative that we understand that any abortion which might upset the balance of the Bill would be utterly unacceptable. People must be told that any amendment designed to prevent a woman from securing an abortion would fly in the face of her rights under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We would have the impression that the law is in the statute books, but the minute it would be challenged before the Supreme Court, it too would be invalidated, just as the preceding legislation was.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I must confess that the abortion issue was a thorn in my side during the last election campaign, and I have found it very difficult to deal with this matter ever since I was first elected to this House. Why? In all likelihood because when I considered the question I was biased by my personal convictions. Well, Mr. Speaker, I have grown to appreciate the fact that my role here, as I said before, is not to impose any concept or moral value on anybody. Our role is to see things just as they are within the context of the Canadian people and to set up a legal structure which can be accepted and which will do away with the kind of difficult and dramatic situation women have to live through, as we saw last summer.

I received a lot of comments, advice and mail from my constituents on the subject of abortion. However complex the whole issue may be, I feel that the Bill under consideration strikes a proper balance and as Member for the riding of Terrebonne, Mr. Speaker, I intend to give this measure my full support.

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): As a Member of this House who is both a woman and the mother of four children, Mr. Speaker, I feel it is important for me to deal with this new abortion bill which, by failing to take a positive stand in an effort to please everybody, settles nothing and creates a new problem.

Abortion was liberalized in January 1988, when the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that under the Criminal Code, anybody who compels a woman to carry a foetus to term is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to legal proceedings. In spite of this decision, women are still faced with the same difficulties when they try to obtain adequate care for the purpose of terminating their pregnancies. The whole approach varies from one province to the next. In some regions, the woman who manages to secure the assistance of a physician for this purpose is considered something of a phenomenon.

In my view, it is clear that in an ideal society with its long term assistance and support services and its really efficient educative and preventive programs an abortion policy would no longer be required. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Far from it! We are still very much afraid of what the neighbours will think, we live under constant social pressure, and we are concerned with the individual freedom to make a difficult choice and to live with it. If we really want to encourage women to carry their pregnancy to term, we can do it in a practical way. We can make sure that they have easy access to adequate, abundant and affordable day care services, that they are entitled to maternity leave and decent subsidized housing, that they get legal assistance in cases of incest and family violence and that they are assured of automatic alimony payments. In short, Mr. Speaker, we should provide women with the support they need to care for their children, especially in a way which is equitable for all.

[*English*]

Unfortunately, the bill presented by the government does not even attempt to address the issue of alternative services. Instead of threatening women and their doctors with the heavy hand of the law, the government should have instituted programs that would provide women with real alternatives. Support systems must be in place to assist women who chose not to have abortions. The government must improve the state of child care in this country. It must address the issues of teenage pregnancy, and it must realize the gamut of complex social, religious and economic influences which play an important role in a woman's decision. It must address the inherent discrimination in this legislation that biases the availability

of abortion services to those women who have both the time and the money to find them.

[*Translation*]

If we really want to improve the current situation, Mr. Speaker, I suggest it is vital that men should be made fully conscious of their sexual activities and the consequences of their actions. Parents should teach their boys to take the necessary precautions not to make girls pregnant if they do not want to be responsible for their abortions. They should teach their children generally that they must live with the consequences of their actions and choices. They will be able to achieve this goal through communication and dialogue before any harm is done. Support services simply do not exist.

In our society, Mr. Speaker, it is important that all children receive adequate sex education, and have access to and use of good birth control methods. The media also have a role to play to eliminate taboos and the obsessive fear that, by talking about prevention and encouraging people to use condoms, birth-control pills or other means of contraception, we are inciting young people to have sex prematurely. I think we must stop burying our heads in the sand or turning the other way if we want to prevent unwanted pregnancies.

Any woman who has gone through an abortion can tell you that it is a difficult choice to make, a major reassessment and a permanent scar in your life. Whatever the motive behind the decision, since it is the woman who is ultimately responsible for having her pregnancy terminated and who must live with the consequences, it is important that she receive adequate care.

[*English*]

When a woman discovers that she is carrying an unplanned child she must face the decision herself as to what course of action she will take. If she is young, poor and has few employment opportunities, she must decide whether she wants to bring a new born child into that situation. She must decide whether to bring a child into a cycle of poverty and deprivation, or to delay parenthood until she will be able to provide a proper environment for herself and her children. Because of the lack of support structures within this legislation there is less motivation for a woman to keep or to take her pregnancy to term.

• (1250)

The fact that this government has backed down on its commitment to the establishment of a national child care program does nothing to discourage the option of abortion. If day care services were accessible to all Canadian mothers, then the ability to continue working and to provide for a family would weigh the question of abortion in favour of carrying the pregnancy to term. Without such services, can our society expect a woman to automatically give up her right to choose?

The rolling back of transfer payments to the provinces for education and health care services will further limit the accessibility of abortion services if needed. Once again, poor women will be forced to use inadequate and, at times, dangerous methods because they are unable to pay for proper medical services because of the lack of provincial funding or lack of access.

It is evident that the bill before us puts a burden on doctors in Canada. If doctors become liable for a criminal act, many may simply not want to take the risk of prosecution. Already, the president of the Alberta Medical Association has warned that doctors in that province would stop performing abortions, perhaps even where necessary, in order to avoid criminal prosecution under the proposed law. This is further evidence that this bill could eliminate those services in certain areas of our country.

If we accept the proposed legislation as is then the decision as to whether a woman should have an abortion should be made between her and her doctor and not by lawyers, judges or the Government of Canada. Physicians might not want to endure the possibility of harassing techniques from various groups and could eventually not offer the services rather than risk the chance of criminal sanctions. In the end, the women of Canada are the ones who will suffer.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, a bill such as this one makes the physician responsible for the decision. Many will desist to avoid social pressure and the risk of being sued. Let us not open the door to illegal abortions which will carry consequences such as infertility, shame, rejection and a

return to the past in a society trying to look forward to the 21st century.

[*English*]

I will probably vote for this bill at second reading, but unless there are amendments there is no way that I could support it on third reading.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Ricard (Laval): Mr. Speaker, when I first came here in 1984, I never thought I would have to legislate on the life or death of an unborn being. I am the father of three children, and neither my wife nor I would ever have thought that we would have to make a decision on abortion, and had we been faced with that choice, it would have really been traumatic to think that one of our children would not have an opportunity to be born.

As far as I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, an abortion is a criminal act, because I view abortion as a band-aid solution. Abortion will not solve the problem in our society. Before legislating on such an important matter, we should first ask ourselves: what causes women to seek an abortion? Why do they have to do such a thing to free themselves of an unwanted pregnancy or birth.

I think we should look at family problems, and in that respect my view is that governments have not done enough to help divorced mothers, single mothers, widows who some day are faced with a pregnancy that is unwanted for lack not necessarily of love but rather money.

In that respect, Mr. Speaker, nobody up till now has thought of introducing support projects or programs helping them bring their pregnancy to term and then raise their children until such time as they can look after themselves.

This is a societal not a legislative problem, it is not a government problem. It is my view that, through the legislation now before us—after the Daigle-Tremblay saga which, as you know, Mr. Speaker, dealt with a lovers' problem by making society, or Canadians pay—this government said there was a legislative vacuum and that vacuum had to be filled. It tabled Bill C-43, which was a way of sitting on the fence.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill is pro-life with pro-choice contents. If you look at it closely you will realize immediately that it criminalizes the act and yet does not provide sufficient protection for the child to be born, the foetus. I am convinced that we will never build a healthy and strong society if we destroy embryos. We simply cannot build something unless we begin somewhere.

Mr. Speaker, some people may suggest that the embryo or the foetus is not a living being, but keep in mind that if it is not a living being, if it is not a human being who will live, it is at least the beginning of a human being who will go on to live. It will become a human being after the gestation period. By denying that it can become a human being we deny as well that there is a beginning. If we do not acknowledge the beginning, we will destroy it. As a society, as individuals, Mr. Speaker, can we allow ourselves to destroy the beginning?

The second part of the Bill under consideration does not acknowledge or protect that, and this is why we in the House find it so difficult to state unequivocally whether we are for or against the Bill. Because on either side of the issue it answers a question we are asking. Well, I ask myself that question. Criminalizing the act because killing an unborn child has to be as close as you can get to a criminal deed, I agree and I can live with that, but the one thing I cannot live with, Mr. Speaker, is our failure to give full protection to the unborn child.

Still I must say that the bill is a step in the right direction. Perhaps it will pave the way for other laws, and perhaps we may be able to redress the situation by moving amendments once the bill reaches the committee stage.

Mr. Speaker, I believe I have not used up all my allotted time before the lunch hour. May I have a few minutes after lunch to conclude my remarks?

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mitges): The hon. member will have three minutes left to complete his speech when we return.

It being one o'clock p.m., I do now leave the chair until two o'clock p.m.

The House took recess at 1 p.m.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

ABORTION

Mr. John MacDougall (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on the serious subject of abortion and a piece of legislation that is before us in the House. I want it recorded that I do not stand for Bill C–43, but I will not stand against it at second reading. As I have told my constituents, I am most uncomfortable with this bill because I cannot condone the act of abortion. I cannot accept the taking of an innocent unborn.

Although C–43 does not sit well with me, I believe strongly that we in this place are obligated not to reject this bill at the outset but consider and debate its contents. We owe it to our public who sent us here and to the future generations to work diligently over the next few months on this bill, to work together as Canadians and to arrive at a position that allows every one of us to sleep at night.

Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Parish of New Liskeard have asked me: "Please stand for and vote for the strictest law regarding abortion. Please make sure there are no undefined terms in it which would provide loopholes." To them, and to my constituents, I understand and I intend to do just that.

* * *

NAMIBIA

Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, with the completion of its first free elections, Namibia is proceeding along the path to independence.

Unfortunately, independence carries with it a financial cost. Namibia must find international support to make up for the withdrawal of budgetary support from south Africa.

Canada's long–time commitment to the well–being of Namibia cannot be abandoned now. With this government's slashing of foreign aid budgets, CIDA has been forced to cut proposed aid to Namibia by 50 per cent.

I call on the government to put its money where its mouth is, restore full funding assistance and a major package of bilateral aid to Namibia, and ensure through its position on the Security Council that Walvis Bay, Namibia's only deep water port, is removed from South African to Namibian control. Last, we must establish a high commission in Namibia or, minimally, an aid commission to Namibia.

Namibia's emergence is a forerunner of future developments in South Africa. The progress of this new nation will be watched intensely by all forces involved in southern Africa. It must not be allowed to fail.

* * *

EL SALVADOR

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, the FMLN in El Salvador have today called for a cease–fire in the war. Their recent dramatic escalation of that war was in response to increased government repression and violence.

The UN Commission on Human Rights in its report on El Salvador noted a dramatic increase in the number of human rights violations since the coming to power of the Arena government of President Cristiani.

The FMLN has appealed for a UN monitored cease–fire. A lasting peace is possible through sincere negotiations between the Salvadoran government and the FMLN and a reversal of current U.S. policy. Only when the United States abandons its cold war posture in the region will the people of Central America be able to exercise their sovereign right to determine their own destiny.

I once again appeal to our government to impress upon the United States that the world is changing and that the U.S. military interference in Central America is unacceptable.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TRIBUTE TO JEAN–CLAUDE MALÉPART

Mr. Vincent Della Noce (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, on Monday, my colleagues on both sides of the House paid a final tribute to my friend Jean–Claude Malépart. Since I

was in Montreal with his family, I could not pay tribute to him in this House.

[*English*]

Pierre Trudeau once said when MPs are 50 yards from Parliament Hill, they are no longer honourable members, they are just nobodies. Well, Trudeau would have been wrong again if he had said that about Jean Claude Malépart.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, more than 4,000 people went to pay their respects one last time over the weekend in Montreal and more than 2,000 people gathered in St. Anselm's Church to honour him in a simple and moving ceremony.

His last speech on Meech Lake in this House attracted much attention. It is no doubt what Jean-Claude Malépart leaves to all Canadians. He saw his death coming, knew that he would die and gave us his parting words. Jean-Claude Malépart, a worker for ordinary people, the Maurice Richard of politics, is now in his final resting place but lives in the hearts of many.

Mr. Speaker, cancer knocked him out, but like a great heavyweight, he continued to fight while going down. We have lost a giant defender of the people, a man with a great heart, and we will miss him for a long time.

Jean-Claude, your friend who pumps gas salutes you.

* * *

[*English*]

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, each week when I return home to my riding, I am faced with yet another example of how detrimental the GST will be to the constituents of Malpeque.

Most recently, the reality of the proposed 9 per cent tax has hit our figure skating clubs and minor hockey clubs. These organizations represent a major part of community life in my district and indeed across Canada.

The importance of sport in young people's lives cannot be denied. Through the minor hockey clubs and the skating clubs, they experience the rewards of dedication, the importance of good sportsmanship and the benefits of physical activity.

The GST proposes to tax areas of sports programs which were previously untaxed: coaching fees, facilities, test fees, membership fees and travel costs. The effect of the GST on these items will create a financial burden that many young people and their families simply cannot afford.

On behalf of the Liberal Party of Canada and more particularly my Liberal colleagues in the House of Commons, I urge this government to keep the community spirit alive in Canada by promoting sport for youth instead of prohibiting participation with the GST.

* * *

ENDANGERED SPECIES

Mr. Patrick Boyer (Etobicoke—Lakeshore): Mr. Speaker, every day more species of plants and animals come in danger of extinction, largely the impact of humans on nature.

One species, the African elephant, is now receiving the protection it needs. Commercial trade in ivory has been banned by Canada and most other nations under the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species. Last Friday hundreds of Canadians who care about this attended a meeting at the University of Toronto organized by Zoocheck Canada. They heard Doctor Richard Leakey, Ian and Oria Douglas-Hamilton and others speak about the plight of Africa's elephants. Over $120,000 was raised for the Kenya Wild Elephant Fund.

Concern for endangered species here in Canada and around the world measures how attentive we humans are to others with whom we share this planet and upon whom we depend for our own life and well-being.

* * *

LEBANON

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Lebanese President was killed in a bombing incident. His death came not only as a shock but as a severe disappointment to the many who saw him as Lebanon's hope for peace. Around the world religious ceremonies were held to mourn this great loss.

[*Translation*]

I hope that President Mouawad's death will not lead to further bloodshed, but instead that it will bring together the citizens of that country as they mourn the death of a leader eager to restore peace to Lebanon.

[*English*]

It is ironic that a man so driven toward restoring peace was killed by such a brutal act of terrorism. After only 17 days in office, President Muawad was already carving out a path that could have led to peace in Lebanon. I am confident that the people of Lebanon will overcome this tragedy and hope they will follow in the late president's footsteps by continuing his efforts toward achieving a sovereign, independent, just and fair Lebanon.

* * *

[*Translation*]

HOUSING

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, an article by journalist Jean-Denis Girouard that appeared in today's *Journal de Montréal* is entitled: "Housing: Quebec does not have its fair share".

Quebec is the only province that has put in place a joint cost-sharing renovation program with the federal government.

The city of Montreal's contribution was practically equal to that of Quebec and of the federal government, and over half the 6,490 renovated units were in rooming houses for the poor.

Mr. Speaker, in this situation, the cut in the rental RRAP is completely inappropriate given not only the costs but also the urgent needs of people in Quebec and Montreal, and I would ask the Minister of State (Housing) to reintroduce this program as soon as possible for the sake of Quebec's poor.

* * *

[*English*]

ABORTION

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, there are those in this House and outside it who would paint the abortion issue as simply a woman's issue. Nothing could be further from the truth. It most definitely is a woman's issue in so far as it is women who are most profoundly, indeed exclusively affected. It is a woman's issue in so far as it is women's fundamental constitutional right to security of the person that those who would deny women access to abortion propose to violate.

For this very reason, abortion is an issue of human rights that far outstrips mere gender. And it is for this very reason that there appears in today's *The Globe and Mail* an advertisement from a group called Men for Women's Choice. Endorsed by over 600 men named in the advertisement, it makes the simple and utterly fundamental statement that "no government should be able to force a woman to bear a child against her will".

• (1410)

These men, and the millions of other men across Canada who support and share their views, are a welcome contingent in the struggle for freedom of choice on abortion in Canada.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, the New Brunswick economy has benefited greatly since this government came to power in 1984. Since 1984, over 38,000 new jobs have been created in New Brunswick alone while the number of people living below the poverty line has fallen by 26,000 over the same period.

The unemployment rate in New Brunswick has fallen from 16.3 per cent to 12.3 per cent since September 1984. Housing starts for the first five months of 1989 are up by 104 per cent from the same period in 1984. Exports increased by over one-third in 1988 as compared to 1984.

I know those opposite find it very difficult to listen to these very impressive figures, but I am sure the opposition members realize that we are doing a good job and will continue to do a good job in Atlantic Canada and in my home province of New Brunswick.

* * *

NATIVE PEOPLES

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, I wish to bring to the attention of this House a disturbing incident which casts in a very poor light this government's dedication to the cause of native rights and dignity in Canada.

S. O. 31

A slide presentation on the Fathers of Confederation prepared by Parks Canada and shown to visitors to Province House in Prince Edward Island contains a reference to Canada's native peoples as heathens and infidels.

It is true that this remark is part of a contemporary quote, however the context is not made clear to viewers, who receive the impression that this is how our society regards native people. As well, the rich contribution made to our nation by Canada's original inhabitants is neglected in the presentation.

Prince Edward Islanders are shocked at the callousness and arrogance of the presentation and disturbed by the government's apparent disregard for the dignity of native people. I call upon the government to take appropriate action regarding this matter and promise all Canadians that such an incident will not be repeated.

* * *

OPPOSITION PARTIES

Mr. Felix Holtmann (Portage—Interlake): Mr. Speaker, what is the difference between the Liberal party and the NDP? In a September 1989 speech to the Canadian Association for Securities and Studies Conference, the hon. Liberal from York Centre stated, and I quote:

> It is in the nature of the Canadian opposition tradition to be irresponsible or non-responsible and I mean that in the highest sense of the word.

This is now the York Centre tradition for the opposition. Recent admissions by the NDP Member for Essex—Windsor follows this tradition. In his drive to lead his party of the irresponsible, he is reported in *The Toronto Star* to have said that the current leader of the NDP wanted to "remain neutral on free trade because it could turn out to be a positive deal for Canada."

Led by the Member for Essex—Windsor, the NDP caucus stayed true to the York Centre tradition and ultimately opposed the deal. What is the difference? Here it is. The Liberals readily admit their irresponsibility and the NDP operate irresponsible—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member's time has expired.

NAMIBIA

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, it is often the case in this House that we spend our time talking about international situations which are not working out, regional conflicts, the prospect of war and various other things.

I think it is incumbent upon the House to take notice of a success story in the international situation that happened recently. I am talking about the election in Namibia. I am talking about the fact that in Namibia we saw the United Nations working as the United Nations was designed to be. That is the agency which provided the context in which a significant act of decolonization could take place, in this case Namibia bringing itself from the colonization of South Africa where free and fair elections were held as a result of the efforts put in by many Canadians, and people from all over the world converging on Namibia to make that free and fair election possible. It is incumbent upon us to notice that and also to call on the Canadian government to do everything in its power to make sure that the very difficult days which are ahead for Namibia are days in which it will have the full support of the Canadian government in every way.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF THE YEAR IN QUEBEC

Mr. Jean-Marc Robitaille (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, on November 10, at a ceremony held at the Méridien hotel in Montreal to mark the eighteith anniversary of the Province of Quebec Chamber of Commerce, the Des Moulins Chamber of Commerce, from my own riding, was chosen as "The Quebec's Chamber of Commerce of the year" among 240 participating organizations.

The Chamber received this award for its exceptionnal performance, its dynamism, its integrity all contributing factors to the economic development of our area throughout the year.

Many of its initiatives were successful, namely the Provincial Data Processing and Office Automation Show, the Primas Gala held to highlight the achievements of our business community, and so on.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to mention in particular the tremendous work of Mr. Normand Harvey and Mr. Claude Hamer, and their team. They have done a remarkable job.

We should be proud, Mr. Speaker, of what those people have achieved, as evidence of the enthousiasm of the Des Moulins area and the riding of Terrebonne.

I want to congratulate the Des Moulins Chamber of Commerce. I know this honour will fall upon all the people of Terrebonne.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

FEDERAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BANK

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Canadians now know that his government has untold millions of dollars to finance an apparently limitless number of dubious enterprises.

Given that the government has all this money to throw around, why is there no money for child care programs, why is there no money for single mothers, why is there no money for food banks, why has the old age pension been clawed back and why has the family allowance been clawed back? What kind of priorities does this government have?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday in answer to a question about a loan to a strip joint implying that some sort of political pressure had been applied, I said that a mistake was made and corrective action had been taken. Subsequently I found out that that should have been in the plural. Mistakes have been made. Mistakes have been made going back to 1972—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An Hon. Member: Who was the minister?

Mr. Andre: Various businesses which were identified as nightclubs, licensed dining facilities and so on at the time and subsequently in other cases brought in exotic entertainment of the type which I think the right hon. Leader of the Opposition and myself would agree was probably inappropriate for federal government financing.

As a consequence the policies of the FBDB have been tightened up to ensure that this does not happen in the future. I hope the right hon. gentleman will join with me in applauding that move by the executive of this Crown corporation and in ensuring that we can say unanimously in this House that we do not think Canadian government agencies should be financing that kind of activity.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): It takes this minister a few days but he finally catches on, Mr. Speaker. I want to say to him that whatever may have gone on in the past, we never sacrificed programs to the needy in order to finance the type of program he has just described. My supplementary question is—

I can wait until the minister gets briefed by the Deputy Prime Minister here. Do you want time out, Don?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is again for the Deputy Prime Minister, in the absence of the Minister responsible for the status of women.

Since the government spent millions of dollars financing countless establishments that exploit women, why did it cut 15 per cent this year from the funds intended for programs to help women?

[*English*]

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, although the question did not really deal with my responsibility, the preamble certainly did.

To make it clear, the Federal Business Development Bank, which has been around for over 40 years, is in the business as a lender of last resort to small business. Part of its business has to do with establishments like motels, nightclubs and so on in the tourist business. For a lot of years, going back to at least 1972, we have had instances where they have been funding organizations that bring in entertainers. They are of a type that are probably not appropriate, at least for federal government help.

• (1420)

I have to add that unfortunately, because of the horrendous deficit left by the previous government, we have had to cut back on the funds that the FBDB has available for small business. It has gone through a 50 per cent reduction.

Is the hon. member suggesting that we should eliminate entirely this bank which is a bank of last resort to help small business in this country? If that is the position of the Liberal party, let it make that position public.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about the Federal Business Development Bank. Under its charter it is indeed a bank of last resort. Under its charter it is supposed to help legitimate small business and is supposed to help the economic growth of the country. I have read the charter too.

I ask the minister the reason why this year only 16 per cent of the money available from the Federal Business Development Bank went to the poorest regions of our country and only 16 per cent went to the Atlantic provinces, the prairie provinces and the Northwest Territories. I ask the minister if that is also an accident. Is that the fault of some bureaucrat? How can he explain as a policy matter that only 16 per cent of the funds available from that bank went to the poorest regions of Canada?

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, the regional development programs of this government through ACOA, WD and through my department in terms of Quebec and northern Ontario are there to provide government assistance to industries, generally speaking, which help in that area. The Federal Business Development Bank is in the business of helping small business across the country. It does not have a mandate that says it must allocate its loan portfolio according to other criteria.

One of the reasons we have had to maintain these regional development programs has been the failure of past government policies to get the kind of economic development in those regions which would create the demand for loans to which the bank could respond.

* * *

JUSTICE

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General about the undertaking of Commissioner Inkster. While Commissioner Inkster is pursuing his independent investigation into possible political manipulation of the RCMP, and we in the opposition support him in this inquiry, I want to ask the Solicitor General about matters which are not police matters but come within his direct responsibility, namely his office.

I know, as a former Solicitor General, that there is an information flow of sensitive police information to the Solicitor General about police investigations which are under way. I want to ask the Solicitor General whether any of that sensitive police information has been made available by him or through his office directly or indirectly to any persons who are involved in the investigations or the subject of the investigations.

Hon. Pierre Blais (Solicitor General of Canada and Minister of State (Agriculture)): No.

Mr. Kaplan: I want to ask the Solicitor General whether he has or will undertake to call his staff together and ascertain from them if that is indeed the case.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Solicitor General of Canada and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, I answered clearly. I defended—and I believe I expressed very clearly in the last few days—the total independence which the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and other police forces must have. So far, no one in the RCMP has said that they were subject to any political interference. I am very satisfied with that, especially when it comes from the Commissioner.

And I do not see why—I always wanted, my team and those around me never wanted to interfere in any way with the work of police officers and I will continue to maintain that position, which seems to me to be the right one. I am glad to learn from my colleague, the Hon. Member for York Centre, that as a former solicitor general, he knows how important it is to preserve this independence. And my colleague himself said and repeated that the Commissioner is a man of great integrity. That is what he said this week and if anyone were able to clear up this whole business, he is the one and we should trust him. I take your word, my dear colleague!

[*English*]

FEDERAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BANK

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the minister responsible for the Federal Business Development Bank. He will be aware that during the eighties and indeed back into the seventies it had always been the bank's practice that it would forbid loans or financing to strip joints, topless bars and exotic dance halls and the like. Yet we have found out now that not only once, but twice, three times, four times, five times, six times, in just one day, all sorts of abuses of this particular regulation have been uncovered.

Has the minister conducted or launched an investigation to find out the extent of these abuses? Knowing that the regulations have been breached time and time again, what was the cause of the breach of this regulation and was there any political interference involved?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, the answer is yes, I have asked how it happened, and yes, I do expect the president to take remedial action. If it was inadvertent, then the policy change should prevent it happening in the future. If it was deliberate, then the penalties, if you will, should reflect that fact.

It is unacceptable to have deliberately given loans of a nature that are contrary to the policies of the bank and indeed of the government.

I have no evidence whatsoever at this point in time of any political interference. It is a Crown corporation, it does operate at arm's length. From time to time, many members of the House phone on behalf of businesses in their constituencies. One of the things we are discovering is if funding has been provided for a motel with a licensed dining room attached, frequently when the business is not up to snuff or what have you, the owners have brought in exotic entertainment. That occurs after the fact. There will be in the future but there has not been in the past a provision to call the loan when that kind of change is made.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, we are not talking about a particular enterprise owner who changes the operation during the process of a loan repayment. We are talking about the Lido club which has been in operation, presumably, for a number of years.

I assume that the representatives of the Federal Business Development Bank visit the premises to see how the business is being conducted and they receive financial statements, surely, on an annual basis.

Yesterday the minister said this was an isolated case, that a mistake had been made by someone, a senior public servant. We now know that there were at least six strip joints, and who knows how many more, so the minister cannot fob this off on a senior bureaucrat. Surely to goodness he is responsible. I want him to explain why he was not aware of this incredible range of abuse that was taking place across the country regarding the bank for which he is responsible.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, I said on Tuesday, in response to an accusation that political interference had been brought to bear in terms of the Lido club, that that was not true and that as far as I knew this was an isolated incident. That is what I knew at that point in time.

The loan in question, by the way, was a mortgage loan, a loan secured by a mortgage on the land and buildings, which was adequate security for the loan. The cash flow to service the loan was provided by a business which was registered as a dining establishment with a liquor licence. The nature of the entertainment was not on the application. It will be in future. If the entertainment is unacceptable, the Federal Business Development Bank will not be making loans to that kind of business. I repeat, the loan was to a numbered company which owned the land and the buildings and supplied the security for the loan.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that we recognize that financing strip clubs, topless bars and the like has been an inappropriate lending practice since the beginning of the Federal Business Development Bank and has been abused, as the minister has indicated, since as early as 1972.

There is something very obscene happening here. I know it is very funny when a government cuts $2 million from women's programs at Secretary of State, when it deindexes family allowance, and when it refuses to meet its child care commitment!

• (1430)

Yesterday in Kamloops alone, my own community, a request for funding for a women's shelter was denied, yet the government presumably puts millions of dollars into the Federal Business Development Bank and approves the Lido, El Greco strip club, the Hideout strip club, Club 61 strip club, Voyageur strip club and Minsky's strip club.

Is the minister simply going to say: "I know that the regulations have been broken for years and years"? What is he going to do to ensure that this kind of lending practice stops and is never, ever done again?

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, I believe the hon. member was here for the last two days. He is late to the issue, and he needs to get his clip for television too.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Andre: That has been answered six or seven times. The answer was: when I became aware of it, I ordered a change in policy to ensure it does not happen again. An investigation is under way to find out whether any officers of the Federal Business Development Bank flagrantly violated the policy that is in place.

I do not know what else the hon. member is getting at. That was the answer two days ago, yesterday, and it is the answer today. He seems to be demanding of me the answer that I gave two days ago.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the minister responsible for the Federal Business Development Bank.

The minister will recall that yesterday I asked him if he would be prepared to provide his assurances to the House that FBDB had not financed other strip joints than the Lido club in Hull. We now know why the minister refused to answer the question, preferring to say, and I quote: "a mistake was made." Will the minister now do the correct thing, the right thing, and tell us how many more such mistakes have been made by the Federal Business Development Bank? Will he table a list in the House of Commons of how many strip joints are financed by his department?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I will gladly tell the hon. member about one called the Hideout in Cornwall, Ontario, the constituency of Ed Lumley, which in March 1983, when Ed Lumley was the minister responsible for FBDB, became a strip joint.

Mr. Boudria: They already had their loan.

Mr. Andre: The fact is that we are discovering, going back as far as 1972 under a whole string of Liberal ministers including the House leader of that party, that the FBDB had made loans to institutions which in most of the cases brought in exotic entertainment after they had received the mortgage loans. We have changed that policy.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I am tempted to ask the minister why there isn't money for anything else but there is always money around for strip joint owners.

[*Translation*]

I would like to ask the Minister responsible for women's issues the following question. My leader asked it a few moments ago but there was no answer, as usual.

Two days ago, I asked the Minister responsible for women's issues whether she was in favour of lending money to a strip club, the Lido, in Hull. I now want to ask the following question: Is the Minister responsible for women's issues in favour of financing clubs which have naked young women dancing on tables for men's entertainment? Yes or no? That is what I want to know.

[*English*]

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, the policy, as I have indicated seven or eight times, is that we do not favour, we do not support, we do not believe it is okay and we have put in place policies to ensure that in future the FBDB or any other government institution, for that matter, does not provide loans to institutions which are putting on that kind of behaviour.

The hon. member talks about the club Lido which I understand had male strippers when it first got into this business. On the question of trying to make it into something having to do with status of women, I think he ought to reflect on the record of his own government, the record of the man sitting in front of him who was minister responsible for this institution during that period, and at least recognize that in fact corrective action has been undertaken now that this issue has become public. We do not, I repeat we do not believe it is

appropriate for the FBDB to be providing loans to these types of institutions.

Mr. Boudria: What about the list, Harvie?

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, my question is also directed to the minister responsible for the Federal Business Development Bank.

It has now come to our attention that the Federal Business Development Bank has a list of notaries who act as legal agents for the bank's various transactions. We know that for loans between $200,000 and $400,000 the list of notaries is put together at the regional office, but for loans over $400,000 that list is provided by head office.

Could the minister table in this House, either today or tomorrow, the complete list of those individuals who are on the list of notaries and legal agents at FBDB, as well as their dates of appointment?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I will have to take that request or representation as notice. I do not know what is involved. I know that thousands and thousands of loans have been made.

Does the hon. member want me to go back to 1946? Is this a leading question that has something else attached to it? If he would tell me what he is after, perhaps I can answer more fully.

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, I will make it very clear. The list I am looking for is the current list which has been provided by this government to the Federal Business Development Bank and which it is currently using.

My supplementary question is for the same minister. Will the minister inform this House at the same time what criteria was used by the government in selecting these individuals for the Federal Business Development Bank notary list? Will he provide the information now, or will we have to wait as long as we did to find out that Senator Michel Cogger had his bill in the till at FBDB as well?

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, if the member is asking for long lists of people who do the legal work, the notary work and so on for this Crown corporation, I think he should do that through the Order Paper. That is the most appropriate way.

If he has somebody specific in mind, if there is some specific wrongdoing, make an accusation and I will provide the information if he is on a fishing expedition. the Order Paper is the place to go.

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FISHERIES

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

I am sure he is aware that the level of industrial toxic contamination of some B.C. seafoods is so high that major new closures are being ordered today on the B.C. coast at Kitimat, Gold River, Elk Falls, Cowichan Bay, Nanaimo, Crofton and Powell River.

Would the minister of fisheries advise the House how long he has know about the growing levels of contamination and why he has not taken any steps to stop the growing levels of contamination before the fisheries had to be closed?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, indeed members of the government and I are well aware of these very unfortunate findings of elevated levels of dioxin and furan compounds in the vicinity of several B.C. coast pulp mills.

That is why, when the presence of dioxins in the vicinity of pulp mills became internationally known in the winter of 1987–88, we initiated a national pulp mill monitoring program. As a result of early findings of that scientific analysis we closed two areas in Howe Sound and Prince Rupert to commercial shell fishing last December.

We have been intensifying the monitoring. At my request we have taken large numbers of samples in the vicinity of these mills and subjected them to assessment by the Health Protection Branch of my colleague, the Minister of National Health and Welfare. On his advice, yesterday afternoon we decided that these closures were immediately necessary in the public interest.

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Speaker, in February of this year Dr. Murray Rankin of the University of Victoria Law School discovered that two–thirds of pollution permits reviewed in British Columbia had been in violation for more than one year. That was in February of this year; two–thirds of the industries dumping into the waters of British Colum-

bia had been in violation for more than a year. They had been breaking the law, to be precise Section 33 of the Fisheries Act.

Today's closure of prawn, oyster and crab fisheries is no accident. It is the direct result of the minister allowing companies to break the law. On behalf of British Columbians and all Canadians, I would like to ask the minister of fisheries: When does he intend to uphold the law?

Mr. Siddon: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that the quantities of these chemicals which are being measured are very, very minute indeed and difficult to detect.

• (1440)

The hon. member also knows that with the exception of the consumption standards with regard to the edible portions of fish products we do not have an accurate base line, nor did industry have until recently a means of determining what its levels of discharge were. Indeed, the levels of discharge in effluent streams could be below the detectable limit.

Notwithstanding, as a result of our monitoring of the meats and the consumable portions of shellfish through the National Pulp Mill Monitoring Program, we have now determined that levels in excess of those acceptable from a health risk standpoint are occurring. That is what is leading to these announcements.

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PRESENCE IN GALLERY

Mr. Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in our gallery of Mr. Terry Dicks, member of Parliament from the United Kingdom.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

* * *

[*Translation*]

INCOME TAX

Mr. Charles DeBlois (Montmorency—Orléans): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Revenue. The NDP financial critic took advantage of last week's parliamentary recess to accuse our government once again of unduly favouring business at the expense of the average citizen who cannot evade the tax system. It seems NDP members do not have the courage to put their questions directly to the Minister, so I will do so instead. Is it true, sir, that over 90,000 Canadian companies made a profit of $27 billion in 1987 and did not pay income tax for that year, and if so, what has the Minister done to remedy the situation?

[*English*]

Hon. Otto Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, as usual the New Democratic Party uses statistics which are out of date. The information obtained by the finance critic of the NDP was prior to tax reform, which brought in such things as a broader corporate tax base, changes in capital gains, general anti-avoidance rules, and so on.

The results of the first phase of tax reform are very clear. Not only is it fairer for all Canadians, but over 40,000 more corporations are now taxable, resulting in additional revenue of some $5 billion over five years. In fact the most recent figures indicate that corporate tax revenue was $11.7 billion, up by 7.8 per cent over last year.

Phase two of tax reform is going to be even better. I just wish the Opposition would keep track of all the positive things this government is doing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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JUSTICE

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General.

Yesterday the minister, in response to the Leader of the Opposition, in dealing with the Peter White letter, said:

> I think it would be entirely appropriate to ask the commissioner again, when he is back in the country, whether this document can be made public.

We do not agree that this is an RCMP matter. We believe that it is a government matter. Peter White who wrote the commissioner was the principal secretary to the Prime Minister in the PMO's office.

Why do we have to wait three weeks to hear from the commissioner? There are telephones. Why do you not call the minister and release the letter immediately?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I have looked into this matter to

some extent arising out of questions yesterday. This issue was raised before the standing committee.

On June 6, the Commissioner of the RCMP wrote to the chairman of the standing committee and indicated the reasons it would be inappropriate to release such a letter, and I quote as follows:

> After consultation with my legal advisors, I believe it would be inappropriate for me to produce this document which was provided to the police in the course of a criminal investigation or for me to disclose, through testimony, to the committee any information contained in this document.
>
> My decision is based on the long-standing practice that the contents of an investigation file should not be produced or otherwise made available, save and except during the course of judicial proceedings in which the rules of procedure and laws of evidence protect the interests of any individual involved in the matter.

He goes on to say:

> Public disclosure of information pertinent to or bearing on the investigation could have an adverse effect upon these judicial proceedings and could seriously jeopardize the rights of these individuals to a fair trial.

This has been pointed out—

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): The trial is over, Don.

Mr. Mazankowski: The hon. member knows that there are other individuals—

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): We just asked for the part respecting Grisé.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, the Liberals change their standards and rules of operation when they are in government as compared to when they are in opposition.

Some Hon. Members: What about you, Don?

Mr. Mazankowski: I quote the former Solicitor General, the member for York Centre, when he said—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mazankowski: The NDP chickadees are singing again, Mr. Speaker.

I quote the former Solicitor General who said the following, as reported at page 1272 of *Hansard* for February 10, 1984. It is very revealing and has to be put on the record. I am quoting the hon. member:

> Everyone surely knows that the Minister, the Solicitor General, does not tell the RCMP when to open and close criminal files. The Solicitor General does not tell the RCMP who to investigate or who not to investigate and where or when to seek a judicial warrant to engage in more intrusive investigation. The Canadian people want police investigations to be entirely free of government interference and direction. In other words, people want the RCMP security service to be accountable, but in police work they want the RCMP to be independent.

That is precisely what we are doing, preserving the independence and the integrity of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, that is precisely why we are asking questions. We are concerned about integrity with the RCMP.

When we look at this particular situation we see that this case is over. If the case is over and a decision is made, is the Prime Minister or his office prepared to release the letter now?

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member got his facts straight he would realize that the case is not over. It was referred to in *The Gazette* of Montreal this morning:

> The head of the RCMP criminal investigation in Quebec said Tuesday he decided not to issue search warrants against Grisé and political organizer Joseph Hamelin because he did not want to influence the outcome of the election.

There are two members involved, and the hon. member should know that. He may not want to listen to the government or trust the government, but surely to goodness he should trust the words of the Commissioner of the RCMP.

What could be more appropriate than that, given the words, the evidence and the testimony of his own colleague, the former Solicitor General, the member for York Centre?

Research your questions a little better next time; don't just rely on the research department.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE OF CANADA

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board. The 2,100 federal ship crew workers put their lives on the line every time they put out to sea to protect the safety and security of Canadians, all for a miserly average salary of $21,000 a year.

The strike of these workers leaves Canada's fishing stocks wide open to foreign fishermen, grinds search and rescue to a halt, and jeopardizes response to environmental disasters such as the near spill off the coast of Alaska just this morning.

Will the minister finally admit that these negotiations have been bungled, that it is time to put a fair offer on the table to get these people back to work and get things moving in Canadian waters?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, as I have mentioned quite a few times in the House on this particular matter, the government is prepared to go back to the table at any time.

We would welcome a positive sign from the union to indicate that it is willing to sit down and talk seriously about reaching a mutually agreeable negotiated settlement.

Mrs. Catterall: Mr. Speaker, it is the minister who has said these people are necessary to the safety and security of the Canadian public. It is up to him not to sit back and wait for the union but to put a decent offer on the table to get these people back to the bargaining table.

Has the minister in fact told his negotiators that $21,000 is not decent compensation for the risks these people take, that their lives are worth the same whether they work on the east coast, the west coast, the north coast or the Great Lakes? Has he instructed his negotiators to put a decent and equitable offer on the table?

Mr. de Cotret: Mr. Speaker, we have already put a decent and acceptable offer on the table in keeping with the offer we made to the rest of the public service.

We recognize the question of pay equity between the east and the west, and we put that on the table. I wish the hon. member opposite would research her questions before asking them. That is on the table.

Mrs. Catterall: But 1991 is not soon enough.

Mr. de Cotret: That is on the table. It is on the table for the end of the contract. That was flatly rejected and no counter offer was forthcoming from the union.

If the union would like to come back with a counter offer, we are more than prepared to look at it.

• (1450)

I am saying that we, as a responsible government concerned with the welfare of our employees and the safety and security of Canadians, are willing to go back to the table on a moment's notice as soon as the union tells us it has something to counter the offer that is already there.

Mrs. Catterall: You should take the initiative. It is your responsibility.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General.

Under Section 5 of the RCMP Act it is not the commissioner who is in charge of the RCMP; it is the Solicitor General who directs the commissioner.

Will the Solicitor General exercise his responsibilities in respect of the Peter White letter and say that in the interests of the public and the administration of justice he will not wait for the commissioner to come back, that he will today produce the Peter White letter in this House?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Solicitor General of Canada and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, that question was answered earlier by the Deputy Prime Minister. I am really astonished, and I find it hard to understand the NDP's position on this matter. We have made it abundantly clear that we believe, and I think we are supported in this by the former Solicitor General, the hon. member for York Centre, that the integrity and independence of the RCMP must be preserved. Is the hon. member suggesting that I should intervene and give instructions to RCMP officers in a case that is now before the courts, Mr. Speaker? If that is what is being suggested, all I can say is that I would never do such a thing, because I respect the integrity of the RCMP and because we must let the RCMP do its job, Mr. Speaker, especially when an investigation is being challenged before the courts.

[*English*]

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Speaker, let me ask about another exercise of the minister's responsibility in the Grisé

matter itself. Chief Superintendent McConnell, who says he made the decision last year to delay because of the election, has said that if he had to do the same thing he would do it again.

Under the minister's responsibility for the direction of the RCMP, as a general policy matter does he agree with Chief Superintendent McConnell? Does he believe that it is appropriate for the RCMP to delay the administration of justice for election and political purposes?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Blais: Mr. Speaker, there are two elements here. First, what Chief Superintendant McConnell said, as reported by the newspapers, and as far as I can see, first of all, he clearly explained that he had never been subject to any political interference whatsoever, that he made the decision himself and that he informed his superiors at the RCMP accordingly. The RCMP Commissioner said this week that he had been informed the day before—I think it was Monday or Tuesday, I'm not sure which—and that he would check all the details of this decision and find out exactly what had happened.

As the hon. member for York Centre said earlier, I believe we should trust the integrity of the RCMP Commissioner, and in this respect, I think we should wait until the Commissioner reports to us on all the circumstances of a case that would seem to be sensitive, and we must consider the fact that some elements are still before the courts. I think we have a duty, and with me the hon. member for Victoria and the other Members of this House, to ensure that we do not interfere with a police investigation, especially when such investigations are before the courts, Mr. Speaker.

* * *

[*English*]

NAVIGATIONAL SAFETY

Mr. Ken Atkinson (St. Catharines): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Transport.

The 1989 Great Lakes Water Quality Board's report to the International Joint Commission states that proposed changes of regulations to no longer require licensed pilots on the Great Lakes may undermine navigational safety, especially in areas where compulsory pilotage is now required, including the Welland Canal.

This has caused concern because navigational safety of commercial vessels is fundamental to avoiding spills of hazardous materials through collision or grounding.

Will the Minister of State for Transport follow the recommendations of the board and review the potential consequences if compulsory pilotage is eliminated?

Hon. Shirley Martin (Minister of State (Transport)): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question because I know of his concern for safety and shipping within the Great Lakes.

Actually the proposed amendments do not affect the areas set aside for compulsory pilotage. Those areas remain the same.

The proposed amendments are for exemptions for captains who have the experience to travel the Great Lakes with their ships. Nevertheless concerns have been expressed, and just last Tuesday the minister appointed a very eminent lawyer experienced in maritime law who will investigate as far as the recommendations are concerned and come forward with a report to the minister.

No decision will be made until that report is received.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Hon. William Rompkey (Labrador): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Employment and Immigration, I want to direct my question to the Deputy Prime Minister if I can just get his attention for a minute. The question is on a serious matter in Labrador and Newfoundland, those fishermen and plant workers who do not qualify for unemployment insurance because of the failure of the fishery.

Three weeks ago the minister said in the House, as reported on page 5000 of *Hansard*, that she was going to build in flexibility to the criteria to meet the needs of those who really needed help. Yet, a directive from her office in Newfoundland went out this past week saying: "These are the only funds we have for this initiative and the program has been designed to assist bona fide people who meet the criteria". Only 50 per cent of the fishermen and plant workers meet the criteria.

My question is very simple. Will the minister see that the directive given and the commitment given by the minister three weeks ago is carried out by the department? If he does not, there will be women and children on the coast of Labrador, on the coast of Newfoundland, who will be facing a pretty bleak Christmas this year.

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of State (Youth) and Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport)): Mr. Speaker, I will be happy to make that representation to the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

I understand the department put forward measures as rapidly as it could. The department is dealing with those who are eligible now as rapidly as it can.

As I have said before, I will be very happy to make those representations to the minister.

Mr. Rompkey: Mr. Speaker, what we need is a definite commitment to act now. We have been on this case for a month. There are people who have had no income at all this summer or this fall. Christmas is coming.

Don't give us a commitment to study the problem; give us a commitment that you are going to help the people who need it in Newfoundland and Labrador, right now.

Mr. Charest: Mr. Speaker, this is not a commitment to study a problem. The government is very sensitive and very much aware of the particular difficulties of those people to whom the member is referring.

Some measures have been put forward, and the member knows that. We have dealt with those who are eligible under the rules as rapidly as we can.

The government intends to act as rapidly as it can to deal with all people who are concerned by this problem and do whatever it can to help them.

* * *

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Communications.

I know the minister is putting out the story that he did not snub the ministers of telephones from the prairies when they were here on Tuesday. After having personally witnessed the minister's uncomprehending, ill-informed and indeed sometimes arrogant attitude toward this issue at his press conference and in two Question Periods, I have to believe the prairie ministers.

When the minister had personally promised that he would not act unilaterally before seriously considering a compromise proposal from the prairie alliance—and he received that compromise proposal several days before he made his surprise announcement, why has he not to this day made a substantive reply to that proposal?

When is he going to quit snubbing not only the prairie ministers but indeed all prairie Canadians?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, the process of defining a telecommunication policy for Canada started seven years ago and is ongoing. It involves both reflection and communication, and I am sure that thanks to our approach based on a sense of belonging and on compromise, we will put together for Canadians a thoroughly modern communication policy.

[*English*]

Mr. Funk: Mr. Speaker, I have two questions. When can they expect a substantive reply to that proposal?

When can they get a copy of the act which the minister has not given them?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Masse: Mr. Speaker, all things are falling into place. When the time comes, I am sure the green grapes will be ready to harvest.

* * *

• (1500)

HOUSING

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State (Finance).

I am sure the Minister realizes that the most recent federal budget discriminated against the Province of Quebec generally and the city of Montreal in particular.

The fact is that, effective January 1, 1990, no funds will be made available under the rental component of the RRAP.

Could the minister who, as a Quebecer, knows just how much the residential rehabilitation assistance program is a success in the province of Quebec, make representation to his colleague the Minister of Finance for the purpose of re-establishing this program as soon as possible?

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I should like to tell my hon. colleague that we have indeed observed the impact the reduction of this program has had not only on the Quebec region, but also on some others. As we are now in the process of preparing the forthcoming budget, this is one of the items we will look into very carefully.

Mr. Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. I suggest the minister's reply was not adequate. The various provincial ministers responsible for housing are going to meet next week and this program is expected to expire at the end of December. Therefore, a reply is required very shortly.

Because the city of Montreal, which had set up its own housing rehabilitation program to supplement the Federal program, will be most adversely affected by this Ottawa decision, the number of tenants there being the greatest in Canada, it will likely be forced to give up its own program. Could the minister accept at least that the rental component continue to apply to all Canadian cities which have their own program to supplement the federal program?

Mr. Loiselle: Mr. Speaker, I could tell the Hon. Member that even before he contacted me about this problem, my colleague from the Conservative caucus had already done so with tremendous energy. They have already made representations concerning this to my colleague responsible for housing. We are in fact very actively looking into this.

* * *

[*English*[

POINTS OF ORDER

COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, during Question Period today I am afraid that the Minister of National Revenue inadvertently misled the House. I know he did not do it intentionally.

I think it is important that we clarify for the record what the member from Yorkton—Melville said the other day regarding the profitable corporations that do not pay any income tax. He said that in 1987 there were over 93,000 profitable corporations that failed to pay income tax because of the various tax exemptions in the tax act. I think that is the appropriate comment. That was in 1987, on profits of $27 billion. Then the minister confirmed that a year later, 1988, the year that we do not really have adequate statistics for yet, there were still 50,000 profitable corporations not paying any income tax.

We appreciate the minister's clarification of that. We were not certain what the number was for 1988 but now we know it is 50,000.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. During the course of my quoting an article from the *Montreal Gazette* in response to a question from the member for Moncton, I am advised that I used the word "members" and it should have been individuals, rather than members. I would not want to leave the inference that it was Members of Parliament. They were individuals.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

WEEKLY STATEMENT

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the usual Thursday business question. I know that the Government House Leader will be unable to give a complete response because certain discussions are under way with respect to the business on Monday and Tuesday, which I feel will likely be resolved in a way that will be satisfactory to all sides of the House. But I think, in conformity with our custom, I should ask the question in the first instance now.

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I will have more precise details to share with the House very shortly, as we are reworking the wording of a House order upon which we have agreed.

I want to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues, the House Leader of the Official Opposition and the House Leader for the New Democratic Party for their assistance in bringing this about.

I can say that tomorrow will be an allotted day and next Wednesday will likely be an allotted day. We are in the process of working out a House order which will lay out the details for Monday and Tuesday.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, there is an additional point I would like to raise with my colleague, the Government House Leader. In the past it has been customary, although not always the case, that when a Prime Minister returns to Canada from an overseas trip he would give a statement to the House about the developments that took place during that trip. In that connection would it be expected that the Prime Minister would report to the House about his trip to the Soviet Union.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I will certainly raise that representation with the Prime Minister as soon as possible.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Lewis that Bill C-43, an Act respecting abortion, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

Mr. Guy Ricard (Laval): Mr. Speaker, when the bell rang I still had a few minutes left in my remarks to the House concerning the very important issue of abortion.

I was saying that the measure under consideration is not perfect but that it is a step in the right direction. I made the statement because I feel that pursuant to the second part of the bill a woman could consult her physician and have an abortion on demand. I think that the opinion of only one physician is not enough.

I believe that a committee of three or five doctors could interview the woman, meet with her family and all people involved and explain to them exactly what it is all about and what are the psychological and physical consequences of an abortion. Mr. Speaker, I think this would have more influence on the behaviour than if there were only one physician.

I am not saying the Bill must be rejected because if we do that it would be like voting pro-choice since the Bill would stay on the shelf, never to be heard of again. We would have no opportunity to delve into the question, debate every aspect of the consequences of abortion, and talk about family planning.

Mr. Speaker, this is why I support the motion for second reading so we may study the matter in committee and bring in the necessary amendments and corrections.

Among such amendments and corrections I would favour considering the advisability of a properly structured family policy, nothing very hard to implement and which only civil servants can easily understand, but something simple which would make it possible for men and women, families and children to develop in society, to make use of our common wealth and plan in the long term. I would like to see structures designed to accommodate all needy people. We could help them earn a living and seek fulfillment in a more or less liberal career.

I think that all we have done so far is paper over the cracks in our society. We have been trying to plug holes. As I said at the beginning of my remarks, Mr. Speaker, we have put band-aids on wooden legs. All parties in the House of Commons have been asking for the establishment of government structures and policies aimed at the family. What are we waiting for?

• (1510)

Mr. Speaker, I should think that Members who will have the opportunity to sit on the legislative committee to study the measure on abortion will be in a position to shed their political party bias, make constructive amendments to the Bill—amendments geared to the 21st century—and set up the kind of structures which will enable us to prosper in this beautiful and great country of ours.

[*English*]

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, once again Parliament is confronted with the complex and difficult issue of abortion. I say complex and difficult because we must deal with such questions as when does human life begin in the unborn child, when is it permissible to terminate that life and for what reasons, and also, to what extent should the criminal law apply to behaviour surrounding the abortion question.

It is also a difficult question for members of Parliament because this is a bill which is submitted as a free vote issue. Members of Parliament must make up their own minds on the bill and must provide their own reasons for voting for or against it. They cannot fall back on a party position.

I am personally opposed to abortion on moral grounds because I believe that life starts at an early stage and must be protected no matter how undeveloped or incomplete the unborn child is. On a moral basis, I would only accept abortion when the life of the mother is seriously in danger. That is my personal, moral position.

On the other hand, I recognize that there are many persons all around me, both here in this House and in my community, who do not share these views. These are individuals who are just as sincere, just as intelligent and just as altruistic as I am and yet they have a completely different view with respect to this subject.

The Christian churches have different views on this subject. They are all opposed to abortion but they differ with respect to the grounds on which abortion should be permitted in the criminal law, and they differ with respect to the period when the foetus has human life, and they differ on other grounds as well.

My point is that personally we have strong views with respect to abortion and those views are based on moral principles, but there are others who are just as sincere and intelligent and altruistic who have different views.

We must recognize that in Canada we live in a pluralistic society which has many views on an issue such as this. In these circumstances, how should we deal with this subject under the law? How should this subject be treated, in particular, by the criminal law?

While many moral codes, both religious and personal, say that abortion is wrong, I do not know of any moral code which says that every moral law should be incorporated in the criminal law. As a matter of fact, in this country, we have many types of behaviour which are considered immoral and which, at one time, were forbidden by the criminal law but which today are not forbidden by the criminal law. I give as examples, adultery, homosexual acts, birth control, blasphemy, suicide, gambling, drunkenness, addiction and so on. As a matter of fact, in some jurisdictions in the world, these things are still considered criminal, and in some countries there is a consensus that they should be considered criminal. But in this country, although we believe very strongly that some of these types of behaviour are immoral, we do not believe that they are proper subject matter for the criminal law.

The question that we must determine in a debate like this is that despite our different, strongly held moral positions, what should be the criteria for certain behaviour to be covered by the criminal law? In answering that question the first principle is that the criminal law should be used with discretion and restraint because it involves penal consequences. It involves prison, and the curtailment of freedom. Consequently, the criminal law should only be used as a last resort in controlling behaviour in a democratic and pluralistic society.

If that is not done, and there is not a strong consensus in respect of a matter being covered by the criminal law, then it will be almost impossible to enforce that particular law. We saw that in the past. I was in this Parliament when lotteries were illegal under the Criminal Code, but nobody paid much attention to that article of the law. While that matter was covered by the criminal law, people turned their heads and pretended that they did not see what was happening, because in fact there was no consensus in the country that it should still be considered a part of the criminal law. The reason was that there were many different views with respect to the morality of gambling.

The same applied with respect to homosexual acts by consent, in private. It was the same in respect of suicide and other matters which were finally taken out of the criminal law. So if certain individuals insist on putting certain behaviour in the criminal law when there is a wide variety of views in respect of that behaviour, then it will not be enforceable. And when it is not enforced, the whole criminal law is brought into disrespect and disrepute.

I believe that totally controlling abortion in the criminal law, when there is no consensus to do so, does not really do very much to reduce the number of abortions or does not deal with the problem of unwanted pregnancy.

It is my strongly held view that there is no consensus in this country with respect to the criminalization of abortion in the early stages of pregnancy. It is very difficult to detect such a crime in the early stages of the pregnancy and such a law would be almost impossible to enforce. I do not believe that abortion should be criminalized in the early stages of pregnancy and I believe that it should be left to the woman and her doctor to decide what must be done. In doing that, the woman in question must wrestle

with her own moral position and the doctor must apply his own professional standards and ethics.

I want to make absolutely clear that because one opposes the criminalization of abortion does not mean that one is saying that abortion is all right, that abortion is okay, that abortion is a good thing. By opposing the criminalization of abortion, we simply mean that in a pluralistic society, the criminal law is not the proper response to the problem of unwanted pregnancy and abortion. I think that we have too many abortions in this country, both legal and illegal, and I think we must do all in our power to reduce that number.

The question is how we deal with the problem and how we reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies and abortions. Once again, I do not believe that the response is a strict criminal law dealing with abortions. If we are serious in wanting to reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies and abortions, then we must have preventive programs. We must have better programs to help mothers keep their children and raise them properly. We especially need better programs for child support, housing, nutrition, education, pregnancy leave, day care and so on. If we did more of these things we would find that more mothers would be able to keep their children, and would want to keep their children. We would have fewer unwanted pregnancies.

• (1520)

We also need better programs in family planning, in reproductive education and in moral instruction. By doing these sorts of things I think we will see the number of abortions and unwanted pregnancies decline.

There are some in this House and some outside the House who say that abortion is murder and should be treated like murder since the moment of conception. The state has never treated abortion history of our Criminal Code you will note that several crimes have been treated differently than murder. The crime of murder at one time had the penalty of capital punishment, which then became life imprisonment. We had the crime of infanticide, the crime of manslaughter, and the crime of abortion which was always treated differently than murder.

Even within our Christian churches the death of a foetus in its early stages was never treated like the death of a child after birth. No church that I know of believes in the baptism of an infant immediately upon conception. As a matter of fact, it treats that unbaptized child in a different way from a theological point of view.

I will conclude by saying that I intend to vote against this bill because I believe, first of all, that it is an inappropriate use of the criminal law. I could accept some criminalization in the later stages of the pregnancy, but even then I doubt whether the substance of the law should be in the Criminal Code but perhaps in some other federal or provincial statute. I am also opposed to the bill because I do not believe that it deals with the real causes of unwanted pregnancies and with the means that will bring about their reduction.

It is my intention to continue to listen to the arguments in this debate. The bill will probably go to committee and then we will have another debate at third reading. For the moment that is my position. I will vote against the bill.

I repeat that this is a difficult subject. I have no problem with my own personal moral position. I am opposed to abortion on moral grounds, but what we are discussing in this House is not what is moral or immoral about abortion. We are discussing to what extent abortion should be criminalized. That is the issue that we must address.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Before I recognize the hon. member for Edmonton East there is a point of order by the President of the Privy Council.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, there have been, as I indicated earlier, discussions among the parties and I think you will find that there will be unanimous consent for me to move the following order and to vote immediately without debate.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That, further to the order of the House made Tuesday, November 7, 1989, respecting the adjournment of the House on November 30 and December 1, 1989:

On Monday, November 27, 1989, the House, on Government Orders, shall dispose of Ways and Means Proceeding No. 8, and then consider and complete report stage and third reading of Bill C–36, with the Speaker interrupting at 4.45 p.m. that day, if necessary, any debate then under way and putting every question necessary to dispose of the said stages of the said bill, successively and without further amendment or debate. Following the completion of proceedings on Bill C–36, Private Members' Business shall be called and taken up for one hour, after which the House shall resume debate on the motion for second reading of Bill C–43, an act respecting abortion, and on any amendment thereto, until 10 o'clock p.m., when the debate and the House shall be adjourned until 10.00 o'clock a.m., Tuesday, November 28, 1989;

That, on Tuesday, November 28, 1989, the House will sit at 10.00 o'clock a.m. on Government Orders and shall resume debate on the motion for second reading of Bill C–43, with the Speaker recognizing the Prime Minister at 11.00 o'clock a.m.; following the speech of the Prime Minister the question on the said motion, and on any amendment thereto, shall be deemed to have been put and a recorded division on the same shall be deemed to have been requested and deemed to be deferred until 1.00 o'clock p.m. that day;

That the sitting stand suspended until 1.00 o'clock p.m., when the Speaker shall cause the bells to ring for 15 minutes to call in the Members, following which the said recorded division or divisions shall be called, following which the House shall stand suspended until 3.00 o'clock p.m., at which time Statements by Members and Oral Questions will be called, followed by Routine Proceedings, following which the Speaker shall adjourn the House until 2.00 o'clock p.m., Wednesday, November 29, 1989; and

That, on Wednesday, November 29, 1989, the Orders of the Day shall be a non–votable Opposition motion as a Supply Proceeding.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Does the hon. Government House Leader have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Lewis that Bill C–43, an act respecting abortion, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, in rising to participate this afternoon on the second reading debate of Bill C–43, it is my intention to be brief because the points I have to make can be made simply and quickly.

I wish first of all to say that although I do not share their views I do respect the deeply held personal, religious, ethical and moral convictions of those who cannot bring themselves to support what I consider to be a woman's right to abortion.

During the federal general election last year it was my privilege to be invited into many homes in the riding of Edmonton East and in many of those homes I encountered constituents who devoutly believed that abortion was wrong. I do not in any way question the sincerity of those beliefs. Again, while not agreeing with them, I recognize them as legitimate beliefs held by those people.

However, in my opinion—and this opinion was arrived at over the course of years—the fundamental right of each Canadian woman to the security of person guaranteed her in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms overrides all other considerations in this matter.

If I may, I would like to quote Section 7 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms:

> Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice.

I can conceive of no greater principle of fundamental justice than the right to control one's own body. The right to control one's body is inherent in each and every individual and so long as that individual can exercise that control then that right is indivisible.

Further, I think it must be recognized that no law adopted in this House which would have as its object the abridgement of that right, for that is what we are speaking of, could succeed. There is no law which we could fashion in this Chamber which would end abortion. It is a social impossibility. We know that from our experience during those years when there were such laws.

They did not serve to end abortion, Mr. Speaker. They did serve to end the lives of some women who sought abortions illegally because they had no choice, and again that would inevitably be the circumstance were we to pursue any kind of law that had as its object the curtailment of the fundamental right to security of the person.

Once again we would find ourselves in a situation where the lives of poor women—for it is they who would have no option—would be placed at risk. The return of the back alley butchers would once again mar our society. In those instances where such a law was effective, where women were forced to carry through to term babies they did not want, we would in most instances merely add to the 1,120,000 poor kids in Canada today, causing that cycle to repeat itself in ever greater degradation.

• (1530)

There is no need for such a law because it is a fundamental fact of our society that individual Canadian women are able to act as competent moral agents. We need not collect into this Chamber that decision-making capacity. Canadian women are perfectly capable of exercising it themselves. They can make those achingly complicated moral decisions.

The proof of this is in current practice where the overwhelming majority of abortions performed in Canada are performed early in the first trimester as soon as the pregnancy becomes known. In almost no instances, I assume, and certainly in none of which I am aware, has anyone undertaken a second or, God help us, a third trimester abortion for any other than the most horrible reasons in the face of the most horrible circumstances.

The one instance, in fact, which comes immediately to the minds of everyone in this Chamber is that of Chantal Daigle, who was forced into the second trimester because of interference in the Canadian judicial system. Other than such instances, and those where discoveries of deformed foetuses are made, it is indeed rare to the point of negligibility to find third trimester abortions. So, we can trust Canadian women to make proper moral decisions based on their circumstances, for they are the only ones who can know those circumstances as intimately as is necessary in this instance.

Further, the law that is before this House presents us with what can only be seen as a potential nightmare of litigation. Relying as it does on the opinion of a doctor, it invites the intervention of a contrary opinion of another doctor. Indeed, it conjures up images of anti-choice vigilante squads moving from doctor to doctor and from hospital to hospital attempting to intimidate doctors and thereby further restrict and reduce Canadian women's access to abortion, using a poorly crafted law as an instrument of terror against women.

Disgruntled ex-boyfriends, as was the case in the Daigle case, could challenge any doctor's opinion and could launch a third party court action. In fact, this bill will once again open up that very door to all kinds of civil litigation which the Supreme Court in its wisdom closed just last week. It would be a terrible error.

I think it must as well be made clear that nobody in this House, and of this I am certain, favours abortion. Nobody in this Chamber can honestly be said to want women to have abortions. The question that can legitimately be before this House is what steps ought properly be taken by a government concerned about this matter? How can a government concerned about reducing the incidence of abortion in Canada conduct public affairs such that that perfectly commendable goal is achieved?

You do not do it by attempting to ban abortions, as I have already argued. You do do it to the extent possible by making birth control devices and counselling widely, publicly and freely available. That is the only way you can do it.

But you have to acknowledge that even when such enlightened public policy is in full flower, there will still be errors, accidents and, God help us, violence against women. In those instances, the option of abortion must remain available at the sole discretion of the woman involved.

What we can do in that regard is to amend the Canada Health Act to guarantee access to every Canadian woman who may find herself seeking an abortion in Canada.

I note that there have been no abortions performed in Prince Edward Island since 1982. This is not because there were no women in Prince Edward Island seeking abortions. Far from it. It is because the women of Prince Edward Island were denied access in their province. That is a condition which must be rectified. It is a condition utterly unaddressed in this bill but it is a condition which must be rectified in the interests of Canadian women.

In summary, I would call on the House, in the name of Canadian women, to defeat this bill. Take positive measures to curtail the need for abortion and then the day may yet come when we can achieve that beautiful vision which animates the pro-choice movement in this country: Every mother a willing mother, every child a wanted child.

Mr. Brian White (Dauphin—Swan River): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to take part in today's second reading debate on Bill C-43, an act respecting abortion.

I have been a member of this House since 1984 and I have addressed my colleagues on several occasions on the subject of abortion. I personally consider the fact that 65,000 abortions performed each year in Canada is a national tragedy. I have expressed that opinion here and at home in my Manitoba constituency of Dauphin—Swan River.

I consider myself, and I am sure my constituents know that I am as well, a pro-life member of Parliament, or, rather, an anti-abortion member of Parliament. I use the term anti-abortion rather than pro-life because I believe that labels have become a major contributor to the rancour in this most emotional of national debates. Pro-lifers are not anti-choice and as well, pro-choicers are not anti-life. So I am personally an anti-abortionist and my record in this House confirms that fact.

For example, on June 2 of 1987, I voted in favour of Private Members' Motion M-37 in the name of the member for Grey—Simcoe. The motion asked the government to consider amending the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in Section 7 to include unborn persons. That motion was lost by a vote of 89 to 62.

Once again in July of 1988, I had the opportunity to vote on several motions ranging from outright abortion on demand to calling for legal protection of unborn children from the moment of conception. I voted for the latter which reflected my belief that life begins at conception and that society must begin to recognize that fact.

It has often been said that every society is judged by the way it treats its weakest members. That particular amendment, once again in the name of the member for Grey—Simcoe, was defeated 118 to 105. That is an indication of strength of the anti-abortion feelings at that time in this House.

In a perfect world, there would be no need for abortions. Every pregnancy would be a wanted pregnancy and a happy pregnancy. Every child would be a wanted child and a happy child. But sadly, as we all know, we live in a very imperfect world. Society wants and needs laws to protect its citizens and as well, society requires laws that are a reflection of that society. I believe that Canada needs a law on abortion.

Since January of 1988 when the Supreme Court of Canada struck down Section 251 of the Criminal Code, we have had no law to govern abortion. The reality of contemporary society is that certain women will seek abortion services.

Another important reality in Canada is the existence of a Charter of Rights and Freedoms. So in its 1988 ruling, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that Section 251 of the Criminal Code, which dealt with abortion through therapeutic abortion committees at accredited hospitals, was in violation of Section 7 of the charter. That is, it violated the woman's right to security of the person.

As well, and this is very important, the Supreme Court also clearly indicated that Parliament should take into consideration society's interest in the foetus, the unborn child. So we now have before us Bill C-43. It comes under the Criminal Code because it is only through the Criminal Code that the Parliament of Canada can legislate on abortion.

Having no law, I believe, would potentially cause serious problems in Canada. The provision of health services is primarily a provincial responsibility; that is, the delivery and the operation of those services.

• (1540)

The Canada Health Act does not list specific medical services, so the individual provinces specify services to be available and specify access to those services. The absence of federal law could lead to critical variations across Canada in the provision of abortion services.

For example, one province's policy could be the exact opposite of that of a neighbouring province when dealing with abortion. It is my opinion that doing nothing was not an option.

Bill C–43 makes abortion a criminal offence unless the pregnancy would likely be a threat to the life or health of the woman, health considerations to include mental, physical and psychological health. The law undoubtedly places a large responsibility on Canada's medical community because such a determination would be based upon the opinion of a single practitioner.

However, I have great faith in the physicians of Canada. The Canadian Medical Association has developed policies on abortion. It has spent much time in debate developing those policies and I believe that association can be depended upon to act in the best interests of their patients.

As well, the decision to have an abortion must be an agonizing one for a woman. I say "must" because I cannot as a man purport to know what a woman goes through in making such a decision. However, as a legislator, I do know that we as a society cannot and must not send women who have or seek abortions to jail. Society must instead work toward a time when abortions are not required or are not even desired.

Abortion must not be dealt with as an isolated issue. Abortion solves no problems. In fact, it could create many new ones. Related and supportive social policy must be developed concurrently with any abortion legislation.

I am, therefore, pleased that a royal commission on new reproductive technology will study the causes, treatment and prevention of infertility, sterilization reversals and other reproductive health issues. As well, the Minister of National Health and Welfare has announced $500,000 per year over the next three years for research into family planning issues, including contraception and fertility problems.

At the same time, federal and provincial governments must continue to develop new policies and programs dealing with family violence, child sexual abuse and child care and must meet the challenge to address the problem of unwanted pregnancies. Of course, ultimately, the search for a better society rests with our young people. They must be provided with information and education so that they can hopefully avoid the mistakes that we have made.

The citizens of Canada expect leadership from their government. I believe that has been provided with the introduction of Bill C–43. Of course, it is impossible, considering the emotional feelings on both sides of this important issue, to develop a law that will satisfy everyone. As well, it would be fruitless to have a law that would not survive a court challenge under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

I could never have supported a bill that based access to abortion on the gestational model. Such an idea I find abhorrent. The logical extension of society's recognition of the increasing value of a developing foetus is to place less value on a life as it ages.

Therefore, I intend to support Bill C–43 at second reading. It does not totally reflect my own personal anti-abortion feelings. However, as a legislator, I feel duty bound to work toward developing laws that are constitutionally acceptable and will meet with the approval of tolerant and thoughtful Canadians. I feel that Bill C–43 accomplishes that purpose.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, over the decade during which I have had the privilege of sitting in this House, there have been many moments in which the House of Commons has risen to an occasion where it provided a sense of direction for the country and responded in a sometimes quite magnificent way to expectations, hopes and aspirations. Unfortunately, this is not one of those times.

It is a great sadness and disappointment to many Canadians that on an issue that affects so many of them in so many ways, that reaches into family life in such a profound way, the Parliament of Canada is not giving this country the kind of leadership that it requires. In this, I agree with the member from Dauphin—Swan River who just spoke.

I have been struck over the last three or four months, particularly after the events of last summer, by how many people in my own riding and across the country have spoken to me about this issue and have approached it in a way with some reason and dispassion, commitment, some with agony, some with clear questioning but in a certain spirit of trying to find a resolution to the problem. I think they were hoping that the Parliament of Canada through its members would find that avenue, that particular opening that would give them some sense that we are reaching a new plateau in public policy as it relates to this very crucial issue.

I would also say, after listening to the speeches made in this House over the last several days, that the feelings expressed by members also had within them the germs and ingredients of a kind of resolution. It has been quite fascinating to listen to the kind of personal commitments, real feelings of awareness and engagement that so many members have had in trying to again find a way of resolving what has been such an important and widespread debate in this country for such a long time.

The legislation before us falls far short of that mark. It is a serious and profound lack of leadership and direction. It is, as the minister who introduced it clearly called it, a compromise at a time when a compromise was not called for but something much broader, more comprehensive, more rational in dealing with an issue of such great significance.

This was not the time for the politically expedient answer. It was not the time to try to find the ways of patching together a temporary agreement among members of the cabinet to get legislation through to meet a statement that was made perhaps in haste by the Prime Minister last summer. In fact, the country was looking for a great deal more than that.

The legislation before us, the bill itself, as we know, is deeply flawed. Perhaps what bothers me most about it, is that it will create a whole new set of problems. I think the test of good legislation is whether it resolves a problem without creating a new generation of new problems. This legislation clearly does not meet that test.

This legislation opens up once again the possibility, the real potential of a number of new actions, of confusions, of court initiatives being taken by third parties against doctors. It is not going to resolve any of the clear questions dealing with access that have been very much part of this debate, of a fair degree of equality and access for women across the country.

We are now going to be putting an onus, an intimidation on different medical practitioners in different parts of the country and basically putting them in the position that they may want to withdraw their services or not become engaged at all. The legislation is flawed.

We have seen since the Supreme Court decision the reaction of the legal fraternity which is to say that it creates once again a new legal problem for many Canadians. That is not good legislation which creates a whole new set of problems. It is not good legislation because once again we are using the Criminal Code as a way of providing punishment to those engaged in the very difficult choice, and it is a difficult choice. We are saying that the criminal system will punish those who disobey this legislation. That is a terrible, awful indictment of a society that uses the threat of prison or of a criminal judgment against such a personal deeply-felt act that involves so many questions of morality and nervousness.

I listened with interest to the speech made by the member from Edmonton East. He said that women have the right to make their choice, and I agree with him. But to say that they can make that choice in a calm atmosphere is not right. I have talked to people from the Pregnancy Crisis Centre in the city of Winnipeg. Often young women, unwed women in particular, are making choices full of anxiety, of a sense isolation, of being lonely. They are making a decision at a time in their lives when it is perhaps the most difficult time to make a decision because they are faced with a great world out there. All of a sudden, a pregnancy takes place and perhaps the boyfriend leaves, or there is no love in the relationship and they are left bereft of any support whatever. That is a very tough time to ask anyone to make a choice.

While I defend the right to make a choice, I also believe strongly that it cannot be a choice made in isolation. Choice does not mean licence. It does not mean to say a complete freedom to do as one wants. That is where again I think the approach taken by the government falls deeply short. There was such an opportunity to address some of the crucial problems faced by

women making a choice, an incredible sort of fear of "just how do I support a child?"

• (1550)

We live in a country that has a million children living in poverty, where 50 per cent of the people going to the food banks are young families with children. We have such a total breakdown and failure of family policy and we say nothing about it.

The Minister of National Health and Welfare says, "Well, I understand the problem," and offers $1.5 million and a couple of studies to deal with that basic breakdown of the family structure in this country and the support for families. What a terrible vacuum.

I listened to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Again, he gave a very heartfelt speech the other evening. He said that it is up to the churches to make this choice and totally absolved himself of any governmental responsibility whatsoever.

We in this Parliament cannot abdicate responsibility. Goodness knows, how can we be talking about the crucial fact of abortion when we know that many women face the choice of living in poverty, living with the prospect of their children being underfed and under-educated, of not having a chance in society. Do you think that does not affect their choice? Do you not think that that biases and distorts the choice that they are going to make? Of course it does. And yet we say nothing in this Parliament about it. It has nothing to do with the debate.

One good reason for voting against this bill and defeating it is to keep the pressure on the government to produce a decent family policy in Canada so that when women have to make a choice, they make a choice with a fair chance, with a proper system of support in this country. If we pass this legislation, then the thing gets forgotten and the pressure is off. For another 20 or 30 years, we can go on doing business as usual and not address what is becoming a national tragedy, embarrassment and serious handicap to the future of a million children or more in this country and that is a fact that they have not been given a proper chance in society. Surely Members of Parliament have to take that into account when they decide how to vote on this bill. They cannot, in any way, eliminate that broader question from the context in which a choice is going to be made by Members of Parliament.

The real question is how do you reduce abortions, how do you reduce the necessity of making those choices? As members have talked, and I have listened to most of the speeches, they have clearly signalled the fact that we need much better services. We need counselling for women. We need to make adoption a real legitimate choice.

My wife and I adopted a young boy four and a half years ago. He brought us enormous warmth and love and it is an incredible experience. I want to see this society do a lot more, not just to have children who are wanted but to have children who are needed in this society.

I do not see anything in this bill that says anything about that. I do not see anything that the government is doing to make that possible. In fact, what I saw three weeks ago, in the unemployment insurance bill, was the government bringing in a measure that clearly discriminated against adoptive parents. Yet, at the same time, its members have the nerve and gall to stand up and say, "We want to reduce the incidence of abortion," but they bring in an Unemployment Insurance Act which clearly contradicts that commitment.

I said in the House at that time to stay true to your beliefs. At least be consistent. The government ignored it. One minister stood up and said: "Well it does not matter. It does not count that we are discriminating against adoptive parents". Yet on the other hand we hear government members say: "But we want to reduce the incidence of abortion". That is hypocrisy. That is not fair.

That is one reason why I cannot vote for this legislation. I do not want to take the heat off this government. I want to keep the pressure on. I want to keep reminding government members every day that they owe an awful lot more to society to deal with this problem. We need much better legislation than this can produce.

If they would listen to the members of this House as they have spoken over the last two or three days, we could come up with a much better bill. I am not saying it would make everybody happy, because there are clear divisions on points of view between those two important values, one of which is right of women to make that choice in a society that has been dominated by males for so long. I do not think that we can compromise on that, but surely there is an awful lot more room to move in legislative terms, statutory terms, regulatory terms and

fiscal terms to create a social and economic system which would substantially reduce the need to have an abortion.

There was room for this Parliament to provide real leadership in the country and to meet the concerns of all those who have spoken, for the entire spectrum of opinion. But this legislation and this Parliament is failing terribly to provide that kind of leadership and that kind of direction for Canada when it is so desperately needed. For that reason, I will be voting against the bill.

Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy—Royal): Mr. Speaker, today on this debate addressing the issue of abortion, I am speaking for the fourth time in my parliamentary career on the right to life for the unborn.

In 1982, the Constitution of Canada was delivered to this country. Despite the fact that it did not have an amendment to it—which I and others of my ilk determined would be in the best interests of the unborn, namely, having a provision included to protect the rights and the life of the unborn—the constitution was repatriated.

With that repatriation, the Parliament of Canada lost its supremacy to the Supreme Court of Canada, and in 1984 this government inherited an abortion law which was struck down early in 1988 by the Supreme Court of Canada. In the intervening two years, the country has been without legislation.

I recognize that the government has the responsibility of governing this country. It has the responsibility of enacting legislation. It has the responsibility to lead. I also recognize that the government has the responsibility to enact legislation that will meet the test of the Supreme Court. Indeed the government of the day is, in fact, in a no-win situation because in my opinion there is no way that legislation can be introduced under the present conditions that will be acceptable to the majority of Canadians.

With this legislation, the government has come under fire from the pro-choice side which believes that any abortion law at all is an impediment to the rights of women. We have seen the pro-life side of the equation just as concerned about the legislation because that side maintains that it forsakes the right of life to the unborn and provides for abortion on demand.

There are for us who are pro-life three positive aspects to this legislation which I have had to take under very serious consideration. First, by placing the legislation in the Criminal Code, it identifies the act of committing abortion as a criminal act and indeed this is important. Second, the exception to this provision is that an abortion can only be accepted with respect to a decision taken by a medical practitioner with the advice and consent of that medical practitioner as it relates to the health of the mother. Third, as it does not identify a gestation period, and although I am not a lawyer, it would occur to me that there could be a basis now to determine through the procedure of the courts that life indeed does begin at conception which would go a long way to identifying with the crisis in which the pro-life people find themselves.

In my opinion if this legislation were on the books, it might be a good thing from the point of view of the pro-lifers to start the process through the courts and deal with the process through changes to the constitution. If, indeed, the legislation is not passed, the field of abortion may be opened as it is now to those people who have made a career out of taking the lives of the unborn.

However, the legislation has unfortunately fatal flaws. These same provisions that I refer to which give support to those who support life and recognize that the unborn needs legislative protection are indeed the very same concerns that are a deep and grave concern to me. The legislation provides that an abortion may be provided if the mental, physical or psychological health of the mother is threatened. In the legislation nobody has determined what psychological health is, nobody has identified what mental health is. This legislation clearly moves beyond the provision that the life of the mother is the only acceptable condition whereby an abortion may be permitted in the event of distress.

• (1600)

Because the gestational period is not identified the problem becomes, when is it acceptable not to perform an abortion? My grave concern is that with the knowledge that life can be sustained at 23 weeks—at 23 weeks a child may be born prematurely—that life is now threatened under this proposed law because it simply provides open-ended abortion which could be inter-

preted by some as being permitted right up to the moment of birth. Nobody, I am sure, in this House would condone or support that type of situation but, nonetheless, that is what we are faced with.

And what constitutes a medical practitioner in this country and what constitutes the direction of that medical practitioner? Does it mean that somebody in an office in Toronto can supervise, under his direction, a team of abortionists in Halifax? Does it mean that we will indeed be in a position in the future to see abortionists, people who are in that business, establish abortion clinics much the same as we have McDonald's franchised across this country, or Burger King? That, too, is a very real possibility.

I appreciate the govenrment's difficulties in trying to come to some solution to this anguishing question. And it is likely that this law, if it was passed, could meet the constitutional challenge. In principle it could be argued that the rights of the unborn are protected but, in fact, in the practicalities of practice this legislation clearly does nothing for the life of the unborn.

My position remains as it has been for the number of years that I have represented my constituents in this Chamber. I have always maintained that abortion is not acceptable as a means of birth control and that we must act to protect those who cannot protect themselves. I say that innocent lives are being destroyed, lives that have value and worth. I just want to read, in the last few moments of my time, a letter from a constituent of mine which I think sums it up very nicely.

He says: "My wife and I are the foster parents of three adopted children. Our three children should have been destroyed in their mothers' wombs, so the abortionists would have us believe. Two were born to unmarried girls and the other was born to a woman separated from her husband. How grateful we are that their mothers decided not to destroy them. They have brought great joy to our lives and enhanced the lives of many other people. My wife and I implore you to enact laws that will protect the unborn at all stages of development."

What I see before us today is legislation that meets the requirements of constitutional challenge and court challenge and the requirement as well of those who want virtually unimpaired access to abortion. Unfortunately, I see nothing that meets the requirements of those who would be denied birth and life.

Mr. Girve Fretz (Erie): Mr. Speaker, it is not possible in ten minutes to consider all the details of Bill C–43, its implications, its medical and legal advice, but let me at the outset say that as someone who believes that the lives of the unborn should be protected I believe the bill is very weak and I believe too that it is badly flawed in its protection for the unborn.

Let me first deal with what I believe are the positives. I am pleased that the justice minister has included it in the Criminal Code. This reaffirms that the performance of abortion is a criminal act. Second, I am no less pleased that the minister did not use the gestational approach. Third, it implies the recognition of human life from conception and that the unborn child does have intrinsic value.

The negative aspects are many. For conviction, the sentence is two years. The taking of an innocent life should demand a much stiffer sentence, say 10 or 15 years. An abortion could be performed for health reasons defined as including physical, mental and psychological health. This is almost abortion on demand. Health is defined basically in a manner which cannot be verified. Therefore, would recurring headaches during pregnancy be sufficient reason for an abortion?

Consultation with only one medical practitioner is another weakness. Surely the woman should be expected to consult at least two medical doctors. It should be a requirement that the doctor or the doctors give written advice and a written report as to why, in his or her opinion, an abortion was deemed necessary.

I find it repugnant that Parliament, representing society, is even debating the issue of abortion. Abortion should not be illegal; it should be unthinkable. Abortion is society's declaration that we have no desirable future as a people, as humanity, as a society.

More and more we find ourselves on the slippery slope of decadence from violence and drugs and sex in relativism and situational ethics. The so–called pro–choice argument postulates the right of a woman to control her own body. What is the legitimate right that allows the

pain and thus the ultimate death of an innocent human being?

Section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms states that:

> Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice.

I suppose it is a foregone conclusion that if we all accepted the premise that "everyone" included the unborn then this debate would not be taking place here today. Consider the following statement made by Jules Carles, director of research at France's National Centre for Scientific Research:

> The first cell formed by sperm–egg union is already the embryo of an autonomous living being with individual hereditary patrimony. Such that, if we knew the nature of the spermatozoid and the chromosomes involved we could already, at that point, predict the characteristics of the child, the future colour of his hair and the illness to which he would be subject. In his mother's womb he will form, he will not accept everything she brings to him, but only that which is necessary to his existence. Therefore he will realize his hereditary patrimony. In that first cell the dynamism and the precise direction of life appears. In spite of its fragility and its immense needs, an autonomous and genuinely living being has come into existence—
>
> The law must therefore aim at protecting the rights of the unborn from the moment of its conception, not merely from some subsequent point of human development. The law must set its face against functional definitions of personhood. People function as humans because they are human; they do not become human by performing human functions—

Mr. Troy Weber, who wrote to me on the subject of fundamental issues inherent to abortion, stated:

> The scientific, genetic criteria speak plainly. The foetus is a human being from the moment of conception.
>
> Since we cannot refute the argument that the foetus is a human being from the moment it is conceived, and since the medical community and the genetic information we have received from it both concur with the argument that the foetus is a human being from the moment of conception, our most logical recourse is to accept that the foetus is a human being at conception.

Mr. Speaker, I agree. From the time of my first nomination meeting in March of 1978 and through four federal elections I have made public my views on abortion. It is on the record back home and it is on the record in this chamber that I am pro–life and anti–abortion. The easiest course of action then for me to take would be to vote against the bill. It will be difficult for me to vote "yes" at second reading and I will do so reluctantly. But let me tell you why I expect to do so.

• (1610)

I will work diligently with other pro–life members to bring in amendments, both in committee and at report stage, to strengthen this bill. Some of my constituents have told me to do everything in my power to defeat Bill C–43 because a bad law is worse than none. I do not think I am going to buy that logic. This law is better than none at all. Not for a moment do I believe that the majority of my constituents want a lawless society. No law on the books is truly abortion on demand.

I recognize the fact that this is the position of many members in this House. It occurs to me that if I and other like–minded MPs cannot pass a pro–life bill then I must do everything in my power to restrict the number of abortions that occur and the wanton destruction of life.

In conclusion, I want to throw out a challenge to the churches because it is mostly they who demand pro–life legislation. The challenge to them is that they provide counselling and, more than that, that they provide facilities and financial assistance with the love that goes with it for women who are facing this dilemma.

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East): Mr. Speaker, the issue of abortion is not for the timid. In general, legislators have displayed a great deal of frailty and evasiveness by refusing to confront what must surely be called the ethical, social and political quagmire of our time. The verdict of this House will determine the value which our society places on human life itself and the very foundation upon which all our laws are based.

In the past it had been possible for those who wished to avoid taking responsibility for their decisions to hide behind the neutrality of the courts. Recent legal decisions have shown that there can be little neutrality on an issue which deals with the primary concept of life. Since the previous legislation was struck down, individual judges were forced into making complicated legal decisions based on their personal and independent interpretation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We have recently witnessed how the community and the courts

were left twisting in the wind because of this government's legislative paralysis.

The decision as to which life merits protection cannot be left to judges, doctors, or even women themselves. The issue must be dealt with on a national level by Parliament so that we as elected representatives may once and for all establish the supremacy of life and the protection of the unborn as would befit a civilized society. We must not be condemned by a future Parliament for legitimizing the termination of hundreds of thousands of unborn Canadians.

This fall the nation was embroiled in controversy. As a result, this government has been forced to hastily draft an abortion law in an attempt to fill the legislative void. The presentation of this bill must be classified as the worst kind of chicanery because Bill C–43, as written, is obviously not intended to be enforced. This bill will not prevent a single abortion, nor was this its objective. Yet it is still being fraudulently marketed as a compromise. On the one hand, this government tells us that abortion is illegal and, on the other, it outlines succinctly how the law can be circumvented in every case.

Bill C–43 is abortion on demand with red tape. The definition of health has been given the widest possible interpretation. One of the authors of this bill admitted in this House that Bill C–43 entitles women to abortion under a wide variety of circumstances. In effect, the legislation makes it possible for women to seek and obtain abortions for reasons that may have more to do with lifestyle considerations than with actual physical endangerment.

In fact, the health clause will operate as nothing more than a rubber stamp condonement of abortion on demand. It will allow women to abort their unborn child based on the fleeting notion of immediate convenience. But life itself is not convenient. Many of the mundane decisions we make on a daily basis are not expedient but we are forced to make them. The value of life is not a function of convenience. Our society grants those who are legally regarded as persons the right to life, liberty and security of person.

We must remember that even during this century the rights of women were severely abridged. We had to fight for what are now considered basic human rights. It was only when social attitudes changed that we were granted full personhood before the law. Thus it would seem incumbent upon those of us who until fairly recently were denied full legal status and protection to extend those same rights to the unborn.

By the simplest definitions available to us, a foetus should qualify for personhood. But as history has proven, the attributes necessary for the granting of legal status can be arbitrary, capricious and discretionary. The argument that this debate is a conflict between the rights of women and the rights of the foetus is political in nature. The mother has size, voice, legal recognition and voting power. The foetus has none of these endowments. It must rely on others for protection. Accordingly, it is granted not even the most minimal of protections under C–43.

As legislators we now have the duty to examine the basis upon which our laws are founded. We must re–examine why we as a society have outlawed crimes such as homicide. We condemn them not because they are socially or economically destabilizing, but because we recognize the intrinsic value of human life. Our laws are not simply non–aggression pacts between participants, but make some attempt to develop universal social standards. The tragedy of this bill is that it fails to address and grant the logical extension of the recognition of the intrinsic value of life to the foetus. It does not make any attempt to defend the weak, but merely caters to the agenda of the strong.

We must channel the energy and passion which surrounds this debate into dealing with our collective social responsibility for the well–being and security of our fledgling generation. Those of us who wish to protect the unborn must also understand, however, that the role of government cannot stop with merely enacting protective legislation. We must also deal with the true challenge of confronting and changing the social attitudes which so often lead to abortion.

Society must learn to accept the responsibility for caring for unwanted births by providing the social support systems which are so desperately needed by pregnant women. These women are often alone, abandoned and trapped by their predicament.

• (1620)

Our governments have failed on many accounts to provide the necessary structural environment to assist women to deal with the existing social inequities. They have failed to provide child care spaces, adequate funding for shelters for abused women, and the counselling

and education programs necessary to alleviate women of the traditional male–female economic disparities.

It must therefore be our responsibility as a caring and just society to protect and nurture mother and child through the full development of human life, both before and after birth. To merely impose an ethical judgment on the backs of the vulnerable members of society without compensating social support would be both cruel and irresponsible. Those of us who are compelled to champion the unborn cannot be indifferent to the needs of those who have survived birth. We cannot make our ethical and social decisions in a vacuum.

Sadly, the proposed legislation is seriously flawed because it makes no attempt to balance the rights of the unborn with those of the mother. The bill before us sets such a small bounty on the life of the unborn that even the lamest excuses of the mother will be accepted. We, as legislators, must learn to embrace the foetus as an equal member of society. To imperiously determine which life should be afforded protection of the law and which should not would leave our society extremely susceptible to the social decision-making characteristic of the genocidal policies of certain Third World nations.

We must not allow ourselves the arrogance of so easily denying life. We do not have that right. No one carries the truth in his pocket. If we are to err in our judgment let us err on the side of life.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Before I recognize the Hon. Member for Medicine Hat, it is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: The Hon. Member for Saskatoon–Clark's Crossing (Mr. Axworthy)—Proposed Goods and Services Tax; the Hon. Member for Drummond (Mr. Guilbault)—Dairy Industry; the Hon. Member for Dartmouth—Auditor General's Report.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Lewis that Bill C–43, an act respecting abortion, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

Mr. Bob Porter (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, at this stage of the debate on Bill C–43 there is probably little else that can be added to the substance of either side of this sensitive issue that has not already been raised.

During the last two elections there was probably no question put to candidates running for office more frequently than "What is your position on abortion?" I stated my pro–life views clearly in 1984 and again in 1988 so that my constituents knew my position before they voted for me. I was among the members in this House who supported the pro–life amendment on motion M–37 during the last Parliament.

Those of us who sit as members in this House come from every area of Canada. We come from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. We come from different walks of life and different religions. It is because of these differences that this place is interesting, challenging, frustrating and, at times, most difficult.

In dealing with the abortion issue it is these differences, personal views and family values that each of us has developed which shapes and determines our individual position on this issue. Despite the eloquent debate on either side of the abortion issue—and I have been listening to the many eloquent speeches on either side—few, if any, members I am sure will be persuaded to change their position.

The difficult decision for many of us is whether or not we can support a bill that is not our preferred choice in legislation. This bill does not contain everything most of us would like to see encompassed in legislation. It contains clauses that I am personally uncomfortable with.

We failed as members to reach a consensus in June 1988. If that exercise proved anything, it showed us that there is no more consensus in Parliament than there is throughout the country. Few if any of us will ever see the legislation we personally want survive this House and meet the test of the Charter. The Supreme Court can strike down any unconstitutional law. It has become apparent to me that my personal choice is unconstitutional.

I admit that Bill C–43, in my view at least, allows abortions in too wide a variety of circumstances. The latitude under the definition of "health", both mental and psychological, creates great difficulty for me. The determination of psychological health I am afraid will not be made, in many cases, by medical practitioners who are specialists in that field.

I have heard it said by some that no law is better than the bill that we have before us today. I cannot agree with that. No matter how minimal the protection, if pause for further consideration of the consequences by a woman and her doctor results, that alone is worth making an effort to achieve. Flawed, in my view, as this bill is, it will reinforce the principle that human life has a unique value. To have no law suggests that unborn life has no value at all.

Colleagues on the other side of this issue will not be persuaded to change their views because of my arguments, nor will I by theirs. I would hope, however, that they would fully consider supporting this bill at second reading. To defeat the bill at this stage would not give Canadians all of the opportunities available under the parliamentary process to attempt those changes and improvements that many of us feel could be implemented in this legislation. Regardless of their position, I think that there is little to be lost and perhaps much to be gained by giving a legislative committee the chance to consider amendments and conduct hearings. With this in mind I will support this bill at second reading.

Statistics are cold hard facts that are often filed away and forgotten. In 1988 between 73,000 and 74,000 therapeutic abortions took place in Canada. If the procedure that has become so commonplace today had been so readily available in the past, how much different might our country and our world have been. What if the mother of a Picasso, a Mozart or a Churchill had the opportunity for easy access to terminate unwanted pregnancy?

If economic factors played a role, how many of us in this House who were born during the depths of the Depression might not be here today? How many members born during the 1940s were raised alone by their mother while their father was serving for his country? No doubt they were an inconvenience and created a hardship and economic difficulties for a single parent. How many of us sitting in this chamber today were at one point in our past an unwanted pregnancy? Can any of us smugly say that is not an option our mothers would have considered? Think about it.

I ask each member sitting in this House to reflect upon the circumstances their own mothers faced a few months before they were born. Ask yourself if, given the choice, might she have made the same decision 73,000 Canadian women made last year. Today you are a member of Parliament. You could have been a statistic.

Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak in this very important debate. If I may be forgiven the expression, I think this is one debate and one issue on which we as Members of Parliament are certainly earning our keep, given the volume and the emotion of interventions by constituents and many others, and indeed the need to probe very deeply within our own convictions on where we actually stand on this particular piece of legislation.

• (1630)

I would also like to thank all other members for their very thoughtful speeches from which I have learned a lot. It is a debate that many of us will remember for a long time.

What we see here is a clash between two very profound, and in many ways, equally compelling values. The one set of values grows from the women's movement which, in my mind, has been the most progressive and powerful social movement of this century in Canada. Many of the people who have taken up the cause of women's rights are genuine inheritors of the legacy of people like Agnes MacPhail and Nellie McClung in seeking not only equality, but the liberation that goes beyond simple equality for women. It is not only the ideology of a movement that propels them, but a real

sense of the reality of many women's lives, especially in the era of backroom butchers.

On the other hand, there is a strong feeling of respect for life that many of us share, and my own case, it grows from the traditions of the Mennonite Church, the Anabaptists movement going back to the 16th century.

We have tried to be consistent about respect for life. As a people we have always opposed capital punishment, although there have been individual people who held opposing views. We have taken a pacifist role, a non-resistant role in times of conflict. The need to respect life goes back many centuries in our family and, indeed, my own being.

I talked to many women in trying to come to terms with this particular piece of legislation. I talked to them as a Member of Parliament and somebody who had to make a decision here, knowing how irritating it is for many women to hear so many male voices talking about this issue. They opened up on this issue because they feel very strongly about it, whether they considered themselves pro-choice or pro-life. What surprised me in those conversations is how many women that I knew and knew well, many of whom came from what might be considered or called good homes with a religious upbringing and so on, had actually had abortions, many of them illegal and many of them outside of the country.

I listened to these women. From what I heard, the presence or absence of a particular abortion law was the least of factors in their decision. What precipitated their choice was in fact the circumstances of their lives and what they saw as the potential future for themselves and their child.

Therefore, it seemed increasingly clear to me that if we in this place are serious about reducing the numbers of abortions in this country and reducing unwanted pregnancies, we must address all the factors involved. We must give serious priority, for example, to the issue of child poverty, on which we are having a debate tomorrow. Our leader's last speech will be on child poverty, and it will be worth listening to and acting on by all of us.

The abuse of women and children in this country must come to an end. I, as a Member of Parliament, had a case this summer where I had no option that I could pursue to prevent a 14-year-old girl from going home to a community and a home where her 16-year-old brother was going to sexually abuse her. I could find no recourse to keep that girl from going back. If that girl became pregnant, I would not want to make the moral choice on what should be done in that situation.

Then there is the whole question of adoption, which is certainly a positive alternative, but is really mired in a morass of bureaucracy and a totally inhumane approach to family structures, especially in cultures that are not mainstream cultures.

We do not have training and support for young mothers. We do not have a national child care policy. We do not have safe and effective birth control, at least to any kind of standards that today's science can make possible. We do not have adequate sex education in many schools. We do not have adequate family planning. The role of men in this is all too often ignored.

As well, any legislation that I could personally support would have to include, first of all, the right of conscientious objection for all health care professionals who disagree with a particular law. Second, it would have to have equal effect for all women in this country, be they rich or poor, and in whatever community they happen to live.

Therefore, I have decided that I would not support any legislative initiative on abortion that did not come to terms with these priorities and would leave them unaddressed.

In fact it seems to me that it is morally inconsistent for people who say that they want to see fewer abortions to put more energy and commitment into lobbying for a strict abortion law than they put into the struggle for better lives for women and children. Indeed, I have observed with some sadness that some of the members of this House who are most adamant in insisting that the full weight of criminal law should be brought to bear on women in these circumstances are also the most ardent supporters of Margaret Thatcher's vision of a dog-eat-dog world and the social Darwinism that goes with it.

Therefore, I cannot in good conscience even try to sort out the deep moral and ethical questions which surround this issue until such a time as a genuinely humane and caring attitude towards women and children permeates

everything we do in this House. I will therefore join my caucus colleagues in opposing this bill.

In closing, I would like to thank all the women who shared their feelings and experiences with me, as difficult as it often was for all of us. I would especially like to thank three women. One, a sister in Prince Albert, in this case a nun who offered to pray for my faith, an offer I gratefully accepted. Second, another sister in the city of Prince Albert, this time a working woman, who asked me point blank if she could count on me not to sell out women on this issue. I would like to place on the record that I promised that woman that no woman would ever go to jail for having an abortion because of anything I did as a legislator.

Last, I would like to gratefully acknowledge the role of the member for New Westminster—Burnaby for her understanding, her sincerity and calm in the face of immense pressures. As the critic on this issue in our caucus she has to take much of the credit, along with our leader and others who participated in genuine debate. But this was really spearheaded by the member for New Westminster—Burnaby. In spite of the profound differences of philosophy which certainly are there in our caucus, her depth of character and the scope of her concern for humanity was enident.

Ms. Barbara Greene (Don Valley North): Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that many of us have struggled with for a considerable period of time not only as politicians but as individuals. In my own case, as a former municipal politician in metropolitan Toronto, representing a constituency of 560,000 people for five elections and 11 years, I have had to take a position on it since 1972.

In every election I have run in I have had a number of people calling and asking my position and telling me that they would not vote for me if I was in favour of permitting abortion. We all have had that experience.

As a member of the Metro Toronto Community Services and Housing Committee in the North York Board of Health, I again had to make decisions which were the subject of heavy lobbying regarding abortion and contraception counselling programs.

Perhaps the most difficult forum in which I had to deal with this issue was at the board of directors and executive committee of the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Metropolitan Toronto. That society takes the position that it can never support abortion under any circumstance because it is firmly of the opinion that another child is involved. The society views this as a fundamental tenet of Catholicism and one of the major reasons for having a separate society.

However, in every instance that I am aware of, when a ward of the society went before a judge requesting an abortion, the judge granted the child an abortion. In one seminar that the board held the matter was debated by theologians and one of the situations that we had struggled with as a board was discussed. This case involved a 13-year old child who was the victim of incest who was threatening to commit suicide if she was forced to have the baby.

One theologian felt that in that particular instance he would interpret the teachings of the church that permit abortions in instances where the mother's life is in danger to the greatest degree possible and permit the abortion.

Several members of the board immediately and angrily protested such an interpretation of the church's position. In their view, that 13-year old victim's mental anguish was not a sufficient reason to permit her to have an abortion.

• (1640)

There are a great many other people whom I know and greatly respect who have equally adamant views on this issue. Many are caring and compassionate people, as indeed are all the members of the CCAS board. Some of them lead truly exemplary lives and have adopted and/or fostered many children because of their deep desire to help less fortunate children.

I strongly believe they are entitled to their Children's Aid Societies, their schools and hospitals and their way of life and beliefs. That is why as a board member I supported the board's position. However, I do not feel that that viewpoint can survive at all in the real world. Just as that 13-year old victim who was freed from her horrible situation by a judge who said that it is wrong in Canada to force a child to bear a child, so too in the real world the subjugation and enslavement of women, the deprivation of freedom of choice that is implied by such an act could not possibly survive in a free society. The anti-abortionists' views are best left as moral convictions to be practised by those who share them.

As an elected official my consistent position has been that I am personally opposed to abortion, but I feel that it is fundamentally important that women not be deprived of the right to choose. I have always said that I am not for abortion on demand and have refused to be labelled as pro-choice because I simply do not agree with the position so well enunciated by those members who feel that no legislation is necessary except for legislation which makes access to abortion mandatory in every town and rural district in Canada.

The proposed law provides the opportunity for women to choose whether or not to have a child based on a reasonably thoughtful process, and in conjunction with the medical profession. While it does not legislate access, it does improve access. The law makes abortions illegal except when they are performed by a medical doctor who has reached the medical opinion that the woman's health or life is likely to be in danger. Health is interpreted as physical, mental or psychological.

In the first place, I do not think that there are any reasons that women have abortions that cannot be considered as health reasons that would qualify under these provisions. Women do not undertake the decision to have an abortion lightly. Women do not have abortions for socio-economic reasons. Some women have abortions because their particular socioeconomic positions are so stressful that an additional child would make their personal situation so intolerable that they could not cope.

The law requires doctors to develop the medical opinion. This must be in accordance with the standards of their profession. We have received a preliminary report from the Canadian medical profession describing what they are. I was pleased to read these and will listen to the presentation of the CMA with great interest at the legislative committee. I think they are very reassuring to many people.

First of all, the CMA interprets abortion as the act of termination of the pregnancy before foetal viability. The CMA has stressed that beyond the stage where the foetus is capable of an independent existence the termination of pregnancy is indicated only under exceptional circumstances. They also say that it should not used as an alternative to contraception. They say the patient should be provided with the option of full and immediate counselling services in the event of an unwanted pregnancy. They say a physician should not be compelled to participate in the termination of a pregnancy, and that a physician whose moral or religious beliefs prevent him or her from recommending or performing an abortion should inform the patient of such so that she may consult another physician. Many people have concerns about the fact that under this legislation abortions could conceivably be in the latter stages of pregnancy. Doctors in Canada will not do abortions too late in the pregnancy without very severe reasons.

The legislation does not currently set a mandatory deadline for an abortion but medical standards do. Similarly, the concerns about counselling, as I have already mentioned, have been addressed. There is a flexibility in the approach that can adjust to future medical developments. At present, amniocentesis can only be done at the twentieth week and a confirmatory amniocentesis and subsequent abortion can take up to the twenty-second week. Medical science could shorten that timespan considerably in the future.

With respect to the question of access, the law will certainly improve the situation. It makes abortion illegal except where a medical practitioner believes that the continuation of the pregnancy would, or is likely to, threaten the life or the physical, mental or psychological health of the patient. I suspect that particularly given the previous Morgentaler decision, it will be very difficult for any provincial government to prohibit doctors performing a legal medical procedure, or to limit funding to only abortions approved in hospitals. That is an issue I want to explore in the legislative committee.

I very much object to the idea of doctors or nurses being forced to participate in abortions against their will, or a hospital board being forced to provide abortion services in a hospital against its will. Abortion does not represent an ordinary medical service. There are many people in Canada who have deeply held moral convictions on this issue that must be respected. This law, however, makes it much more possible for individual medical doctors to provide this service in clinics. The law is necessary to establish a national standard and to clearly state that the decision to authorize an abortion is based on medical reasons after a consultation with the patient.

One final point I would like to make is that permitting abortions in this fashion also ensures that women are free to choose to have the child. If abortions were made illegal and in some strange authoritarian society women were not able to choose to have a child, but were forced to continue their pregnancies, the tremendous joy of having a wanted child who is welcomed into the world as a blessing would be lost.

I think of the great joy I have had in my daughter. I think of other friends and relatives who have grappled with the issue and have chosen life. It is a good law and I look forward to considering it further.

Mr. Rex Crawford (Kent): Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the opportunity to speak in this historic debate this afternoon. We as legislators have a very important role to play in crafting a new abortion law for Canada.

I am of the firm belief that life begins at conception, and that the state has the responsibility to protect that life. Indeed, Mr. Justice Beetz wrote in the decision of January 28, 1988: "Parliament is justified in requiring a reliable, independent and medically sound opinion in order to protect the state interest in the foetus". Further, he stated, "Parliament requires this independent opinion because it is not only the woman's interest that is at stake in a decision to authorize an abortion".

I am here in this Chamber today by the good graces of the people of Canada. I believe the majority of my constituents are pro-life and they have elected me knowing that I too was pro-life. Like many other members, I have received over 3,000 letters in the last month urging me to follow my conscience and protect the unborn. I believe that I can do no less.

I have listened to many sincere speeches by members from both sides of this House. On Tuesday night, the hon. Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources outlined his reasons for supporting this particular bill. I listened and I was moved.

But I am very troubled by the dilemma we face. It is this law or no law. It is an unfortunate and negative situation. It is also one that I cannot accept. If we support the bill for second reading, it means that we support the bill in principle. I believe this means that we support abortion on demand. If we compromise on life itself, what is next?

• (1650)

Each of us represents a special interest group, a group whose issue we speak out on. It could be farmers, seniors citizens, women, or small business people. Who speaks out for the unborn, those who have no voice? What interest group could be more special than a child as yet unborn? It is a crime to destroy the eggs of certain birds, yet it is acceptable to destroy a human being.

I share the views of my hon. friends for Leeds—Grenville and Bruce—Grey who spoke eloquently this week. The member for Leeds—Grenville mentioned that back in history if a woman was to be executed and was found to be pregnant the execution was delayed so that the baby could be born. Two people were involved, Mr. Speaker, not one.

I am not a lawyer or a university professor or someone who pretends to have all the answers. I am just a human being who listens to my constituents and follows my conscience. We hear about the limits on what may or may not be legal when it comes to abortion. We hear what may or may not be acceptable. We hear about what may or may not be worthy of a choice. Is morality not supposed to be a consideration? I believe that it should be.

I acknowledge that it is extremely difficult to impose morality in a law. Laws are supposed to be clear, objective, sterile and without emotion. For me, the issue of abortion is different. Anyone can hire a lawyer to try his or her case, but who speaks for the unborn? Perhaps that is the issue: Who speaks for the unborn? Our obligation as human beings is to protect the lives of others who are in no position to do so.

In the 122 years since Confederation, Parliament has never debated or voted on a question of such moral gravity. To paraphrase Sir Winston Churchill's famous saying, we could say for Canada, with no fear of exaggeration, that never did so many human lives depend so much on so few.

This week we are debating a compromise bill. Some positive points can be seen in the new government bill.

However, the legislation has three negative aspects: any doctor can approve and perform an abortion at any time during the course of the mother's pregnancy. Second, the doctor is not required to verify the reasons for approving the abortion; and the abortion may be performed if, in the opinion of the doctor, the health or life of the mother likely would be threatened. Health reasons are very loosely defined as physical, mental or psychological. I believe that the undeniable and elementary right of the human person, the right to life from conception to death, would be gravely wounded if this proposed legislation is enacted.

Those who hold the reins of government should not forget that it is the duty of the public authority by appropriate laws and sanctions to defend the lives of the innocent. This is all the more so since those lives which are endangered and assailed cannot defend themselves.

We hear often in this House concerning protection of minority rights, of French or English-speaking people, for example. We have multicultural bills to protect ethnic minorities. But what of the unborn? Who speaks for them?

Legislation to protect the unborn is just the first step. If we enact legislation, any legislation, we as a people then have a responsibility to offer support to the women with unplanned or unwanted pregnancies. Social programs must be enhanced and more and better counselling services offered. The full range of alternatives, including adoption, must be explained. Housing and child care access must be improved upon. Above all, we need education to prevent unwanted pregnancies in the first place.

As I stated before, we who consider ourselves pro-life are torn terribly by the notion that if it isn't this law, it is no law. The arguments put forward by the ministers of energy and transport are very persuasive. However, it seems to me that Bill C-43 shows no purpose or direction. If I vote for it on second reading to send it to committee, then I accept it in principle. I say very profoundly that I am unable to do that.

I have rhetorically asked throughout my remarks: "Who speaks for the unborn?" I believe that we must speak for the unborn. This is the most personal, moral issue we could ever face. Life and death issues are incredibly difficult to translate into barren words, to be placed within a specific piece of legislation.

Birth is a miracle. I can only think of my own five grandchildren and the day each of them were born, gently holding their delicate hands, looking into their newborn eyes as they look back at you with a sense of wonder and trust, and finally holding their fragile bodies in your arms. It is an experience born of a miracle. Life is so precious we must protect it. We must speak for the unborn. This is not a perfect world nor a completely moral or ethical world, but surely we must strive for it to be so.

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak on this very important subject of abortion.

I approach the subject today from the aspect of 30 years in family practice in medicine. In that time, I have seen the advent and development of the birth control pill, the acceptance of surgical sterilization as a legal right, I have witnessed the sexual revolution and its diverse consequences, and I have witnessed the changes in the legal status and frequency of abortions. I have seen this in the context of the family unit and seen its effect on the functioning of that unit which is a basic building block of our society.

This is a very good bill in many ways. It has been arrived at in a way that I hope will set a precedent in establishing other new legislation. It is essentially a middle of the road bill in the fact that it has received criticism from both extremes. It is a good political document as it provides the answers that many Canadian people have been looking for in this serious national question of abortion.

The big problem, however, is that abortion is not only a political question, but it is also a bio-ethical question. In other words, it should be based, not only on good political but also good biological and ethical principles as well. I believe this is what the legislation lacks. I think it is worth while to look at those principles that are relevant to the question of abortion.

When the sperm and the egg unite they produce a single cell containing the blueprint for a complete new life. That single cell is a new life and it soon doubles, quadruples, and multiplies many times over. It is not long before the cells start to differentiate and show the characteristics different from that of the original cell. It is not many weeks before it can be identified as a human embryo and not some other member of the animal kingdom. Some people have compared the foetus with an acorn, claiming it only has the potential to form in the

one case an adult human and in the other a mighty oak tree.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I must interrupt the hon. member because it is five o'clock. He will have eight minutes left in debate when we get back to the orders of the day.

It being five o'clock, the House will now proceed to the consideration of private member's business as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS—MOTIONS

[*English*]

WESTERN GRAIN TRANSPORTATION ACT

MARINE TRANSPORTATION COSTS

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of extending the Western Grain Transportation Act to include marine transportation costs incurred between Thunder Bay and salt water, along with an elimination of the 100 per cent cost-recovery requirements of the seaway.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to present for debate my private member's motion which you have just read into the record.

Since I came to this House, in fact even before then, I have been concerned about the impact of the Western Grain Transportation Act on the economy of the port of Thunder Bay and the ports along the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway.

Prior to 1984, I appeared before the Standing Committee on Transport which was charged with the responsibility of reviewing the changes to the Crow benefit and replacing it with the WGTA. At that time in Winnipeg, my colleague for Regina—Lumsden was there, I made a presentation to argue for protection for the Port of Thunder Bay and the Port of Vancouver, a protection that was subsequently placed into the WGTA requiring that rail transportation subsidies be paid only on those commodities that were being processed through the ports of Vancouver or Thunder Bay and obviously, in turn, Churchill and Prince Rupert as well.

My involvement with the whole concept of grain movement goes back for a number of years now, because it is very important to the community that I represent, the Port of Thunder Bay. The Standing Committee on Transport has been seized with the issue of the viability of the Great Lakes—St. Lawrence Seaway system for a number of years now. We had hoped to complete our work this fall but we were sidetracked, if I can use that term, to deal with the question of VIA Rail. We did not get back to the seaway but we will continue our work on that.

It is important to note that the seaway is in trouble. There are a multitude of solutions that have been suggested. What I am proposing today are two of them that I believe are worth considering. They are probably the two easiest to deal with, both in terms of the economics involved and the politics of 1989.

The first is the inclusion of domestic marine transportation costs under the WGTA. As some members will know, the way the WGTA was designed in terms of the subsidy component was ,in effect, to equalize the distance-related costs for moving grain from the farm gate to the port of Thunder Bay or to the port of Vancouver. What has happened, and it has equalized it even though the run to Thunder Bay is downhill, is that the turnaround time is 14 days; that is, from the grain car from the Prairie elevator to Thunder Bay unloaded, deposited in the elevator and back to the Prairie elevator, while for Vancouver and Prince Rupert, the time ranges from 18 to 21 days.

Second, the trip to Vancouver is uphill through the mountains and through a very congested port system that creates inefficiencies in terms of the movement of that particular commodity. The WGTA did equalize that. If the producer in middle Saskatchewan was sending his or her grain east or west, the cost was the same, whether it was 500 miles from Thunder Bay or 500 miles from Vancouver.

What was not taken into consideration was the additional cost for the eastern movement, the cost of the marine transport from Thunder Bay to Baie Comeau, Port Cartier, Halifax, Quebec City, Sorel or Trois Rivières. That is purported to be in the range of $23 to $25 per tonne. When you add into that the principle that my party supports, which is that the Canadian Wheat Board has a responsibility to get the best price at the lowest cost

for the Canadian producer, you can see how the emphasis on marketing in the Pacific Rim will attract the attention of the Canadian Wheat Board.

For example, in the last few years the Wheat Board has closed its marketing office in Europe and opened up one in the Pacific Rim. We know that right now in the third of three disastrous crop years the Wheat Board is maximizing the west coast ports. It is pushing every tonne of grain, every bushel it can through Vancouver and Prince Rupert because the Wheat Board gets a better deal over all for the producers by doing so.

What does that mean in the long term? It means, and we have seen this over the last three years, that a number of vessels have been scrapped on the Great Lakes. Lake freighters have been cut up with torches and sold to scrap yards. We have seen a number flagged out to foreign countries, formerly Canadian vessels crewed by Canadians with employment and revenue coming to Canada. Now these vessels are flagged in the Bahamas or any other country that provides that kind of tax-free haven. We do not have the capacity to move the kind of grain that we should be able to move in good times.

I was told two days ago at the retirement reception for Mr. William O'Neil, president of the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority, that one of Canada's shipping companies is moving only American grain out of the port of Duluth to Port Cartier or Baie Comeau.

We have been told that we cannot move the grain sitting in Thunder Bay downstream right now because we do not have the ships available—this is still in a bad year. What happens if we get a 30 million tonne crop for export purposes? Sure the west coast can handle 16 million, 17 million or 18 million tonnes, but where is the rest going to go? What happens if we get a 40 million tonne crop? The port of Thunder Bay can handle 26 million tonnes during a short season with a winter rail program. As a nation, if we do not protect the investment that we have in Thunder Bay, in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway system, we will not be able to move our products when we have to.

What I am proposing is a means of equalizing the movement of grain east and west, to leave it to the market-place to decide in which direction the grain should go. Right now it is going through the west coast because the Wheat Board is more aggressive in its marketing in that direction than it is in Europe, North Africa and even the Soviet Union.

Let me refer to the years 1978-1984 when on average Thunder Bay had 55 per cent of the export grain moving through that port and then the river ports. At one time, 37 per cent of the grain that the port of Thunder Bay handled was rehandled at Baie Comeau. We are now at the point where we will be lucky if we get 40 per cent of the grain movement coming through the eastern system. So there has been a fundamental shift and we will have good times again. It is important that we, as a nation, be in a position to export that grain. Quite frankly, if we cannot move it, then why are we producing it on the prairies?

• (1710)

The only other option would be to rail the grain past Thunder Bay, down to the bay ports, even to Montreal or to Quebec City, at a much higher cost. It is about $20 a tonne more using three freely-supplied Canadian Wheat Board cars to move it east of Thunder Bay by rail. The irony is that we are probably going to have to do that this winter. There will probably be a winter rail program out of Thunder Bay this winter because we do not have the ships to move the grain in the last three weeks when the Seaway will be open in order to meet the unconfirmed purchase from the Soviet Union. So as a society we will pay more than we have to.

We also have to recognize that, although rail transportation is a very efficient mode of travel and a very environmentally friendly method of transporting bulk commodities, marine is even better. So we will lose in a couple of ways. What I am proposing is that in order to level the playing field, we treat the eastern movement the same way we are treating the western movement by rearranging the WGTA.

I am told that in the WGTA there is a provision for 20 per cent overhead for CN and CP, a guaranteed allotment of funds from the federal treasury for the processing of the handling of grain. I am suggesting that money could be better used by providing the same kind of subsidy that we currently offer CN and CP to the ship operators on the Great Lakes, so that it is farmgate to salt water whether it is the west coast or the east coast. The logical extension of that is that the Canadian Wheat Board will not have to overemphasize one direction over

the other. It can be as aggressive in its marketing for the eastern system as it is for the western system.

Tied into this is the whole question of the seaway tolls and the current requirement of 100 per cent cost recovery. We do not have that requirement in air and we do not have that requirement in trucking. We are subsidizing rail, so we obviously do not require it there. When we look at the Seaway tolls I will admit right up front that the amount of money per tonne which goes toward Seaway tolls is minimal. But as Robert Patterson, president of Patterson Steamship Lines, one of the oldest grain shipping companies in this country, has said in the past, "On the seaway we are talking about pennies per tonne. In terms of our flexibility, one or two more pennies will mean the difference between whether or not we move that cargo."

To say to the users of the Seaway: "Thou must pay 100 per cent of the cost of operating" does not reflect the realities of the market-place, nor does it reflect the reality that every time bulk cargo is moved through Thunder Bay, whether it is potash to the United States, coal to Hamilton, grain to Sorel, Quebec City, Baie Comeau or Port Cartier, it is not just Thunder Bay that is benefiting from it, it is Sault Ste. Marie, Welland, Thorold, Toronto, the Quebec ports and Halifax that are benefiting. Jobs are created in those provinces.

In western Canada it is coal from British Columbia and Alberta, it is grain from Saskatchewan and Manitoba and it is potash from Saskatchewan that is moving through the system. The hub, the handling and trans-shipment point is Thunder Bay. It is important for our community. Hundreds and hundreds of jobs in Thunder Bay depend upon the movement of grain and bulk commodities through that port.

The tolls exist because during the lead up in the negotiations between Canada and the United States to construct the Seaway, the American rail lobby, which had blocked such a development for years, only agreed to let it proceed if there would be 100 per cent cost recovery. Do you know why? Because they knew they would be out-competed. It was the Americans who forced Canada to charge 100 per cent of the cost.

Today the United States has eliminated its Seaway tolls. The Americans have put in place a port tax on commodities in all ports throughout the U.S. with the money going into a development fund to operate and build. They rebate those who go through Canadian locks with American products. Even though they are the ones who said Canada must charge 100 per cent, they are not doing that themselves now.

Tolls are a barrier to the introduction of new services. Tolls are another form of tax and act as a detriment to the ongoing viability of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway. The largest population mass in North America lives along the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway system and has a very important impact on the economies of both countries. It is up to us as legislators to try to provide solutions to the very real and legitimate concerns about the manner in which the movement of bulk commodities is treated—grain on the one hand in terms of the WGTA and all bulk commodities in terms of the Seaway toll.

We have had a discussion paper called "Growing Together, A Vision for Canada's Agri-food Industry" which has been circulated by the Minister of Agriculture. It is asking for responses. It is asking for ideas. It raises issues. My intention is for this motion to be a catalyst, to provide a focus for discussion that will impact on "Growing Together" because it will have a major impact on our ability to sell the grain that we know we can grow. Some of the best grain in the world, if not the best grain in the world, comes from our prairies.

There is a major crisis in the Seaway. We are losing ships, both to the scrap heap and to the foreign flags. We are losing highly skilled trained workers. Even with the upturn in terms of grain movement this fall, no one has been called back to work in Thunder Bay. What we are seeing, as well as the rail program that I expect will occur, is some employment stability for those few men who have been called back this fall. There will be a whole other group that will not have any work this year and will not be able to qualify for unemployment insurance. They are going elsewhere to find other work and we will lose their talents.

It is not just a question of not having the bottoms to move the grain, we must have the skilled people on the marine side, elevators on the land side and rails to move these products. As a country we will lose because of that.

In closing, I want to say that I would encourage the government to take this motion very seriously. This is not a dilatory motion. One has to plant a seed and say: "let us look at it". I would encourage the members opposite to support this motion, to allow it to come to a vote so that we can send a message to the Government of Canada. It is up to them to decide if that is the direction they want to go, but there is no benefit in saying no at this stage.

• (1720)

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, as you know very well one cannot talk about the grain industry without talking about grain transportation. Furthermore, you cannot talk about grain transportation without talking about the WGTA.

WGTA is not a simple issue. In fact, it is very much an historic issue in the sense that it is built upon the Crow rate which I would like to talk about in a few moments.

Unfortunately, the motion before this House to extend the WGTA to include marine transportation costs between Thunder Bay and Salt Water fails to recognize this history.

Furthermore, I would suggest that now is not the time for piecemeal solutions to complicated problems. As the hon. member has just indicated, we are on the threshold of a major agricultural policy review which will deal in a comprehensive way with transportation as well as with other issues which are vital to agriculture.

Perhaps for our listening audience it is important to talk for a moment about the WGTA, and to note that the act is related only to rail transportation and only to movements no further east than Thunder Bay. This act came into effect in 1984 but it was a successor to the legendary Crow which is very much a vital part of our history. In fact, the Crow and the history of western Canada are almost synonymous, at least since the latter part of the 1890s.

Under the famous, or some might even say the infamous Crow, the Canadian Pacific Railway built a railway line from Lethbridge to Nelson through the Crowsnest Pass in return for a fairly generous subsidy from the federal government.

As part of that package there was an agreement that freight rates would be reduced on inbound settlers' goods and outbound grain traffic. This agreement encouraged settlement of the west and expansion of Canada's grain industry. Although this agreement was subsequently altered in legislation in the 1920s, it basically remained in effect until the 1980s. By the 1960s, however, the statutory grain rates were not providing the railways with enough revenue to maintain the grain-related rail network on the prairies.

As a result, ad hoc government financial assistance programs were instituted in the 1970s to assist the railways, to help with the cost of hopper cars, boxcar repairs and the rehabilitation of grain-dependent branch lines.

The WGTA was supposed to provide the railways with enough revenue from the transportation of grain to ensure the long term viability of the grain gathering network. The required revenue was generated by increasing the government's subsidies to the railways through the so-called Crow benefit and by increasing the freight rates charged to shippers.

This act did result in increased freight rates. But like the previous legislation, it was directed to rail transportation of western grain from the prairies to Canadian ports. That is why, in my opinion, this motion is inconsistent with the act's historical basis as an assistance mechanism for the movement of western grain.

In addition, any extension of the WGTA to include marine transportation costs, together with the elimination of the 100 per cent cost recovery on the Seaway, would undoubtedly increase the current level of subsidy. That subsidy is approximately $720 million at the present time. It is my opinion, speaking as the member of Parliament for Brandon—Souris, and on behalf of an area which has been badly hit by drought for the second year in a row—in some instances a third and a fourth year in a row—that if we are now able to increase financial assistance to agriculture, as indeed I hope we are, then the 1989 drought program should be our first priority.

While the WGTA has largely achieved its goals, it has been discussed and debated widely for many years. There are many questions remaining with respect to its future. There remains a wide range of views about what its

significance has been in the past and what its role should be in the years to come.

Obviously now is an important time to review the role of the WGTA just as it is a very important time to review the role of agricultural policies in general. That is why the Western Grain Transportation Act is considered to be a very key transportation issue in the current review of federal agricultural policy.

A discussion paper has been unveiled called "Growing Together". It will be discussed at some length when farm leaders come to Ottawa in early December. It will also be discussed at farm meetings throughout all of Canada.

This policy review is concerned with getting Canada's agri-food industry up to date and able to cope with the next decade.

There are many pressures facing the agricultural sector today, both domestic and international, which point to the need for this comprehensive policy review.

In the past few years, we have learned—sometimes the hard way—that approaches used in the past are no longer appropriate now and they do not always permit us to address future challenges in a way in which we would wish.

In some cases, these policies are preventing the agricultural sector from exploiting opportunities. In others, the uncertainty and unpredictability of ad hoc programs is interfering with its management decisions. I think it is exceedingly important that we rid ourselves to the nth degree possible of our dependency of ad hoc agricultural programs—

Mr. Benjamin: This isn't ad hoc.

Mr. Clark (Brandon—Souris): No, not agriculture, but ad hoc agricultural programs have not always worked in the best interests of the agricultural communities and that is why this review is important.

Recent events have shown more clearly the need to take stock and adapt to the environment the agri-food sector will face in the future.

There are a number of compelling reasons for government and industry to define a new vision for agriculture. The sector needs to adapt to a rapidly changing domestic market for agri-food products. We must also be ready to respond to an increasingly competitive world trading environment. We must also review and revitalize our financial farm support programs. We must do what is necessary to keep pace with rapid technological change. The challenge of increasing environmental awareness and pressure must be met. Our record for safe nutritious food must be maintained.

In the area of transportation, this government knows transportation policies must be sensitive to both regional diversity and national interests. A program that operates in one region may have implications across the country. These implications must be considered in any proposals for change. For example, four western provinces at the moment either have or have had livestock feed assistance programs to offset the effects of other programs. Sometimes this patchwork of programs leads to conflicting results and makes it exceedingly difficult to have a national approach to agriculture.

Since the WGTA took effect, Canada as a major exporter of grains and oilseeds has experienced the negative impact of huge, direct subsidies by our major competitors, namely, the American and the European communities. Programs which support the Canadian industry must be viewed in the context of these high subsidy levels maintained by our competition.

Transportation policies, like all government policies, should be consistent with international trade rules to minimize the risk of trade action by other countries. Canada wants to reduce over-all levels of trade distorting subsidies, but we do not plan to do it alone. We will be looking at the actions of our trading partners to ensure that they are dealing with their subsidies as well. What we need to do is to examine our grain transportation policies including the subsidies to make sure that they are the most effective form of assistance possible to promote and develop our industry into the future.

Many agricultural policies and programs, including the Western Grain Transportation Act, have been in place for a number years and in some cases have been built upon a legacy of a number of decades. A review which is now about to take place is designed to ensure that transportation policies like other agricultural policies are developed and planned so that they are in harmony with each other to ensure that government dollars are used in the most effective manner possible, to ensure that there is co-operation between provincial and federal governments, as there must be, and to ensure that these policies work together in co-operation with the farm

communities to provide as much viability and security for the farm community in the future as indeed it must have.

• (1730)

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity today to debate the motion before the House. I agree with my colleague from Thunder Bay—Atikokan on many of the statements he has made with respect to the efficiency of the workforce in the city of Thunder Bay, and in fact in northern Ontario, which has a great effect on the movement of grain through Kenora, Dryden, Ignace, and Thunder Bay and out of Winnipeg and Brandon.

We serve fundamentally the same area and the same constituents. We serve the 1,500 grain workers in Thunder Bay who work in the elevators, led by their very capable business agent, Richard McFarlane. Many railway workers working in that area for the CNR and the CPR move very efficiently the full grain cars coming in from the west, unloading them at the elevators, moving them out from the elevators and returning them back to the farmers for refilling.

There are hundreds of government employees involved in the movement of grain through the port of Thunder Bay. The municipality of Thunder Bay and other municipalities along the north shore benefit greatly because of the municipal tax base created by the elevators on the waterfront.

Indeed, we serve also the business community and the businessmen in Thunder Bay in the north because of the tremendous wealth brought into that area by the movement of grain into the port of Thunder Bay. We serve the same area. I agree that when we compare the movement of grain from the farms in the west to the Prince Rupert ports, the Vancouver ports and the port of Thunder Bay, they are indeed moving grain downhill rather than uphill.

More important, the port of Thunder Bay has been moving grain for well over 75 years. We have developed an efficient workforce. It is a treat to go down to the ports to see how they move the grain in from the rail cars, unload them and move the empty grain cars back with, as my friend says a turnaround of more than seven days in moving the grain through the western ports. These are considerations that have to be taken into account when we are talking about the Western Grain Transportation Act.

I agree with what has been said here today in the main. Unfortunately, I cannot agree with the solution my friend offers. I would like to explain why.

When we talk about subsidizing the movement of grain from the port of Thunder Bay to down river ports in Baie Comeau, Montreal or Halifax, we are talking about moving approximately 17 or 18 million bushels of grain a year. The average cost of a tonne of wheat being moved is about $20. This means that we are adding an additional $340 million in subsidy to the transportation of grain in this country. When you add this to the Crow's Nest Pass or recently the Western Grain Transportation Act which is approximately $1 billion a year, we are contemplating subsidizing it in excess of well over $1 billion a year. With the economy we face today, when we have to come to grips with the deficit that we are trying to control on an annual basis, with the huge debt that we have, I am wondering if it makes any sense at this point in time to further subsidize something else in our economy that will add not only to the deficit but to the debt, when there are alternative ways in which to correct this problem.

The alternatives have been suggested not only by our experts in this field but by the Alberta and British Columbia governments; the Canadian Grain Council's factoring influence in the direction of exports of grain, which was in March 1989; the solutions of the president of the Canadian Ship Owners Association; and the solutions of the Shipping Federation of Canada. All of them say that we should change the Western Grain Transportation Act. That is the fundamental issue we are here to discuss today—changing the manner and the method in which they are paying the subsidy of the movement of grain today to a more efficient method.

If I may say there is no incentive today to reduce the cost of shipping grain. The farmer brings the grain to the gate and he pays a certain fee regardless of where the grain is shipped. The railways, CN and CP, have no incentive to move the grain at a more economical rate or find better ways to ship the grain. According to the act they get paid by the distance they move the grain. There is no efficient, cost effective way or any incentive for

either of those two primary parties to reduce the cost of shipping of grain in western Canada.

What I am saying, as has been said by the people who have reviewed the Western Grain Transportation Act in some depth, is that we have to create an incentive to move grain in Canada at a more efficient rate than what we are doing today. We must make our railways more competitive. We must promote efficiency and reward that efficiency with the railways and with the farmer.

We have to change the method of payment from paying the railways to paying the grower or the producer. Let the farmer, the person who produces the grain or the product, make the final decision as to where and how he is going to ship that product because it means more of a return to him. This is a basic flaw in the Western Grain Transportation Act, as it is now stated. Until we come to grips with that fundamental flaw in that act, we can do nothing to enhance the movement of grain and the cost efficiency of movement of grain in this country.

I see that my time is up. I thank Your Honour for the opportunity to make this intervention.

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina—Lumsden): Mr. Speaker, again I find myself surrounded by amateurs; two in particular, the hon. member for Brandon—Souris and the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Nipigon. I never thought I would live to see the day when they would oppose a motion that protects the hundreds of millions of dollars of both public and private investments in Canada, in the St. Lawrence Seaway, in our ports, in our shipping industry, in our grain terminals, and in our railways.

The whole purpose and intent of the Crow's Nest Pass Freight Agreement and subsequent to that the Western Grain Transportation Act was trying to provide—and I hate to use the phrase—a level playing field for our grain exports. Our competitors produce their grain within 200, 300 or 400 miles of salt water. Our average haul is 1,000 miles. What we have at the moment is a level playing field and the other guy has the ball on our 10-yard line all the time. I am sure, Mr. Speaker, you will understand that.

• (1740)

I want to say to the hon. members for Brandon—Souris and Thunder Bay that I would appreciate if they would organize a debate on this issue in their respective ridings any time they wish and invite me. I ask them to give me a couple of weeks' notice. They can invite all the Liberals and Tories they like and fill the hall with them. I would love a chance to take them on.

All that this country has been trying to do since 1897 is make the playing field level in competition with our main competitors.

Second, as my colleague from Thunder Bay—Atikokan pointed out, the Americans refund the tolls on the St. Lawrence Seaway to their flagships. That is why even Canadian ships are moving grain from Duluth and not from Thunder Bay. That is why the grain handlings have dropped substantially in the downstream ports in the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence and Atlantic Canada.

In fact, American companies are using some of our terminals downstream St. Lawrence to move their grain and the tolls do not cost them anything, because they get it fully rebated by the U.S. government. Surely, any member of Parliament from Thunder Bay, in fact from Halifax West would understand that is unfair and unreasonable. We can do no less than try to defend ourselves from that kind of unfair, irresponsible activity of not only the United States but other countries, particularly the European Economic Community.

My friend from Thunder Bay—Nipigon had the figures all wrong on the cost of moving grain. He used figures for moving it by rail, not by water. He gave dollars per bushel instead of dollars per tonne. He must have dropped his file in Thunder Bay, because he was all wet on the figures he tried to cite.

We cannot continue to just leave things as they are. It was the party of the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Nipigon that killed the Crow's Nest Pass rate. The Conservatives along with I and others fought the Liberal government on that for a year and a half until we lost the vote in 1983. I did not expect any more from a Liberal, because they are the ones that did it to us. But when I hear a Conservative member from a Manitoba constituency, almost all of whose grain goes east, getting up and opposing this motion, I tell you that passes all understanding. It is not only wrong headed; it is stupid.

I have been involved with this issue for more than 21 years as well as when I was on the railroad. If you charge the full commercial rate for the movement of grain and

other bulk commodities without any subsidies of any kind, one of two things will happen in our country.

It either loses the markets or producers of those bulk commodities will have to take drastically lower prices and they will get out of that production. I do not care whether it is coal, potash, sulphur, pulp, or grain; you name it. All these programs, as does the WGTA to a certain extent, take into account our climate, our geography and who it is we are competing with, compared to climate, geography and where they produce their commodities.

As I pointed out earlier, the Australians and Argentinians produce their grain within 200 miles of salt water. The Argentine Government hauls its grain to export positions at no cost to the producers. Yet these two hon. members, one Liberal and one Tory, expect our grain producers and our shipping companies on the Great Lakes and seaway, to compete with that. That is unmitigated nonsense.

My colleague's motion makes imminent sense. It is another step we have to take. According to free trade agreement proponents, if they mean what they say about a level playing field and they are honest about it, we are to see to it that this sort of thing happens.

The St. Lawrence Seaway for Canadian products and shipping should be toll-free. It is a public investment. It is a public utility. It is there for all to use like our highways. I do not understand the so-called free market system and free enterprise system. It has been nothing more than socialism for the rich and capitalism for the poor.

I do not understand why there is the resistance to make a national effort to take into account our geography and climate and set up facilities and transportation costs that allow us to deliver our product to export positions anywhere between Thunder Bay and Halifax at an equal transportation cost to those of our competitors, even if that means another $200 million or $300 million a year in subsidy. I do not call it a subsidy. I call it protecting our investment in our farms, shipping companies and what we have put into the seaway and ports, all of which lose money. You cannot even give them away to a municipality.

This motion is worthy of consideration and action by a government of any political stripe, if it treats all the producers and transporters anywhere in this country equally and decently.

• (1750)

Mr. Bob Hicks (Scarborough East): Mr. Speaker, may I allude to some comments first of all by the hon. member for Regina—Lumsden. He refers to the amateurs who have spoken. I am proud to be an amateur. I am proud to have the opportunity of addressing this particular bill as the member for Scarborough East, because I think it is incumbent upon all members of this House to try to comprehend in some way the problems of their colleagues from other parts of Canada.

I think it is necessary for us to consider and examine various provisions of the Western Grain Transportation Act, which is a very important piece of legislation for all western farmers. The act came into effect on January 1, 1984. Rail freight rates for shippers increased and the federal government was committed to making payments to the railways to reflect new cost based rail rates.

The act consists of eight parts plus two schedules. The main provisions of the act include new regulatory and advisory machinery aimed at implementing the act and improving the over-all grain transportation system, and also a timetable for review of the acts, operation.

Although the act contains no formal statement of its over-all objectives there are references throughout to a number of interrelated objectives, such as to improve the capacity and efficiency of the grain transportation and handling system in order to maximize returns to producers and to ensure an adequate, reliable and efficient railway transportation system, as well as to ensure that the over-all revenues of the railway system are adequate to meet long-term needs.

The WGTA is comprised of five major parts which deal with administrative measures, rates, government payments, limits on shipper rates and reviews. The part dealing with administrative measures has two principle objectives. The first is to establish the Senior Grain Transportation Committee, to define its membership and responsibilities, to establish in law the grain transportation administrator and to define his responsibilities. It also deals with specific provisions related to efficiencies, system performance, service quantities, car allocation and railway commitment plan.

The Senior Grain Transportation Committee advises the minister and the administrator on any issue affecting the transportation, shipping and handling of grain,

including performance objectives, capacity, efficiency measures and railway car allocations.

The SGTC originally consisted of 21 members representing a wide range of interests, including producers, the railways, grain companies, Great Lakes carriers, the Canadian Wheat Board and the Canadian Grain Commission. Amendments to the act approved in 1985 expanded producer representation on the committee from four to nine. The establishment of the Senior Grain Transportation Committee has facilitated the involvement of all segments of the grain industry and the evolution of the grain transportation and handling systems.

The grain transportation agency administrator and his staff have specific operational responsibilities related to system capacity and efficiency, performance objectives, car allocation and administration and control of the government fleet of hopper cars. The administrator is a member of the Senior Grain Transportation Committee.

A nominal system of awards and sanctions related to performance objectives was established pending a review in 1985 and 1986 to determine the practicality of a permanent scheme. Implementation of such a scheme would be to subject to parliamentary review.

Under this system the grain transportation agency administrator establishes objectives such as tonnage targets for system participants. The administrator reports twice each year to the minister and SGTC on the achievement of these performance objectives. This provides an opportunity for the industry to assess problems and identify solutions for the transportation and the handling of grain.

Monitoring railway investment is an important aspect of the WGTA. The railways submit to the minister, the Senior Grain Transportation Committee, The National Transportation Agency and the GTA Administrator, an annual statement of their plant and equipment investments related to the movement of grain for the preceeding year, their general investment plans for the current and next calendar year, and expenditures on the maintenance of grain dependent branch lines for the preceding year.

The National Transportation Agency monitors the railways expenditure programs and submits reports to the minister. The minister has the authority to withhold payments to the railways in the event that he is not satisfied with the level of branch line maintenance on grain dependent lines undertaken by the railways or with railways general investment program.

The second part of the act deals with rates. The principal objectives of this section are to provide a statutory basis for the distance related base rate scale for the movement of grain by rail, the principal of port parity for Vancouver and Prince Rupert, a phase–in contribution to the railways constant costs, the determination of the railways eligible costs in the annual rate scale and finally, regular railway crossing reviews.

Unlike the old statute which fixed the rate levels of grain movements, the new act sets formula which determine the new rate every year. The annual rate scale is determined on the basis of the distance related base rate scale adjusted for railway price indices established by the National Transportation Agency, tonnage forecasts provided by the administrator of the grain transportation agency, and productivity improvements.

The WGTA contains a base rate scale which is simply the Crow rate scale adjusted to correct certain anomalies. The annual rate scale under the WGTA is determined by adjusting the base rate by a multiplier calculated in accordance with the WGTA formula.

In the interest of achieving future system economies, provision was made for the railways to charge incentive rates, that is, rates below those permitted under the rate scale. These incentive rates are subject to National Transportation Agency approval. The initiative to seek a lower rate rests with the shipper in consultation with the railways. Until crop year 1985–86 no lower rate application to the agency was permitted except for weekend and seasonal loadings. All the major grain companies currently benefit from incentive rates.

Provision was made to ensure that a lower or higher rate paid by the shippers as a result of an error in a tonnage forecast was corrected over the course of the two following crop years. This provision has since been

amended to provide for an adjustment only where an overpayment or underpayment exceeds $150 million.

The principal objectives of the part of the act concerning the government payments are the following: to provide a statutory basis for the Crow benefit; to define the cost sharing formula; to limit the government payments to a tonnage ceiling linked to a blended freight rate; and finally to provide for a timetable to make government payments.

The government is committed to pay the full Crow benefit of $658.6 million plus the government share of cost changes. The Crow benefit is the shortfall in railway revenue calculated for 1981–82 when legislative change was set in motion. The shipper currently pays for annual changes in railway costs up to 6 per cent. The government pays for cost changes in excess of 6 per cent.

An adjustment payment is made to CN owing to factors affecting costs outside its control such as port parity to Prince Rupert and the high cost of the Churchill line. There is a single rate scale common to both railways.

The "shipper share limitation" provision in the act requires the government to ensure that average rates paid by shippers do not exceed a defined percentage of the selling price of a basket of six grains. The limit is currently 10 per cent. This acts as a safety net for producers.

The section on review enshrined in legislation is a commitment to undertake reviews of key features of the bill.

I see that my time is up. I have enjoyed having the opportunity to address the Western Grain Transportation Act.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The period provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired.

[*English*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 96(1) the order is dropped from the Order Paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Lewis that Bill C–43, an act respecting abortion, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): When the debate ended at five o'clock, the hon. member for Delta had the floor. He has eight minutes remaining in his debate.

• (1800)

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): Mr. Speaker, when we were interrupted by Private Members' Hour, we were just comparing the human foetus not with the acorn but with the young sapling of an oak tree. It resembles a young sapling much more. Although small in size, it has the fully developed characteristics of that mature tree.

However, the single fertilised egg can indeed become a whole body of extremely complex structures producing many different tissues and functions. It will produce many thousands of complex chemicals and enzymes, nerve cells, skin, hair, bone, muscles and blood and various sensory organs.

When we are talking about the embryo or the foetus, we are not dealing with an indeterminate mass or a lump of tissue, we are dealing with something that will eventually become what you and I are today. That little foetus is a contractor for the adult human. It has the plans and the blueprints and the ability to receive supplies from the mother and develop something far more fantastic than the building of brick and mortar. We need to remember that you and I and Dr. Morgentaler were all at one time an embryo, a foetus, a baby and a child.

The greater and harder question we have to ask today is, is that foetus a person? Is it a human being? Does it have a soul? That question must be asked because it is crucial to the whole question of abortion. When does one become a human being? Do we suddenly become one? Is it a gradual process or a developmental thing?

We do not have all the answers at this time in history. Part of the question is semantics. A person is a legal definition for a biological entity of the most complex order.

The answers to this question are as varied as the numbers of people providing answers. Aristotle, for example, thought that males became persons at 40 days after conception and females at 90 days after conception. There are many criteria which have been used over the years to try to determine when the foetus does indeed become a human being or a person. There are physical criteria such as time or age. For example, does it become a human at conception? Is it when the organs are forming or when the heart starts to beat or perhaps when the mother first feels that quickening. Perhaps it is at the age of viability when it is first able to survive on its own outside the womb. Others would suggest to us that it is when that first breath is taken at birth.

The second physical criteria that is sometimes used is health. In other words, if a foetus is not healthy, it is not a person or a newborn. For example, Nobel prize-winning biologist Francis Crick believes that a child should be two days old before it is considered to be a person. This would allow for elimination of those who are unhealthy or perhaps have serious defects that would interfere with their functioning in society. Others would use social criteria. In other words, an infant must show interaction with other human beings in order to be considered human. This would put the development of a person at a much later stage than birth.

A third possibility that has been used is mental criteria. Man is distinct from animals because of his intelligence. Joseph Fletcher, the author of *Situation Ethics*, supports this view and maintains that abortion, infanticide and euthanasia are not the taking of human life, merely biological life.

It is this reasoning that allowed slavery to flourish as blacks were considered a sub-human species. Nazi Germany allowed the extermination of six million Jews in World War II because they were not as human as the master race.

The Vancouver Sun, in an editorial of November 20, 1989, said in its referral to the Supreme Court decision in the Daigle case that the court did not attempt to assume the role of a moral or philosophical adviser on the controversial question of when life begins. It did not consider the theological or scientific aspects of the question, only the legal ones.

I would suggest tonight that this Parliament must define these rights of the foetus. As Madam Justice Wilson said in a written judgment in the Morgentaler case: "The precise point in the development of the foetus at which the state's interest in its protection becomes compelling I will leave to the informed judgment of the legislature which is in a position to receive guidance on the subject from all relevant disciplines".

I personally have sat and wept with young pregnant teenagers. I understand the anguish of the pregnant wife with the alcoholic husband. I have wept with the 45-year-old woman with three teenagers who finds herself pregnant even though her husband has been out of town for six months. I have also seen the 18-year-old coming in with her third and fourth pregnancy and desiring an abortion. These are the realities that we live with.

I believe the answer to these problems is not the quick and easy abortion route but rather the development of a caring society that provides for good birth control information when and where needed. We should encourage research into new and safer forms of birth control. Society has to provide the caring support for the unwed and the poor mothers and their families. There are more than enough good homes in this country crying out for babies to adopt.

Ninety-five per cent of abortions in this country are performed because of the anxiety and depression resulting from the pregnancy. Abortion is said to be a woman's issue and in many ways it is. However, in my practice I found that a very high percentage of the abortions were as a result of pressure brought about by boyfriends and husbands who threatened to leave or threatened other things for their own selfish reasons. I believe that we must ensure a thorough counselling and support program, including financial support for pregnant women where required.

I would suggest today that there is absolutely no evidence that the long-term health effects of abortion are in any way better and indeed many studies have been shown them to be far worse than when an unwanted pregnancy is carried to term.

Dr. Philip Ney, a Victoria psychiatrist and professor at the University of Calgary, writing in the current issue of the *Psychiatric Journal* of the University of Ottawa found in a survey of the literature "Mental Health and Abortion: Review and Analysis", and I am quoting here his summary:

> This survey of studies which relate to the emotional sequelae of induced abortion draws attention to the need for more long-term in-depth prospective studies. The literature to this point finds no psychiatric indications for abortion, and no satisfactory evidence that abortion improves the psychological state of those not mentally ill; abortion is contra-indicated when psychiatric disease is present, as mental ill-health has been shown to be worsened by abortion. Recent studies are turning up in an alarming rate of post-abortion complications such as PID and subsequent infertility. The emotional impact of these complications needs to be studied. Other considerations looked at are the long-term demographic implications of abortion on demand and the effect on the medical professions.

In this day of modern medicine and therapy, indeed there are very few medical indications for abortion.

In summary, I would like to agree with the author of the minority report of the Law Reform Commission which stated abortion should be permitted only where the continuance of the pregnancy would constitute a genuine and serious threat to the health of the mother.

I would be prepared to vote at second reading for this legislation in the hopes that the legislative committee and later the House would bring in amendments to the bill so that we may restore to this problem a basis of sound biological, medical and ethical principles for guidance and judgment.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Lise Bourgault (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I must say I found it very difficult to espouse the legislator's point of view and accept the fact that the Abortion Bill had to be part of the Criminal Code. In this respect, I must admit that the position taken by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops as well as that taken by the Law Reform Commission reflect the principles I adhere to as a Catholic, and I quote: "The inclusion of provisions relating to abortion in the Criminal Code reflects the fundamental policy of our nation. In the last analysis, the Criminal Code is a reflection of what we are. It is an extension of our will or absence of will to promote human dignity and equality".

Mr. Speaker, in every discussion we had in caucus and with the public, there were many times I felt this as an intrusion in my personal affairs, and I was very frustrated to see a lack of understanding for the economic, physical and physiological circumstances of women's lives.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, I was very much involved in preparing the legislation before the House today, and I admit that I am a pro-choicer who was willing to compromise, because we must have legislation in order to avoid incidents of the kind we saw in the sad and sensational case involving Chantal Daigle and Jean-Guy Tremblay.

• (1810)

During our first debate, I was in favour of an 18-week limit, a position I had to revise as a result of the numerous debates that ensued and the legal opinions I received. I am also very concerned about what is happening in the Maritimes, for instance, because if the government had provided for an open gestation period, from 0 to 18 weeks, during which women could obtain an abortion without indicating any particular grounds or reasons, we might have penalized certain women and created an unfair situation, because the provinces could have refused to pay the fees of medical practitioners since certain regions do not offer this kind of service.

Mr. Speaker, we must not forget we have two extreme positions on abortion: pro-choice and pro-life. In fact, anti-choice is more like it, Mr. Speaker. Both parties object to any legislation that does not espouse their respective principles.

It is easy for those on either side of the fence to say that the government has failed to address the issue, because these people did not have to sit down as legislators to deal first of all with Canadian realities, then Parliament, caucus, the Supreme Court and finally, our Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Bill C-43, in my opinion, merely lays down in a legislative text what is happening today. A woman who wants an abortion must first see her doctor. We all agree that abortion is a medical act. So, with or without legislation, a woman must talk to her doctor, and the doctor will either agree or refuse to do the operation.

As for those who complain about lack of access, this is a frivolous objection since, according to the Canada Health Act, health is a matter under provincial jurisdiction and provincial health care systems have been devel-

oped to cover the specific needs of each province, hence the obligation to deal with Canadian realities.

The criteria in the act provide a general orientation, while the provinces are deliberately given a certain latitude for implementing the legislation, so that they can make decisions on the basis of local priorities and resources.

When we read the text of the Canada Health Act, we find there is no list of specific medical services, such as oncology, cardiac surgery or abortion services. The provinces, together with the medical profession, determine what medical services are necessary. The provinces regulate the medical profession and health care institutions such as hospitals and CLSCs. The provinces also decide how to ensure that their residents have access to these medical services.

We must remember that the federal government cannot dictate policy in areas under provincial jurisdiction. It seems to me that is not difficult to understand, Mr. Speaker. If it tried, it would impinge on the role of the provinces in Confederation, which would obviously meet with objections from the courts.

We must remember that the constitutionality of the Canada Health Act is now being challenged before the courts. However, we believe that this abortion legislation will come through with flying colours, since its present wording does not impinge on provincial jurisdictions.

Briefly, Parliament can only pass regulations on abortion at the national level through the Criminal Code. The proposed legislation provides the provinces with the guidelines they requested regarding the legal framework for dealing with abortion. To do so, the proposed legislation gives the provinces the guidelines they sought concerning a legal framework for abortion.

I think that with this new legal framework, the provincial governments will be able to respect the letter and spirit of the law and provide access to all the required medical services.

I now call on women's groups to put pressure on the legislatures in provinces which do not provide abortion services. I ask my colleague from Halifax, the Liberal critic on women's issues, to spend more time in New Brunswick than in Ottawa, because that is where the big debate is going on.

Another thing to point out, Mr. Speaker, is that we broadened the definition of health to include psychological health. That was very important. It shows that we trust doctors because we know very well, Mr. Speaker, that women who want an abortion do not do so with a glad heart; it is always an agonizing, difficult decision.

It is really sad to see all sorts of propaganda campaigns with beautiful little babies, as if women were killers. It is wrong to believe that we who are pro-choice are pro-abortion. We are for women's choice, which is quite different.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell all Members of this House that the moderate approach of Bill C-43 should become law so that this public debate, which I think has gone on long enough, can end. It is time to get back to more basic things, like how to reduce the sexual abuse of children and how to help the victims of it, just as it is time to fight the violence suffered by many women.

The economic reality of women is staring us in the face, Mr. Speaker. We just have to look around us to notice it. The same goes for the insidious poverty of young people, which should make us think some more instead of acting in a paternalistic way and engaging in sterile debates on an issue which is first and foremost a woman's own business.

Mr. Speaker, I shall support the bill because I sincerely believe that it is the best compromise under the circumstances and in future I want to deal with the economic situation of tomorrow's children, those who are alive and just want to grow in the best world possible.

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, the subject is a very difficult one. This two-page bill on abortion says, and I will quote the English version:

[*English*]

Every person who induces an abortion on a female person is guilty of an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years unless the abortion is induced by or under the direction of a medical practitioner.

[*Translation*]

I agree with that part. We have finally gotten rid of the sordid image of backroom transactions. Finally, when an abortion is necessary, it is done by a physician, and any other person who does so is a criminal.

[*English*]

If the abortion were to be induced, it could be in a case of the health or the life of the mother. In the case of the life of the mother, I do agree with it, but I have some difficulty when I hear the definition of health when it talks about physical, mental and psychological health. I wonder who is going to make this decision.

If a person goes to see a doctor and doctor number one is not in agreement, then would the pregnant woman go and see doctor number two? If this is the case, are we not opening the risk of having a lawsuit by a third party who would ask why is it that doctor number two was in favour of the decision and doctor number one was not. Was doctor number two a psychiatrist or was he an expert in abortions? What kind of an expert was he? This will open the way for a tremendous amount of lawsuits by third parties, I suspect.

• (1820)

The last part of the bill states that everyone who unlawfully supplies or procures a drug or other noxious thing, or an instrument or thing knowing that it is intended to be used or employed to induce an abortion on a female person is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years. That I also agree with. However, with the bill as it stands I would have a great amount of difficulty.

I have heard speaker after speaker, member after member, especially now, referring to this being a woman's issue. I beg to differ with that point of view. We are all human beings. It appears to always be the same people who insist that when we refer to the feminine gender we should only refer to persons in the neutral gender. In this particular case, they become very possessive and they say that we have no right to even discuss the issue, let alone make a decision.

I find that difficult because life depends on the couple, that is male and female. I have had four children. I was very lucky to experience the births of my three last children. I found those births to be miraculous things, good things. We are part of this universe to procreate.

I have also experienced the death of a grandchild at the age of eight months and that is excessively difficult to experience. I have raised four children with my wife and found that a wonderful experience because I am rather proud of my children.

In a contemporary society such as ours, we must not be afraid to adapt ourselves to the evolving needs of society. To adapt ourselves may signify sometimes that we must make a few drastic changes. Such changes should be expressed by establishing once and for all the basic rights of the foetus.

[*Translation*]

The Supreme Court says it has no obligation to intervene in philosophical and theological discussions on whether the foetus is a person. In that case, we wouldn't have to consider this matter here in Parliament and pass legislation in this House to protect the foetus.

[*English*]

Despite what the Supreme Court has said, the question of when life begins is not an issue of theology or philosophy; it can easily be answered by elementary biology. For more than a century, medical science has known conclusively that every individual's life begins at conception.

[*Translation*]

In any case, I would like to say a few words about my position on the abortion issue, with special emphasis on the rights of the foetus.

[*English*]

Presently, abortions are performed in Canada to solve the socio-economic problems of distressed pregnant women. These problems are real, but should be treated with socio-economic solutions and not by the wilful destruction of human life.

Let me quote a doctor who was on a therapeutic committee before they were declared unconstitutional on January 28, 1989:

> In the time I was on the committee, there was no instance in which a serious physical threat to the health of the mother was ever demonstrated, and I don't recall any patient with a diagnosis of psychological or emotional illness being sick enough to ever have been referred to a psychiatrist – My recollection of all the cases presented in

the month that I was on the committee, is that they were all socio-economic or economic reasons.

Hence, we do not solve any problem by implementing this law nor would we if we allowed abortion on demand. One of the issues that this government will have to face is what drives so many women desperately begging for an abortion when the majority of them are perfectly healthy. I pay a great deal of attention when I am told that pregnancy is a perfectly normal biological event, never a disease.

There is no case where an abortion is therapeutic. Abortions have nothing to do with physical or mental health. Abortions are done for reasons of social, economic or medical convenience.

[*Translation*]

The life of the foetus versus the life of the mother. Fortunately, this cruel dilemma is very rare nowadays. Doctors will practically always try to save both. However, the situation is interesting in that it gives us a chance to take a general perspective on the problems that arise when the interests of the foetus and those of the mother do not coincide, when it is a matter of survival for one or the other, and whose interests should come first, when we assume they are not compatible. In fact, it is both difficult and distasteful to put these two lives in the balance. Life is our most precious possession. Take that away, and we take away a person's whole world. Furthermore, what grounds are there to justify setting a higher price on one person's life as opposed to others? All lives are equal. After all, no one in our society considers destroying a foetus as intrinsically good, despite all the diverging views on abortion. In fact, even the most solid supporters of free choice, who see abortion simply as a way to terminate unwanted pregnancies, will admit that the decision is often heartbreaking. To most people, the best answer is better family planning.

We could avoid this lengthy debate on abortion if we could improve family planning and education for Canadians. Family planning and education should be a priority for every government that wants to make abortion unnecessary. When abortion seems inevitable, we should encourage the use of social programs that provide single mothers with daycare and financial assistance. We must maintain and develop new and effective social programs in order to help the neediest among us who are seeking some kind of support.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I must admit that I intend to vote for the bill on second reading. However, it is not because I support the principle of the bill but because I feel the bill should be considered by a committee of the House and that amendments should be made. However, I intend to vote against the bill in its present form on third reading, especially if we fail to offer at least minimal protection for the foetus.

[*English*]

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, the decision to allow the termination of a pregnancy is indeed one of the most difficult and divisive issues that our country has ever faced. I know that all of us as legislators have given it a great deal of personal thought and have wrestled with its moral and social implications.

We have all been lobbied intensively by those who oppose the concept of choice and those who support a woman's right to self-determination. We must always, as legislators, try to seek public consensus in a process and through our decision-making. Unfortunately, there are always those issues in our imperfect world where consensus is all but impossible, where public opinion remains intransigent and unalterably divided. There are occasions when the processes of conciliation and compromise only serve to compound our difficulties and to frustrate the solution that we seek. Such is the case with abortion.

• (1830)

I believe that the legislation on abortion now before this House does just that. In attempting to seek compromise where none appears possible, this legislation in fact denigrates a woman's legitimate right to choose by throwing it back into the Criminal Code. It compounds and frustrates the difficult decision to terminate a pregnancy by casting over it the ominous cloud of criminal sanction.

I have thought about this issue a great deal and I firmly believe that making abortion illegal is unjust in principle and is unworkable in practice and that is why I cannot support this legislation.

The choice to terminate a pregnancy is a moral and intensely personal decision and in a free and a democratic society the conscience of the individual must remain paramount to the state. As was so eloquently stated by Supreme Court Justice Dickson, forcing a woman by threat of criminal sanction to carry a foetus to term unless she meets certain criteria unrelated to her priori-

ties and aspirations is a profound interference with a woman's body and an infringement of security of the person.

In this country we have a strong tradition of freedom and of individual liberty. We value our freedoms and our right to make those choices necessary to reach our life's goals and aspirations. Through this proposed legislation the government wants to take away that right to choose and give it to the politicians, and I think that that is a dangerous wrong.

Yesterday I listened to the former minister of health give his reasons for supporting this legislation, and in his arguments he made a very cogent point. The minister stated that we should not ascribe to society the powers it does not have. I would like to respond by saying that we should not ascribe to society the powers it does not deserve. Society does not deserve to interfere with what is a woman's personal moral decision, the outcome of which will influence the rest of her life. It is not for the state to legislate morality. Morality, the distinction between right and wrong, is not based on one answer for everyone. Morality is based upon freedom and the very essence of freedom involves the principle of choice.

The ability to choose one's destiny and to select one's path toward self-determination is a fundamental democratic right, a right that is being jeopardized by this legislation now before the House, a right that this government is trying to take away from the women of Canada.

Just what does the concept of choice really mean? Most anti-choice advocates equate the concept of choice with abortion on demand. But as a gross misconception, it completely ignores the traumatic reality that a woman must face when she is confronted with an unwanted pregnancy.

I make that statement with some direct experience. My wife faced an unplanned and totally unexpected pregnancy as a young woman. For her the prospects of bearing a child meant interrupting her education, it meant finding employment and it meant bearing the social and psychological trauma of being a young and unwed mother. She probably could not have faced it alone, but she was exceedingly fortunate. She was surrounded with the love and fellowship of an understanding and compassionate family who were there to help and support her in the difficult path that she would choose.

She chose to bear the child and to endure the difficult and often painful, yet greatly rewarding job of parenthood. I came to know her at this point in her life and I witnessed first-hand the difficulties, the barriers, the deep psychological trauma that a young woman, as a single parent, must face. After we married I adopted her daughter who is now a young adult completing her degree in psychology and it goes without saying that we are both very proud of her.

Later in life, as a parent with three children I decided to interrupt my professional career to return to university and complete my doctorate degree in the health sciences. My wife informed me that she was again pregnant. Although we had taken precautions mother nature had once again performed her timeless ritual demanding the re-enactment of the biological imperative with great finesse. We could not possibly face the burden of another child if I was to return to academia and yet to terminate the pregnancy was not in the cards. There was, we felt, a reason for this child. So, we had the child, our youngest daughter, Karalyn, who is now eight years of age. I remained in my career. I eventually entered political life and that is why I am here today. There are times, I must admit, when I wonder whether I am a victim or a beneficiary of circumstance.

For my wife the choice to terminate her first pregnancy was not the option she could choose despite an uncertain future and hardship as a single parent. The same was true for us as husband and wife with our last child despite the difficulties involved. Having said that, we would not want to dictate to anyone else the path that they must choose. Faced with that decision, I think we both have a more realistic appreciation of the difficulties and the personal trauma that other women must endure, women who do not necessarily have the financial and the emotional supports to adequately care for a child.

And that is precisely the point. Choice means the freedom to select the path that is right for you. Choice means the right of a woman to decide for herself whether to bear the child or whether to interrupt the process until such time as she is better able to bring into this world a child that is wanted, a child that is loved, a child that can be adequately cared for. I firmly believe that the right to make that choice must be left up to the

individual. Governments should not be allowed to interfere.

The legislation before us today does nothing to resolve the bitter polarity surrounding the issue of abortion. It is intellectually dishonest and it is politically fraudulent. It gives the appearance that the government is doing something about the issue and in reality it is doing nothing to tackle the very essence of the problem. It does nothing to reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies and to support the unwanted children who continue to suffer in society today.

Our efforts in resolving the controversy of abortion have been futile, largely because we have been tackling the problem from the wrong dimension. To circumvent the need for abortion should always be the ultimate goal. Consensus can only be reached by focusing on the preventive side of the issue. The aim of education, research and social action must always be to reduce the incidence of abortion and to promote effective contraception. We must also involve the development of national programs, of counselling and support for those women who have decided to see their pregnancy to term.

The reality is that 56 per cent of single parent families in Canada live at or below the poverty line, and while one woman in four is sexually active by the age of 15, fewer than 10 per cent of North American teenagers use birth control when they first become sexually active. Despite these harsh realities, the national division of health and welfare has only one full-time worker in its family planning division.

We have failed miserably as a nation to provide a framework of support so necessary to allow women to make responsible decisions. Establishing effective preventive programs through our health, educational and social service agencies will do much to decrease future demands for abortions. This has to be combined with adequately funded support and counselling services for women facing an unwanted pregnancy. It is our collective responsibility to do all we can to help.

May I conclude by saying that in the final analysis the decision of whether or not to terminate a pregnancy must be left to the woman. It must remain hers to choose the path which she alone must walk.

• (1840)

Mr. Rob Nicholson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, usually when I have the privilege of speaking in this House I mention how pleased I am to speak on the bill before Parliament. Tonight I am not so much pleased as I am aware of the difficulties of this subject for all members of Parliament, including myself.

This is the second reading stage of Bill C-43. We are being asked to approve in principle a new law on abortion. The bill does not reflect my personal point of view. I have opposed abortion since I was a teenager and since that time I have worked and spoken out on behalf of protecting unborn children. I have spoken twice before on this subject in the House of Commons and it is not my intention at this point to repeat the arguments that I have made as to why I want protection for the unborn. I think it will suffice for me to say that for me this is a deeply held conviction.

I said this subject is difficult for parliamentarians. It is difficult because I know there is no consensus in Canada. I and many who share my point of view have tried to build that consensus but, for many reasons, it does not exist.

This Parliament now has the unenviable task of trying to reconcile two very divergent points of view, both, in many cases, passionately held. I do not know the words that could be put down on paper that could completely satisfy both sides of the issue.

Therefore, those of us who are deeply committed to the pro-life position have a decision to make. On the face of it, it would seem that the decision is straightfoward because this piece of legislation does not reflect my point of view and, therefore, it would seem simple to say that I must vote against it. But, and this is why it is difficult, there are other considerations to take into account.

One of them is my belief that this bill is better than no bill at all. It affirms that all human life has value. As well, there is the possibility that if this law passes perhaps a future Parliament might be able to build a consensus that would strengthen the protection of unborn children.

I am also faced with the reality. If this law does not pass I do not believe that Parliament ever again will pass legislation in the area of abortion. I cannot see federal parliamentarians re-opening the subject of abortion if this Parliament fails to enact legislation.

So the decision for those of us who support the pro-life position is this: Do we vote against this because, on principle, it does not protect unborn children in a manner that would be acceptable, or do we vote for this knowing those political realities that I have just set out?

One of my colleagues yesterday quite correctly pointed out that compromise is necessary in all legislation. I agree that we are called upon to do that in the parliamentary process. Every piece of legislation I know of that is presented to this House is an attempt to balance two or more competing interests and we, as legislators, try to strike a reasonable balance.

However, I believe that when all is said and done there are some beliefs that cannot be compromised. There is a set of core beliefs in all of us which defines who we are as human beings and what it is that we stand for in this world. I am at that point.

I have had to face a decision like this on a previous occasion. Sixteen years ago I was a member of a university student council. We were asked to approve a student council departmental budget that dealt with many aspects of health. Part of the money in that package would end up financing an abortion referral service. The vote that we were called upon to make was a take it or leave it proposition on the whole package. I spoke with a number of my colleagues about my concern and said that my opposition to abortion precluded my support for the package. They gave me the strong argument that if the vote was lost we would lose all the other good services included in the package. I felt then, and I believe today, that I cannot rationalize my position to that extent.

There are others in the same position as am I who have come to a different conclusion and will support this bill at second reading stage. I do not believe that they are any less right in coming to a different conclusion than me based on the same set of facts. But for me, in this debate, this is the crucial point. This is the point at which Parliament is being asked to give approval in principle to something that I have always opposed. Accordingly I will vote against this bill.

If it is the will of Parliament that this bill be approved in principle, I will be among those who will say that it is preferable to none at all. But I will be among those who will say that once having been approved in principle there is nothing that can be done to turn it into a pro-life bill. The attempt would be procedurally out of order, I think, and would probably destroy any consensus that has developed up to this point, but that argument is for another day.

For me the way is clear; I will vote against this at second reading. But being sure in my own mind as to what I should do does not make the decision much easier. It is a free vote for members of Parliament in the Progressive Conservative Party. If in coming to my conclusion I had been pressured by my colleagues to do something against my conscience, my decision would have been easier, but that was not the case. I was and am free to speak my mind and vote according to my conscience and I think that is crucial.

As have all members of Parliament, I have received a great deal of mail on this subject. One man recently wrote to me and said that I had an obligation to do what a majority of the people want and not vote according to my conscience. I have to disagree. In the long run it would be very bad for Canada if members do not act and vote according to their conscience.

I thank the House and particularly those in the leadership of my party who have understood and been supportive of those for whom this decision has been so difficult.

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to participate in this very important debate on Bill C-43, an act respecting abortion.

I do not think I would be exaggerating at all if I stated that this issue is one of the most difficult and contentious issues that has gripped Canadians and members of Parliament, my colleagues, in many years.

It is very difficult to deal with because the legislation as proposed deals with two very fundamental issues; the rights of women and the rights of the foetus which encompasses the sanctity of life. It is a debate on a piece of legislation, the outcome of which, regardless of defeat or approval, holds little hope of lessening the passionate and, at times, gut-wrenching and divisive debate now or in the foreseeable future. But as a legislator I bring with

me my own opinions, my own biases, and also my own concerns.

During this debate on this particular issue I have tried my very best to put my own point of view and my own positions aside and to listen to those who hold contrary opinions and to try to understand why they hold those contrary opinions. I have listened a lot. I have tried to understand how these individuals, whom I consider to be rational, caring, intelligent individuals, can be so far apart on such a fundamental issue as abortion.

I also want to say that I have attempted always not just to listen but to respect contrary opinions on the subject. I have defended and I will continue to defend the rights of individuals on all sides of this issue to have an opinion, to present that opinion and, most important, to be respected for having that opinion. Consequently, in return I ask nothing more than that same courtesy.

I must also state that I consider myself not just to be against abortion but to be in favour of protecting the lives of the unborn wherever and however possible. I do, however, understand the position of individuals who hold a contrary view, many of whom are my dear and longstanding friends. But as hard as I try, I simply cannot accept their conviction on the other side of this argument.

I am sure that most of us in this Chamber, no matter what point of view we hold on this particular debate, have been asked by individuals who hold different points of view what our point of view is.

• (1850)

There is one thing that has bothered me, although it has not happened in this House. After being asked what my position is and saying that I am probably pro-life—although I do not like the labels that this debate has forced on many of us—many times I am immediately told that I do not have a right to have an opinion because I am not a female. I fully understand some of those sentiments. But I also know, as a father of two children, that I should have some say in the rights and the future of the unborn. Many times when I am asked my opinion it is met with hostility but many times it is meet with a great deal of support.

But all of that aside, we are now in the place where a decision on this very critical piece of legislation must be made. I have listened to arguments and I suppose I am prepared to accept any bill that limits abortions to those instances where a mother's life is at risk. I suppose I am also prepared to listen to arguments concerning abortions being permitted in cases of violent crime, such as rape and incest.

I intend to support this bill at second reading solely so that it can proceed to the legislative committee for further review and to hear from Canadians on this critical issue. It is also my hope that when we do get it into committee a true debate will take place, not the type of sterile debate that many times takes place in the House, but a true exchange of ideas across a committee table as amendments are put forward, to try to make this piece of legislation which is currently, in its present form, to me unpalatable, more palatable to myself, many of my colleagues and many Canadians.

In my view this government has a responsibility to propose legislation. It was my hope as well as the hope of millions of Canadians that this House would bring in legislation that would not just address the rights of the foetus, but a bill that sought to make a statement which indicates society's interest in the rights of the foetus.

In its ruling of last January 28, the Supreme Court clearly indicated that the state has an interest in the foetus. As Chief Justice Dickson wrote:

> The precise point in the development of the foetus at which the state's interest in its protection becomes "compelling" should be left to the informed judgment of the legislature.

He went on to say:

> Like Beetz and Wilson, I agree that the protection of foetal interests by Parliament is also a valid governmental objective. It follows that balancing these interests, with the lives and health of women a major factor, is clearly an important governmental objective.

In other words, what he was saying is that the state has a responsibility to act on behalf of society's interest in the foetus. Many individuals such as myself waited to see such legislation that would enshrine the rights of the foetus. In late October and early November in the days preceding the introduction of Bill C-43 on November 3, the government systematically leaked bits of information which suggested that somehow the legislation that would be forthcoming would be pro-life in its form, that the

great compromise had been reached and it had been reached in favour of foetal rights. In my opinion, nothing could be further from the truth.

This legislation outlaws abortion, except—and it is a very important exception—when in the opinion of a doctor the health or life of the mother is likely to be threatened. Health is then defined as being the physical, mental and psychological health; by any stretch of the imagination, a wide and sweeping definition.

What the government has really done is to introduce a bill that at first glance seems to be pro-life but in practice is actually, or could be, abortion on demand. Nowhere does this legislation mention foetal rights. The foetus is without any protection whatsoever in this bill.

The government did not have the guts to define health. Instead, it has left the entire responsibility in the hands of Canada's doctors. I know that many people think that might be appropriate. For instance, I am sure that doctors such as Henry Morgentaler must be quite satisfied. Others do not share the same definition of health.

If this bill passes unamended, I am sure that in a short period of time some medical practitioners, a very small minority, will become abortion specialists because of their very loose definition of what constitutes a risk to the health of a mother. Although the legislation says there will be some protection against this type of thing happening, I think anyone who has examined the bill and has looked at some of the recent court rulings, including the Chantal Daigle case, would question whether or not any third party intervener would have any success in laying charges or getting a prosecution against a doctor's medical opinion in this instance.

Most important, the bill does not recognize society's interest in protecting the rights of the foetus. I happen to believe that the foetus represents life and with Bill C-43 there will not be any recognition anywhere in Canada for those rights.

As I mentioned earlier, I intend to vote this legislation through on second reading to committee stage, but let me say very clearly and unequivocally that if this bill is not changed to protect the rights of the foetus, if it is not changed to more clearly define the definition of the risk to the health of the mother, I will not be able to support it on third and final reading.

Bill C-43 is another disguise for abortion on demand. I personally find it a bit abhorrent when I look across at the government and see how weak-kneed it was when it did not seek to put a proper piece of legislation before this House. Bill C-43 does not protect the sanctity of human life and I cannot support any legislation that completely ignores those rights.

One other thing has to be said before I conclude. There is another important piece of the puzzle that has not been addressed by this government in its legislation. This government has failed in that it has not introduced companion legislation to remove the economic and other factors that force many women to choose abortion. There should never be a case in a society as wealthy as ours, with the resources that we have, as advanced as we are, where an individual chooses to have an abortion because she simply cannot afford to have and raise her child.

Yet the government comes in with a piece of legislation which is supposed to address the problem of abortion in our society and completely fails, through legislation, through government policy, to remove those economic indications that have caused thousands too many abortions to be performed on Canadian women.

Child care is not there. Income support programs are insufficient. Family planning programs which should be taught to children at a very early age in the school system and public education and awareness are nowhere in this bill or in any piece of companion legislation put forward by this government.

Therefore, it is my opinion that this government has introduced legislation that provides for far too easy access to abortion without addressing the real causes for abortion.

I started off by indicating that this was a very difficult debate for most of us to be involved in, but it is one that none of us can afford to skirt because it is a fundamental issue.

I do not intend, I have never in the past, nor do I intend in the future to lecture those who do not subscribe to my point of view or to criticize those who, for whatever reason, find themselves in a position that they have to choose legal or illegal abortions.

I would hope that once this bill comes back it will have the necessary amendments to protect the rights of the foetus, that it will have a clear definition of what "at risk" means when dealing with the health of a mother and, more important, that the government will recognize its responsibility to remove the economic justification for abortion that has far too long been imposed on the women of Canada.

Hon. David MacDonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, this debate is not one that is easy to address and in fact it raises some fundamental issues of life and respect for life to which all of us are committed, particularly in terms of our public representation.

I want to deal this evening, in the brief time available, with what I think are the three essential aspects of the debate on this bill. They are the issues of right to life, respect for life and responsibility for life.

Over the past number of years I have been increasingly troubled by the increasing amount of hate and animosity and the decreasing amount of understanding and insight that has occurred in trying to deal with this issue. I guess I could even say that in several elections, particularly the election of 1980, I experienced the extent and the depth of the animosity around this particular issue.

This is not my first occasion, neither in this place nor in other places, to discuss this issue. In fact, as I was preparing for the debate, I looked up one of the House of Commons reports on Health and Welfare from 1967 and 1968 when I participated in the standing committee which, on December 18, 1967, issued its report recommending some of the changes that subsequently became the law which stood until early 1988.

• (1900)

Having said that, I would in no way want to suggest that I feel that I have any more expertise or right to speak on this matter than any other individual in this House. I do think, however, it is important that we understand what this debate is about. Those who have taken a strong anti-abortion position have chosen to describe their position as one of right to life. I have always felt that they had chosen the right language even if, from time to time, they demonstrated a very real lack of understanding and sensitivity and very often, and perhaps with increasing frequency, have transmitted a message which is almost the opposite of that to which they espouse.

This is not something new. As far back as our own committee of 1967–68, in quite a lively exchange that took place on February 8, 1968, I was forced to say to one witness: "I would say though, Mr. Dehler, that your whole interpretation is founded upon a one dimensional view of life, that life can only be looked at and human life as being much more than its isolated physical aspect in its biological sense". I said that because it seemed to me that so often the discussions that took place around the issue of right to life were, at best, narrow and superficial and, at worst, even contradictory.

I guess another example of that is to suggest that I often found that people who were the most passionate on the issue of right to life were equally at home with the feeling that we should retain and, in many instances, expand the use of the death penalty. I was never quite able to reconcile that dichotomy. I believe that in the matter of life one cannot disengage for other reasons.

We must look at what the issue is with respect to this right to life. We are dealing, as almost all members have said, with a very unique form of life in terms of the foetus, but in dealing with that unique form of life we must remember that there are some very real limits and those limits are rarely, if ever, recognized or dealt with.

The Canadian Medical Association, in its own communication in response to this legislation, has said:

> Abortion, as interpreted by the Canadian Medical Association, is the act of termination of a pregnancy before foetal viability.

The words "foetal viability" hardly ever enter into the discussion. But when the Supreme Court was faced with its own decision it said, and I quote here Chief Justice Dickson in interpreting that decision:

> Forcing a woman, by threat of criminal sanction, to carry a foetus to term, unless she meets certain criteria unrelated to her own priorities and aspirations, is a profound interference with a woman's body and thus an infringement of security of the person.

I have to believe that the Chief Justice, in speaking not only for himself but for others in the court, was presenting something that was profoundly important. We really have to ask the question: whose life are we concerned with? I think it comes out, both directly and indirectly, in

the things that people have been saying about the legislation.

Tom Harper who is an Anglican priest and writes for *The Toronto Star*, in writing a column in justification of this legislation, uses this paragraph:

> What having an abortion in the Criminal Code says to me and to all Canadians is that all human life is sacred and so nobody can terminate it merely on a whim or to remedy one's own basic stupidity.

Now notions of "whim" or "stupidity" related to those who make the awesome decision to have an abortion reflect an attitude which, unfortunately, is all too pervasive and current.

Even more troubling is the recent press statement of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops on the introduction of this bill where on three separate occasions they refer to the dignity, value and protection of the unborn child and of children. That is very important and is to be applauded. But this same press release makes absolutely no reference whatever to women!

I find it passing strange that a body that would speak for close to half the population of this country, over half of whom would be women, would not recognize the fundamental respect for rights and life that exist with the mother and the potential mother in each and every instance. I have to say as a church person myself that we have a lot to answer for. A lot of it goes back deep into our own scriptural heritage. I could refer to the symbolism of 'Adam's rib' and of the notions from Genesis of "man having dominion over every living thing" as creating an expectation that is altogether paternalistic and degrading ultimately for half the population of this planet.

We are in fundamental terms looking at responsibility for life itself. Where does that responsibility rest? Well, in the first instance with the very life that gives new life opportunity, and that is woman. I ask you, how can we be expected to believe that we are going to make some advance over the present agony that exists, not only for those who are at different ends of this debate, but for the tens of thousands of women who face this decision, if we focus so narrowly and exclusively on only one aspect of that dilemma?

I think the issue quite fundamentally is one of responsibility for life and responsible decision, and I have said for some time now that I think we have to face the issue of responsibility squarely. What disturbs me so much about this legislative initiative is that it moves that responsibility away from the women themselves and back into the courts and the Criminal Code. The language would imply, if not invoke criminality. It appears to do one thing while, in effect, apparently intends the opposite. This does no service to the law and does no service or respect to women.

It has already been mentioned and I would mention it again that there are major issues of counselling and support and understanding with respect to the issue of abortion itself that have not been addressed. There is the scandalous situation of the inequality of treatment that exists for women across this country which has become more pronounced in recent years with the actions of my native province, Prince Edward Island, and now Nova Scotia.

This legislation—and I am no lawyer—troubles me because it might create the kind of incentive for further inequality that none of us should be willing to accept. This legislation in no way meets the basic concerns that all Canadians have, namely, to ensure that all members of society are treated with dignity and respect and invested with the responsibility that we all seek to bear.

This legislation is troubling and not acceptable in its present form.

Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas): Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to take part in the debate on Bill C–43, an act respecting abortion.

There is no doubt that Bill C–43 concerns a very serious and difficult issue which is of great importance to all Canadians. However, what is in question with this bill is its ability to adequately address the issue of abortion.

Matters which relate to life and death are not easy to deal with. During the last Parliament the debate on the death penalty certainly proved that. Yet the members who were involved in that specific debate eventually chose the preservation of life rather than have the state take it away. Unfortunately, in this case Bill C–43 does not provide complete protection for foetal life.

• (1910)

Bill C–43 is a feeble attempt by the federal government to escape a very difficult issue. It has failed in drafting legislation to protect the unborn. Bill C–43 is merely an example of the government trying to appease the opposing sides in this issue. Such an exercise is futile. It pleases no one. It will do very little to settle the abortion issue. Far more importantly, this bill does not insure an unquestionable and most basic right in any society, that being the right of life.

I respect the views that have been presented thus far by all members on Bill C–43. I know that the decisions reached by my colleagues to support or oppose this bill were not arrived at quickly or without serious consideration.

In the past year, every member has had contact with representatives of the pro–life and pro–choice organizations. As members, we are also aware of the views held by a large number of our constituents. I would certainly like to thank my constituents and Canadians from all parts of the country who have written and talked to me on this issue. Their personal opinions were valuable to me and I certainly know that they were very sincere.

During the 1988 election campaign I clearly identified myself as a pro–life supporter. I believe that life begins at conception. I also believe that there must be legislative protection for the unborn to guarantee their right to life. Since being elected as the member of Parliament for Stormont—Dundas my position has not changed nor has it diminished. I have always shared my views on abortion with my constituents. The people of Stormont—Dundas know where I stand.

Bill C–43 is an attempt by the government to apply a political answer to an issue that is way beyond politics. Whatever position we as legislators take on abortion, it is understood that lives are in the balance. This fact is indisputable. We are debating legislation which, if passed, would permit the ending of human life. This House, and our entire society for that matter, cannot view this in any other light. Abortion ends the natural progression of human reproduction. In the final analysis, if this bill is passed without protecting the right to life of the unborn, our society as a whole will be the real loser.

We can argue numerous points in this debate. We will, however, actually end up weighing the value of human life. Whatever we argue and however passionately we present our arguments, the hard fact remains that if Bill C–43 is accepted then there will be no protection for the unborn. We would be sanctioning the right for life to end.

Every member of this House knows the multitude of issues tied in with the subject of abortion. There is a myriad of questions involving issues of a legal, ethical, moral, societal, medical, religious and constitutional nature. With such an array of items to consider, it is easy for this government to present Bill C–43, and hope that the Canadian people accept it.

I cannot accept this bill and I am certain that a good number of Canadians will not either. It was incumbent on the government to introduce abortion legislation when the Supreme Court of Canada struck down the previous abortion law. The government, however, took a considerable amount of time to present such legislation.

While this issue is certainly complex, it is by no means a new one. I believe the government would have been content to sit back and do nothing except that two sensational cases arose this past summer which forced the government into action.

These court cases made it clear that the government could not hide from its responsibilities. The pressure for the government to act reached a point where it had to. We see the results of the government's response here in the contents of Bill C–43. One could say that Bill C–43 is a compromise. Unfortunately, it is impossible to compromise on matters which involve life and death. As is to be expected, both sides of the abortion issue have condemned this bill.

As I have said, I support the pro–life position with regard to abortion. I formulated my position as a result of a number of influences. Certainly the environment in which I was raised played a part in my own views on a very personal matter. The information that was available to me and the many discussions I had were also significant factors.

I do, however, believe that my views reflect a reverence for human life and I know I am not alone in this thinking. Society has a fundamental duty to protect and foster human life and its development. To lessen that duty in any manner would be inconsistent with our social and moral values.

No one segment of our society should have the right to decide whether another life can continue or not. The rights of one must not take precedence over the rights of another. It is not a question of gender here, it is a question of life.

We as a society must adopt an attitude which clearly states that all life is precious. We have to accept the responsibility to share in the nurturing and care of both mother and child, born and unborn, so that human life is supported and enriched. It is all too simplistic to end the life of a human foetus. Every effort must be made to preserve life.

We have to pursue all avenues in making it easier to continue with a pregnancy, rather than to end one. If we really believe that the abortion of a human foetus solves the problem then we as a society have failed.

In conclusion, Bill C–43 must be defeated, but the matter will not end there. We will have to present an acceptable alternative, one which will take a firm stand and enshrine the principle of the right to life of the unborn.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Fernand Jourdenais (La Prairie): Mr. Speaker, I take part in this debate with sorrow in my heart. I have heard my colleagues on both sides of the House express their opinion. I agree with some of them and agree less with others.

Let me take a few minutes in this House to share my deepest convictions with you.

Mr. Speaker, as member for La Prairie since 1984, in the service of my fellow citizens, I was elected according to the ethical principles found in our modern democracy. I would like to tell hon. members to ponder this principle: "Do not seek greatness and strive for honour, but excel in the practice of virtue."

This maxim of our philosophy is the very essence of what guides me in this debate and all the debates in which I have taken part in this House since I was elected to the Commons.

I have always professed good humour, sincerity and discussion. My trademark is open–mindedness and moderation in all my dealings with fellow human beings. Mr. Speaker, in my humble opinion, patience, kindness, trust, self–knowledge, but especially warmth and love for humankind, justice and honesty, should guide this debate, in spite of everything.

For years, Mr. Speaker, although I lacked a university degree, I pursued my education methodically, I questioned and consulted and today I speak in this debate, as in all others, as my conscience dictates.

• (1920)

Mr. Speaker, I listen to my constituents and I heed their advice. Such are the very premises which guide my choice when it is not tied to a party policy and when that policy does not disturb my conscience.

Mr. Speaker, human laws do not supersede God's commandment: Thou shall not kill. The Supreme Court of Canada does not consider the foetus as a human being, but geneticists tell us that the first cell division occurs 30 minutes after fecundation. Six days later the foetus measure 2 centimetres and the embryo is taking shape. The heart muscle begins to beat on the 25th day. After 30 days most of the organs essential to survival are already growing.

Mr. Speaker, foetus is the name given to the child in the womb of his mother from the moment he can be recognized as a human being, after about two months. To destroy a foetus is to get rid of a child to be born.

What is life, Mr. Speaker? When does life begin? At conception? When the cell first separates? Even scientists cannot agree. Have they proof to state unequivocally and absolutely when life begins?

What is happening to the conscience of man for whom killing is no longer a question of ethics but more often than not a question of comfort, luxury, materialism? What is happening to men, they who no longer feel love in their heart for a child to be born?

Mr. Speaker, nowadays we are witness to too much youth abuse. Abortion is the killing of the smallest of the small. Who will come to their defence? Who will give them a chance to claim their place under the sun? How many more potential human beings are we going to destroy this way? At the rate we are proceeding we will do away with the next generation before they are even born.

If we give the permission to destroy, how many Canadians will see the light of day? Mr. Speaker, will the next generation have to be ever grateful to their parents for not killing them? What are the moral, mental, psychological and spiritual consequences for future generations? What is the future of a civilized country like Canada from which a number of developing countries draw inspiration? Are we going to have another genocide? Will countries that look up to us follow our example? Will they not be left with the impression that we Canadians can afford to do without human beings,

important as they are for the survival of our country. We have it made, they are not so well off, so should they not do as we do?

If we look at what is going on world-wide in all so-called underdeveloped cultures we realize that respect for life and procreation as well as the assurance of having many offsprings is a major priority in many countries.

Instead, Mr. Speaker, why not set up preventive and educative programs, make available birth control methods, facilitate adoption programs, and assist needy women with alternatives which are less radical then abortion.

Let us listen to our own heart, let compassion and love guide our decision, this love which we feel for other human beings. Let us treat life with the respect it deserves and we will be shown respect.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of Bill C-43 is to amend the Criminal Code. I understand that the area of Federal jurisdiction is rather limited, health care regulation being a Provincial responsability.

I am aware that Bill C-43 does not legalise abortion. Yet, under Clause 1, an abortion induced by a physician will be deemed legal when the health or life of a female person is threatened. I understand that health means physical, mental and psychological health.

Mr. Speaker, we are not sanctioning abortion on demand, but we are making it a legal medical procedure when performed for health reasons.

Tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, will physicians be called upon to exterminate the poor, the old and the needy on behalf of the state which is shirking its responsibilities by renouncing all ethical and moral rules?

That is not a solution, Mr. Speaker. The legislators' duty is to be the guardians of public morality. To criminalize abortion is not an ideal solution. Entrusting physicians with the responsibility of the state to make social judgments is not an acceptable solution.

With an heavy heart, Mr. Speaker, I must inform my constituents and my colleagues in the House that I just cannot support Bill C-43.

[*English*]

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Mr. Speaker, there is an ad in today's *Globe and Mail* which states:

> "Men for Women's Choice.
>
> This Personal Decision is No Crime.

I rise in the House to concur with that sentiment. Underneath the ad is a list of several names, I suppose hundreds, I have not counted them. I am sorry that my name does not appear among them.

I would like to read the ad, because I think it says in all the essence what I stand for personally and which I believe my party's stand tries to say:

> No government should be able to force a woman to bear a child against her will. The proposed law would make women criminals for taking a personal decision to seek an abortion. Abortion has no place in the Criminal Code.
>
> Like a growing number of men, we do not think that men should control women. Men ought to have equal say and responsibility in a decision to parent. But ultimately, if there is a dispute, the decision to end a pregnancy must be a woman's choice because it is her body.
>
> No husband, no boyfriend, no judge, no doctor, no politician, should control a woman's body. Ever.
>
> Governments should act to ensure access to abortion in every province and every territory. More and better sex education and birth control information should also be provided.

It goes on to say that: "Now is the time for men to speak out. Show your support for women's choice by letting—" and I will not bother to name the politicians who ask us to let them know—although, of course, it includes the Prime Minister and all the other Members of Parliament—how we feel.

I rise today on this issue in as sincere a plea as I have ever made in my life that this place should not recriminalize abortion. Abortion is a health matter, not a political matter, not a criminal matter. It certainly is an emotional matter. It certainly is a physical matter in every sense of our humanity. The government has said that it is a psychological matter, and it certainly is; that it is a health matter, and it certainly is. I guess there have

been some suggestions made that it is a religious matter. I presume that some of the decisions on both sides are made on the basis of a religious conviction.

The question is certainly a human rights matter without question. Fundamentally it is a power question. I will deal with some of the other questions in more detail a little later. It is an economic, sociological, educational and political matter. This piece of legislation cannot be. We cannot get ourselves involved in a criminal matter in so far as this issue is concerned.

• (1930)

It is a health matter in more ways than one. I would suggest that one of the most important aspects of it being a health matter is again that it is women. Why is it that in this human history of ours throughout the ages it is always women who become the victims as a result of decisions which are for the most part made by men?

Also, in so far as women are concerned and as far as the matter before us is concerned, it is a matter of rich and poor, and that is not an unusual question to be coming before this House. There are many, many things which seem to be predicated on privilege. The obvious fact is that if a woman has access to any degree of wealth, she will be able to have an abortion regardless of what is decided in this House. She will be able to have a safe abortion, perhaps not even in this country. But if she has the financial wherewithal she will be able to avail herself of a safe abortion.

That is not the case with those women who do not have much money, who do not have the financial ability to perhaps go to another province or to go to another country. Sometimes, certainly in the past, it has meant going far beyond the borders of Canada to procure something which, undoubtedly, for their psychological, mental and physical health was a necessity, but again we have injected into this discussion the whole matter of the rich and the poor.

I do not think too much has to be said about the religious connotations. Wherever religious connotations arise, I would suggest that in Canada, being a nation where church and state are essentially separate, that a religious discussion should not inject itself into the discussion in the Parliaments of this country.

As I mentioned, human rights are involved because I do not think the issue is abortion; the issue is the freedom to choose. The issue is the freedom of a woman to choose and the freedom not to have to be beholden to a man when she makes that choice.

I mentioned that power was an element in the discussion and this relates back to the matter of being able to choose. As the advertisement in the paper said, there is no way that a man should be able to exercise that kind of power over a woman, be he a husband or a boyfriend.

We have seen in one case this summer where that was precisely an element in what was probably the most severe distress a woman has suffered publicly in Canada for a long while. I would suggest that such a spectacle is something which surely most Canadians would have found abhorrent and would in all senses wish not to see repeated. There is an element of power in this which has to be recognized, and it is one of the main reasons why this legislation should simply not be put through.

The proposed legislation states that a woman may have an abortion if she can demonstrate physical, psychological or mental reasons for having it done. I would suggest that most Canadian women who are going to have an abortion in reality are psychologically very sound mentally and physically. In order to have the abortion they are going to have to lie and perhaps drag the physician into the matter as well, which introduces the element of criminality as far as the legislation is concerned.

I do not think that this legislation ought to be enacted, something which will stigmatize half the population of Canada permanently in law. I would strongly suggest that this legislation should be defeated.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Tétreault (Laval–des–Rapides): Mr. Speaker, on the issue of abortion, I am of two minds and, while appreciating one another, the two minds cannot really agree. One of those minds belongs to the member of Parliament who, being at the same time a lawyer recognizes the government has an obligation to fill a legal vacuum with something acceptable. The other is that of the man, the father, for whom life transcends every law. In other terms, Mr. Speaker, while recognizing that a bill is needed, I deplore the need for one.

The need for abortions is almost entirely caused by the current lack of a social conscience. Nobody could object to a therapeutic abortion, that is in the case where the life or health of the mother is really threatened.

But the other abortions, those for instance that result from a whim, vengeance, socio-economic considerations, lack of generosity, irresponsibility, immaturity—how could they be justified? Or could they only be justifiable under an enactment?

At every turn my thoughts bring me back to that starting point—the fundamentally of happy christian ethics, and the social conscience that leads a notion to ensure its own survival. A society that eliminates its children soon after their conception is bound to disappear. There is no future for a society that refuses to be perpetuated.

It is a sad reflection, Mr. Speaker, that in Canada there were last year 65,000 therapeutic abortions as against 360,000 births. One child out of six was sacrificed.

Since the Bill was announced, there has been general dissatisfaction. Some view it as too permissive, others charge that the freedoms of women are being violated. My intention is not to deal once more with the basic issue of whether the foetus is or is not a human being.

But since a law is needed, let us take the time to look at what the physical and psychological implications are for women who will get an abortion in order to terminate a pregnancy.

Abortion is touted as the almost only and perfect solution for women faced with an unwanted pregnancy whose physical, mental and psychological health might be threatened.

But would the physical, mental and psychological health of those same women not be also threatened by an abortion?

Abortion is the radical solution to an often temporary problem. If we really want to protect the mother against the consequences of an unwanted pregnancy, we should at the same time caution her against the physical and psychological dangers.

In that respect, Mr. Speaker, let me join Father Jacques Croteau who had this to say: "I would be the last one to accuse a mother who had gotten an abortion of deliberately wanting to kill her child. Things almost never happen that way, either in the mind or the heart of a woman faced with an unwanted pregnancy, in view of the fears, panic, anxiety, even distress that can grip her."

• (1940)

But in practice, once the abortion is performed and the baby is no more, many deep and at times indelible psychological and physical scars remain.

Last January, right after his election as President of the United States, George Bush said at the Roe vs. Wade rally, and I quote:

[*English*]

> Before you begin your march today, on this first Monday of my presidency, I wanted to take just a few brief moments to restate my firm support of our cause, and to share with you my deep personal concern about our American tragedy of abortion on demand.
>
> We are concerned about abortion because it deals with the lives of two human beings, mother and child. I know there are people of good will who disagree, but after years of sober and serious reflection on the issue, this is what I think. I think the Supreme Court's decision in *Roe versus Wade* was wrong and should be overturned. I think America needs a human life amendment. And I think when it comes to abortion there is a better way, the way of adoption, the way of life.
>
> I know that you and hundreds of thousands with you across the country have raised a voice of moral gravity about abortion, a voice of principle, a full voice that properly asserts and affirms the basic dignity of human life—
>
> I promise you that the President hears you now and stands with you in a cause that must be won.

[*Translation*]

What strikes us at the outset is that President Bush talks about two separate entities: the child and the mother, which raises a question: Why is it only by destroying the former that we can solve the problem of the latter's unwanted pregnancy? Why not a life-enhancing solution rather than a death sentence?

I think it is unfair to the mother faced with an unwanted pregnancy to present abortion as the only option. If it is indeed the case, where is her freedom of choice? And does the woman asking for an abortion know all the potential and likely consequences of her decision? Does she know, for example, that abortion has been linked with subsequent problems such as more difficult pregnancies and deliveries, congenital deformations, ectopic pregnancies, psychological problems, suicidal tendencies, et cetera?

Even though such problems are not common, we cannot say that "it only happens to others" and no woman can say beforehand that she will be spared.

On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, abortion is not an exclusively male or female issue; it concerns an entire people that is in danger of disappearing sooner or later if its children, the hope of the future, keep getting killed.

In Quebec, for example, there are only 1.4 children per family, whereas it would take at least 2.1 to maintain the population. I repeat, Mr. Speaker, that a society which has no more hope, no more desire to perpetuate itself is bound to disappear shortly.

The bill now before us must be compatible with the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in the Morgentaler case. However, this decision does not prevent Parliament from prescribing penalties that would forbid abortion at any stage of pregnancy, unless continuing the pregnancy would endanger the mother's life or health. In this case, most judges said unequivocally that choosing a criterion based on the protection of life and health is not incompatible with the right to security of the person guaranteed by the Charter. Physical, mental or psychological health: a woman who really wants an abortion or believes that it is the only way out for her can easily find herself in one of these three categories, with this bill. That is just what I have trouble with.

While I realize the need to legislate abortion to make it accessible in certain cases, I cannot accept all the terms of the bill. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I fear that with the present terminology, refusing abortion will become the exception, whereas abortion itself should be an exception.

And now we are back at the starting point, the basis of a responsible society which, far beyond its rights and freedoms, would assert its obligations and responsibilities.

But society needs tools, and it is the role of the state to ensure that all citizens can live and grow in a climate of freedom, balanced by rights and responsibilities that must be respected. The role of a responsible government is also to provide everyone with social measures to meet all needs.

The State should open up other avenues, to provide hope and suggest positive and viable solutions.

Mr. Speaker, we see the despair of women faced with an unwanted pregnancy and we also see the despair of thousands of Canadian couples whom nature has not endowed with the gift of fertility. These couples would have no hesitation in spending nine months helping a pregnant woman who cannot keep her child. Mr. Speaker, from a strictly objective point of view, adoption is certainly the most positive and most equitable answer. It releases the natural mother from a responsibility she is not able to assume, and more than meets the expectations of couples who until then had no hope of becoming parents. And I think adoption is a unique opportunity to overcome despair by giving the gift of unselfish generosity.

I realize that many women worry that they will not be able to give up their child if they carry it to term, and they think it will be less painful to have an abortion. This is where we have a responsibility to counsel and help these women.

Besides caring for his patients, a doctor has an obligation to protect and save lives. What would happen if the doctor became the cornerstone of a system for protecting life, for encouraging the woman who is pregnant and for providing hope for couples who cannot have children? If all those who are pro-life were to make a common effort, many solutions would emerge and many lives would be saved. It would mean an ongoing presence at the doctor's office in the form of appropriate literature, resource persons to support and counsel the pregnant mother, a database with names of prospective parents, and so forth. All these couples who despair of ever having children would be delighted to help contribute to the life-creating process.

As a member of a Christian society and of this government, I feel responsible for protecting life. I think it is time we dropped intransigence and systematic opposition in favour of understanding and compromise. It is time society realized where its responsibilities lie, otherwise the state will have to take charge of our collective conscience.

Mr. Speaker, I hope the definition of health will be amended to make it more restrictive. I believe that every doctor who is asked to do an abortion should immediately suggest another alternative. Then and only then will women truly have a choice.

Mr. Speaker, I have just explained my philosophy, which reflects the tenets of the Christian conscience and my social conscience, which dictate my behaviour.

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on the issue of abortion and also to speak to Bill C-43.

Let me just say at the outset that I consider abortion one of the most important and difficult issues that we have ever had to face as a legislature. It is also one of the most difficult issues that any individual has to face. We are debating an issue which strikes at the core of our belief system. Every individual who enters the abortion debate brings with him or her a different conception of the meaning of the purpose of life, of our collective existence, and of our society. I for one believe that life begins at conception. All of my religious and rural upbringing has given me a strong respect for the preciousness of life.

Abortion demands and produces more than opinion. It demands and produces belief, and beliefs are what people live for and what some people quite frankly are willing to die for.

I know that all of us in this House understand the depth of the sentiment involved in this debate and of the disagreement within this House and in communities throughout Canada. We see it when we go to our constituencies and talk to Canadians. I have received letters from hundreds of residents throughout Haldimand—Norfolk, each one of them with strong views and each one vastly different from the next.

All those views are represented in this House tonight. The predominant viewpoint and opinion expressed by the people of Haldimand—Norfolk to me is one that leans toward a pro-life meaning.

• (1950)

I have met people from Dunnville. In fact, in my constituency office last Friday I was to meet a small group of people concerned about this issue. Well over 100 people packed into my office. We had a good discussion about the bill because they are concerned about it.

They are concerned about what some people in this House like to call a compromise solution, and they did not believe there was a compromise. It was their point of view that this bill should be defeated. I explained to them my belief that if the bill were defeated after third reading, we would not have another opportunity in this House to debate the issue. I still believe that. I believe that this government is not committed to bringing forth another piece of legislation if this bill is defeated.

I am left with the question as to whether or not this bill goes far enough toward a compromise or whether or not this bill could be amended at report stage in such a way that a compromise solution could be found that would be acceptable to all in this House.

I believe that if I project my views and the amendments proposed by certain members of this House, we are going to get extremes again. I have been talking to different members throughout this House and have looked at the amendments they want to bring in. Quite frankly they are still at the extremes. I believe that if a bill is going to come out of this, we are going to have to compromise. That would mean that I would have to compromise my beliefs and that many members of this House will have to compromise theirs too.

But I feel that it is important to have a piece of legislation on the books because some law is better than no law. I believe that if we defeat this motion at second reading we will have no law and that the rights of the foetus will not be protected.

What we are talking about tonight is what is right and what is wrong, and who decides this issue? I believe that we as a legislature must decide. Our decision must be based on the full exercise of our collective mental and spiritual capabilities.

I do not believe that it is preferable for Parliament to stay out of the abortion debate. In fact, I do not believe it is possible to stay out of the abortion debate. We are dealing with the fundamental rights of human beings. If we do not decide, we are saying that we believe that somebody else should. With the depth of belief on abortion and the depth of opposition on abortion, I do not believe that anyone else can decide but the highest court in the land—Parliament.

To abdicate our responsibility to legislate on abortion would have just as much impact on the lives of Canadians as accepting and fulfilling our capacity to legislate. We need to find a solution that is workable, and by that I mean one that the majority of us here in this House with our strongly held beliefs can support. Unfortunately, I believe that the bill we have before us in its present form fails in its attempt to provide a workable solution.

I have heard many of my colleagues in this House observe that in a perfect world we would not have to legislate on abortion. In a perfect world every pregnancy would be a wanted pregnancy. A world of only wanted pregnancies could come about in two ways as I see it. Birth control, if accessible and safe enough for all women and men, would allow for absolute control over

our reproductive capacities. Every pregnancy would, therefore, be out of choice.

To say that every pregnancy would be a wanted pregnancy would also mean that our society, if more supportive of women, if more developed in its ability to provide for the financial and emotional well-being of every pregnant woman, every mother and child, would demonstrate a collective responsibility for our children.

This is not a perfect world and in terms of recognizing our collective responsibility for children, it is unjustifiably far from being a perfect world.

When we talk of abortion, of the rights of the mother and the rights of the foetus, we must recognize that giving birth, creating life, is a unique occurrence in our lives and it creates equally unique emotional ties.

The relationship between a mother and child is one of dependancy. The child is dependant on the mother for life but the mother in turn is dependent on her child, on her immediate surroundings and on society at large for support. In turn, we in society are dependent on children. They are our future.

I believe that we as a society have failed to recognize our interdependency. Too often, women who have children bear the responsibility on their own. Single mothers still face emotional and financial hardship.

I do not believe that abortion is the answer. While I believe that we have a responsibility to protect the rights of the pregnant woman, I do not believe that open access to abortion is in the best interests of anyone in the long run.

I do not believe that this bill contributes in any positive way to addressing the problems that exist *vis-à-vis* the rights of women and society's interests in the protection of the foetus.

This bill is nothing close to what I feel would represent a compromise. The bill gives only the most empty recognition of society's interests in protecting the rights of the foetus. While recognizing that abortion is not condoned by society, it proceeds to negate this principle by allowing abortion at any stage of pregnancy.

This bill represents an amendment to the criminal code and yet the maximum sentence is two years. If the bill purports to see unjustified abortion as a crime, then I think higher possible sentences are necessary.

The bill also fails to make a distinction between illegal abortions performed by medical practitioners and non-licensed practitioners. I do not feel that the bill's provision for abortion to be performed on the determination of one medical doctor is sufficient for an objective determination. I believe that this bill's failure to define what is meant by health when determining a legal basis for abortion would have serious repercussions were it to become law.

I will not be supporting this bill. It gives no substantive recognition to the rights of the foetus and is therefore not an acceptable compromise.

The justice minister has said that while some amendments would be possible, amendments which would substantively alter the bill would not be welcome. If providing for the protection of the foetus can be seen to so alter this so-called compromise bill, then the government must admit that it has failed and it must find a workable bill.

I call upon this government to present a bill to the House which would truly strike a balance for the rights of women and the rights of the foetus. Hopefully, with amendments after second reading which address the main issue of the rights of the foetus to survive, the right to life of the foetus, I believe that possibly we could get a compromise in this House.

This bill goes nowhere toward giving that compromise and I cannot at this time, in any way, support it, though I will continue to look at the issue. I will continue to discuss with my colleagues on all sides of the House what they feel to be compromise solutions and what they feel can be done to this bill to make it more workable. Quite frankly, I do not see this bill as a compromise. I do not see it protecting the rights of the foetus. If it stays this way, if there are no changes after second reading, if this

government is not willing to accept amendments then I will not support this bill on third reading.

Hon. Shirley Martin (Minister of State (Transport)): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this topic tonight with less enthusiasm than I have brought to any other duty that I have had as a minister or as a member of this House.

Like so many of my colleagues, I wish that this decision had been someone else's responsibility but it is not. This is an issue that has afforded me more personal anguish than any other debate in which I have participated in my five years in this House.

• (2000)

When the Supreme Court struck down the previous law on abortion almost two years ago, we tried here in this House to build a framework upon which society could arbitrate this clash of fundamental rights. We failed. Now we find ourselves facing this question again, and perhaps this is appropriate.

Thousands of Canadians each year face the dilemma of an unplanned pregnancy and for them it is not an issue that they can avoid, it is an immediate and a pressing problem.

In the last two years we have watched as private citizens found themselves before the courts of law and before a far more brutal court of public opinion and media exposure. It is hardly appropriate that we should stand by while young people confront an intrusive review of their personal lives and motivations when they seek to define their rights under the law.

Abortion has been an issue of debate in my riding through two national elections. Indeed, even in the election of 1988, when free trade filled the newspapers and the nightly news broadcasts in Hamilton, Stoney Creek, Grimsby and Lincoln, the issue I heard about most often at the front door of thousands of homes was abortion.

In those two national campaigns, while there was no clear consensus in my region, there were a number of points upon which my constituents clearly agreed. First among these was the clear message that abortion should not be considered as an alternative method of birth control.

Second, the role of a doctor was seen by most people as essential to ensure about the safe medical procedure and also a degree of professional counsel for the individual making this difficult decision.

Finally, the people of my region clearly believed that Parliament has a role, a duty to provide leadership and to attempt to fashion as best it could a compromise which respects the rights and the views of everyone concerned.

I believe that this bill meets these conditions and that the vast majority of people in the communities throughout my riding will agree that this bill is as good a compromise as could be created with the deeply divided environment which surrounds this discussion.

Clearly not everyone supports the concept of compromise. In the last few weeks we have heard many voices raised against this bill. Some pro-choice supporters, such as the New Democratic Party sitting opposite, will vote en bloc against this bill because it does not provide abortion on demand. The leader of the NDP has even suggested that the government should deny provinces funding for essential medical services unless they agree to guarantee the availability of abortion services.

On the other hand, there are voices arguing with great sincerity that the right to life is pre-eminent and that Parliament's paramount duty is to protect that right even when it collides with other rights. Is this an option open to us? Could Parliament move today to ban abortion altogether?

The judgment of the Supreme Court indicates clearly that to do so would be simply to invite another successful challenge under the Charter of Rights.

We should remember that in the landmark Morgentaler decision, Chief Justice Dickson wrote:

> Forcing a woman, by threat of criminal sanction, to carry a foetus to term— is a profound interference with a woman's body and thus an infringement of the security of the person.

This government does not support or encourage abortion. Indeed, in this bill we will make it a criminal offence to perform an abortion except in the consideration of a threat to the health of a woman. We believe that a qualified medical practitioner is the appropriate person to judge this question and, in stating that, we put

our trust in the ethics and judgment of the women and men of Canada's medical community.

My colleague, the Minister of National Health and Welfare, in speaking to this bill made it clear that the government will redouble its effort to help Canadians avoid unplanned pregnancies and the agonizing choices that follow.

As a woman and as a mother, I know that women who choose to have an abortion do not make the decision lightly. In many cases, the individuals may feel that no alternative exists because of their economic or social situation. We owe it to these people to do whatever we can to help them avoid the problem in the first place and to provide all the possible alternatives to abortion in cases where unplanned pregnancies have occurred.

The Minister of National Health and Welfare mentioned some of these measures that are planned. They include increased research into family planning, including contraception, continued funding of Planned Parenthood of Canada and measures to encourage more pregnant women to consider adoption.

We must remember that young people in Canada today are exposed to a far more chaotic social environment than the one which most of the members in this House experienced. If we do not take steps as a society to provide greater stability and to support the individual, we can scarcely be surprised when that individual faces problems which might not occur if the educational, religious and family systems were all as effective as we would like them to be.

In two elections I told the people of my region that I did not believe in abortion as a method of birth control, but that I could not support legislation that took away the right of a woman or, where necessary, parents of an under-aged child to make a decision, no matter how painful, to end a pregnancy. This is a matter for a woman in consultation with her doctor and with the guidance of her God. This bill is consistent with that belief and I would urge the House to support it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. David Berger (Saint-Henri—Westmount): Mr. Speaker, like all my colleagues in this House I have been flooded with letters and phone calls from my constituents. Admittedly, opinions are diametrically opposed on the issue of abortion. Some firmly believe that life begins at conception and have urged me to support a legislative measure which would be aimed at protecting the foetus right from the moment of conception. Others do not share that view. I respect the opinion of each individual.

I listened with interest to the remarks made on this subject by all Members of the House who have also heard from their constituents.

I recall the comments of the Minister of State for Employment and Immigration, the Member for Rimouski-Témiscouata, who told us about a family father who said he was in favour of this Bill but who, to his 13-year-old daughter who asked him what he would do if she came home pregnant, replied: If you chose to interrupt pregnancy we would take all available means. On the other hand, if you wished to keep the child we would want you to lead a normal and happy life and we would help you raise the child as if he or she were our own.

I should like to direct a question to Members of the House. If a young girl in such circumstances decided to interrupt pregnancy, would we be right to say that she is committing a crime? Are we justified to make a young girl of 13 or 14 a possible accomplice of a crime for having obtained an abortion if she does not meet the requirements of this legislation?

• (2010)

Because, if I am not mistaken, that is what could happen with the bill we are considering today.

Mr. Speaker, one of the principles of democratic societies is that the state should not tell everyone what to do. Therefore the state must allow every woman to choose freely according to her own philosophy or her own religious beliefs.

[*English*]

It has long been accepted in western society that individual rights are the basis of our concept of human dignity and liberal democracy. I voted for the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1981 because I believed that the courts had a role to play in defining the rights of Canadians and in setting limits to governmental action.

In the Morgentaler decision, Madam Justice Wilson puts it this way: "The rights guaranteed in the Charter erect around each individual, metaphorically speaking, an invisible fence over which the state will not be

allowed to trespass. The role of the courts is to map out, piece by piece, the parameters of the fence".

Respect for individual decision-making in matters of fundamental personal importance is how Madam Justice Wilson summarizes the philosophy underlining the Charter and indeed our democratic traditions. She decides that these rights apply to women and, in particular, to a woman's decision to terminate a pregnancy.

She explains why only a woman can make this decision in language which I feel bears repeating in this House:

> This decision is one that will have profound psychological, economic and social consequences for the pregnant woman. The circumstances giving rise to it can be complex and varied and there may be, and usually are powerful considerations militating in opposite directions. It is a decision that deeply affects the way the woman thinks about herself and her relationship to others and to society at large. It is not just a medical decision; it is a profound social and ethical one as well. Her response to it will be the response of the whole person.

I agree with Madam Justice Wilson that a woman's decision to terminate her pregnancy is a fundamental human right protected by the charter and by her democratic traditions. This bill denies this right and therefore I cannot support it.

Indeed, the bill makes abortion illegal. Rather than assuring access to safe abortion services throughout Canada, the government reduces access by threatening doctors with criminal action. It makes women possible accessories to a crime. It invites third party interventions. It fails to address prevention or unwanted pregnancies. It is a given that we all want to reduce the numbers of abortions but this bill will not reduce the numbers of abortion. Every year there are about 360,000 births and about 65,000 abortions in Canada. I do not think that any member of this House can seriously maintain that we can significantly reduce the number of abortions by prohibition or by criminalizing abortion. I would remind hon. members abortions are illegal in Ireland but that that country has one of the highest abortion rates in the world. To reduce the number of abortions we have to on the one hand reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies and on the other hand ensure that women who decide to carry their pregnancy to term know that they are doing so in a supportive environment.

The only effective tool for the prevention of unwanted pregnancies is education, particularly for our most vulnerable group, the young. As a society we must address prevention in an active fashion. We must increase education about responsible sexuality. We must increase the involvement of men in family planning and support continued research into acceptable and safe birth control measures for both men and women.

I certainly agree that the state has a legitimate interest in protecting potential children and members of society but this rings hollow when women cannot find adequate day care, when single parent women are among the poorest people in Canada and when one in six Canadian children is being raised in poverty.

Hon. Alan Redway (Minister of State (Housing)): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words in connection with Bill C-43, an act with respect to abortion. It is a matter which is very controversial and very sensitive.

My own views on this subject are very well known indeed. As you may be aware, I was nominated to stand for Parliament back in 1982. I spent some two years going door to door in my constituency and at many of those doors I was asked the question where I stood on this issue. On each and every occasion I indicated that I stood on the pro-life side of the issue.

That was not the last time that my views were made known because during the last term of Parliament I frequently rose in this House and made statements on the subject, all of which reflected my own views and personal beliefs, that of a pro-life position. I might say that about a year ago, last Christmas, I was nominated by a well-known radio broadcaster in the city of Toronto as the creep of the year as a result of my pro-life position. I base my own position very clearly on what I think and believe are undisputed medical facts with respect to this matter.

First of all, as I understand it, and I do not believe it is disputed in any way medically or scientifically, immediately upon the union of a man's sperm with a woman's egg, that is fertilization, cellular development begins. Second, the sex is determined at the single cell stage by the X and Y chromosomes carried in the father's sperm cell. At the single cell stage the egg is alive and is human

and has a sex, either male or female. It immediately begins the growth process which continues from then on until adulthood.

Third, in the first week the division of the cells continue. Next, after 18 days the heartbeat can be detected. At 30 days, the foundations of the brain, spinal cord, nerves and sense organs are complete. There are eyes, ears, a mouth, kidneys, a liver and blood circulation. At 43 days brain waves can be detected. At six weeks nerves and muscles begin working together, the skeleton is fully formed but made of cartilage. Lips become sensitive to the touch. At seven weeks all internal organs are present. The stomach produces digestive juices, the liver manufactures red blood cells, the kidneys eliminate uric acid from the blood; the legs, ankles and toes are formed.

• (2020)

At eight weeks, lines of the hands develop that will remain as a distinctive feature throughout the entire life of an individual. At eight and a half weeks, the child squints, the fingers close into a fist if the palm is touched.

At 10 weeks the thyroid and adrenalin glands function. At 12 weeks, the child kicks, turns his feet and curls and fans his toes, swallows, inhales, exhales, sucks its thumb. From 16 to 20 weeks hair grows on the head, eyebrows and eyelashes appear, the child sleeps and wakes and it can be roused from sleep by external noises. And from there on, as you are well aware, it continues to grow and to mature.

In addition to that, the medical profession is now able to operate on the brain and urinary tract of an unborn child and a foetus can be kept alive in a hospital outside the mother's womb just 26 weeks from conception. I do not believe that any of those facts are in dispute by anyone, whether a scientist or a member of this House. No matter what side he be on, I have never heard anyone dispute those facts. It is on that basis that I have come to my own position, a pro-life position.

What we have before us tonight, Bill C-43, is a bill that has been arrived at after an awful lot of discussion and an awful lot of debate. Mr. Speaker, you are aware as I am of a good deal of that debate.

For me, it began in the last term of Parliament. It was one that caused an awful lot of emotion and concern within the government caucus, it was one that was the subject of very lengthy debates. It was one that was subject not only to very lengthy debates but very emotional debates; debates in which each and every person on each and every conceivable side of this issue put their views very strongly, very firmly, very forcibly and very passionately.

It was not just within the government caucus. Certainly the same process took place within cabinet, within committees of caucus and within the caucus itself. Out of that has come this bill, Bill C-43.

There are certain aspects of this bill which I find appealing. This bill, for instance, makes the inducing of an abortion an offence under the Criminal Code. It also rejects the gestational approach to abortion and it recognizes implicitly, although not explicitly, the right to life from conception.

The problems that I have with this bill, as many other people have, is that unfortunately the bill's exemptions are far wider than I want. You know and I know and members of this House and the public know that the Prime Minister has said that in spite of their personal views all cabinet ministers must vote for this bill. I have wrestled with that issue very long and very hard. I spent a good many sleepless nights on this issue and I want to tell you I have not finished wrestling with it. I continue to wrestle with this issue.

I am one who believes that this bill needs quite a few amendments. Many have been suggested and I know that if and when it goes to committee there will be a number of amendments put forward.

There has been one in particular that I put forward the last time this matter was debated in this House in 1988. It has to do with the health care workers and a conscience clause for health care workers.

You may or may not remember that in the debate of 1988 on this subject, I indicated that I felt very strongly that any legislation with respect to abortion should include a conscience clause. That is a clause that would deal with the question of a health care worker's conscience. Many doctors, nurses and other health care workers firmly believe that in caring for pregnant women they actually have two patients, a mother and her unborn child. They do not want to participate in a procedure to terminate a pregnancy because it would conflict with their own moral beliefs and moral values.

There are many hospitals that recognize and respect those views of health care workers. The ones that do permit health care workers to arrange their assignments to exclude participation in abortion procedures. However, there is no legal obligation at the moment and, to the best of my knowledge, there never has been a legal obligation for a hospital not to discriminate against a health care worker who refuses to assist in an abortion.

That is not the case in other countries. In at least 44 states of the United States and in the United Kingdom there is such a conscience clause. It is written into the legislation to protect health care workers in this sort of a situation. Section 4 of the British Abortion Act of 1967 states:

> Subject to subsection (2) of this section, no person shall be under any duty, whether by contract or by any statutory or other legal requirement, to participate in any treatment authorized by this Act to which he has a conscientious objection:
>
> Provided that in any legal proceeding the burden of proof of conscientious objection shall rest on the person claiming to rely on it.

I fervently hope that if this bill is passed in principle on second reading that there will be opportunity for that sort of amendment to be put, passed and carried because there is real concern out there on the part of health care workers about this issue.

I notice that you are already indicating that my time is drawing nigh. I have two or three other points I would like to make, very briefly. I hope with your indulgence and the indulgence of the House I can do that.

In the first case, I want to say that in the short five years I have been in this House I have seen some spectacular things done in changing bills in committee. I have not been a member of too many legislative committees, but in the ones I have been a member of I have seen some really spectacular things done in the way of changes. One of them, the Shipping Conferences Act, I can remember was changed entirely. The whole concept changed entirely from the day it was introduced into this House until the day it came out of that committee and finally was passed, in an entirely different form than it went in.

I remember being a member of another legislative committee on amendments to the Criminal Code. At that time it was suggested we should add another amendment which would allow for the introduction of a new offence, war crimes. That was rejected by the Parliamentary committee. Shortly after, almost instantaneously, and before the Parliamentary committee reported, the Deschênsne Royal Commission was appointed and out of that came an amendment to the Criminal Code dealing with war crimes. So I do not believe that there are very many things that are not possible to be done in this House and to be done by a committee if there is goodwill on all sides.

• (2030)

I believe that at this stage, notwithstanding my views, it is premature for us to decide whether this bill is good, bad or indifferent. I believe that we should see what happens when it does go to committee. It may very well be that an entirely different bill will come out of committee.

The government has indicated that this may not be the case. But, who knows. I am one who believes there should be changes made. I fervently believe that there should be changes made in this Bill C–43. I fervently hope that we will see those changes made and amendments put at committee.

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, I rise in this debate, I think as all members do, taking this issue and this debate very seriously. It has meant a lot to many of us in our election campaigns, and much of the discussions that we have had with our constituents concerning Bill C–43, an act regarding abortion that the government has introduced. It deals with a very important issue that we take seriously, and I think I could speak for many members.

In our election campaigns, when we are asked for our stand and our position on abortion, probably most of us in this House take the time to let our constituents know exactly where we do stand. It is because we owe our constituents, on this very important issue, an opinion and advice so that they know, when they are voting for us or against us, where we stand on this issue.

I can safely say that I support my party's position on this legislation. It is the same as my own personal view when it comes to abortion. The debate has been led by our critic in this area, the member for New Westminster—Burnaby. As well, I had the opportunity to read

the excellent speech made by our leader, the hon. member for Oshawa the other day.

Our party has been clear on its position. That does not always mean it has been an easy position to take, because for many people, this issue goes perhaps to the root of some of the many concerns that they have.

Let us take a look at the legislation that the government has introduced. What is Bill C–43? The bill is an amendment to the Criminal Code that prohibits abortion at all stages of pregnancy unless a doctor decides that the continuation of the pregnancy would threaten the woman's physical, psychological or mental health. Doctors can be charged with an indictable offence subject to the penalty of imprisonment for up to two years.

We have been told in this House that the cabinet must support the bill. We have had some ministers say they will hold on and see just exactly what is going to happen with the legislation.

Our party stands proudly on our position, a well thought out one I might add as well, because of the work done by our caucus, the people who work behind the scenes and our critic as well.

What does the bill do that we find offensive in not dealing with the issue? I think that is part of the context of the comments that I would like to make. What does this legislation not do?

First of all, the bill reduces access to abortion by threatening doctors with criminal penalties unless some vaguely defined health criteria are met. It really ignores the whole issue of unwanted pregnancies.

We on this side of the House have suggested that the Canada Health Act was supported by members on the other side, the government side. When that legislation was introduced in the House, you will remember, there was some discussion at that time whether the Conservative members would actually support that legislation.

I spent some time looking at what the Canada Health Act is not doing with this legislation. It is punitive legislation and it does not get at the root of the problem. What is there in the family planning unit within Health and Welfare Canada? One position. Funding to planned parenthood is being cut.

The way to deal with problems like abortion and not have the extremes of debate is to deal with it in a preventive way. How can we do that?

What we do not have in this legislation or other legislation that might be brought before the House are changes that through the Canada Health Act can become the vehicle by which the government can deal with the question of access to abortion. This is a very important question, not just for those members who represent large metropolitan areas like Toronto where if a woman has a need for an abortion, it might be available. But what about the communities across this country that do not have that access? It is easy for someone from Toronto to have that access, but much more difficult for a woman in Prince Edward Island.

Equal access is guaranteed or should be guaranteed to us under the Charter of Rights in our Canadian Constitution. What can the Canada Health Act do? What I would suggest is, as our leader has very clearly pointed out, use the measures in that legislation to ensure that women across the country have equal access to abortion, when necessary.

I come from a province where the premier is wont to shove his ideas down our throats. Yet you must balance that against some very informative and thoughtful speeches, not just in this House, but elsewhere. I am reminded of the speech made by the Governor of New York, Mario Cuomo, who had to debate the merits as a practising Catholic with what that meant to him as a legislator. I recommend that article. It is an important one because it debates the issue that we in this House must deal with now as we debate this legislation.

On health care planning right now, there is a need to have a major federal–provincial review to look at the kind of work that we can do in this country both between the federal government and the provinces to ensure that we can have proper family life programs.

Because I do not think he understands, I think we should get the premier of our province before a committee here so he can learn and try to understand some of the problems and difficulties that many women have across this country. I think there is an obligation on the part of the federal government to ensure that he does understand, and in that case the provincial government of B.C. would bring in the necessary legislation and rules

to ensure that we do have equal access across not only our province but across the country.

This legislation, Bill C–43, is a set–back for the women of Canada. The government is suggesting to us that the bill is a compromise, that somehow government members have found a way to weave their way through the courts. I would suggest quite the opposite is going to happen. Perhaps there is some sinister scenario from the Prime Minister's office to introduce this legislation, in the hope that it will fail so then he can say that he attempted to deal with it but, of course, he will attempt to blame Parliament for not being able to pass this legislation.

When we do vote on this legislation at second reading we will see what support there is, if any, from the government members to ensure that this legislation is not passed because the bill is not going to help solve any of the problems we have with health care and with the unwanted pregnancies in Canada.

I want to just wrap up on what I think is a related issue. Our leader has recently been speaking about the incidence of child poverty in this country. I believe it is on the agenda to be debated tomorrow in this House. I think that is part of the package that we must look at and decide what we want to do. We must take a holistic approach to health care. This legislation is not that. We are not getting that from this government and we have many steps to go yet before we can see the kind of open and fair access to health services, including abortion, across this country that we need.

• (2040)

I know that this is not going to be the end of this debate in the House or throughout this country. We will be debating this for some time to come. That is our duty. That is why we have been elected.

I think all of us are taking this discussion and debate very seriously and we will certainly when we are back home in our ridings be explaining our position. That is our obligation. It is my obligation, I believe, given my own position and our party's position, to oppose this legislation.

Ms. Ethel Blondin (Western Arctic): Mr. Speaker, through you, I take this opportunity to address Canadians and my northern constituents of the Western Arctic. I speak to this issue after much deliberation, soul–searching and examination of the implications of Bill C–43.

I have been listening to the tortured reasoning and qualifications of many on why to support or vote against this bill. I am not a doctor or a lawyer. Those are not my orientations and I suppose in a sense that would be reason enough in many minds to disqualify much of what I would render as my position, but I say not.

This is not just a legal issue. It is indeed the most profound moral dilemma with which I have ever had to come to terms. This is not just a legal or a medical issue or strictly a woman's issue. This is a human issue with which we are all struggling.

How do I, as a woman of the eighties and nineties, young, and I guess by some standards, progressive, upwardly mobile and career oriented, approach this issue? I know that my first commitment to society as a person is truth and decency. I cannot be hypocritical to save face or to advance my personal political goals and aspirations. That in my mind would be deceitful. I have indeed struggled to find common ground and I have retreated to a place of truth for myself, who I am and what are the values and principles that guide me that I brought to this complex political process.

I am a woman, a mother of three wonderful people, a Dene from the Dene nation in the Northwest Territories, a member for the Western Arctic and, of course, a Canadian federal parliamentarian. All these roles bear each a certain responsibility, sometimes conflicting.

I would be dishonest to say that I could expound a profound legal sense of this issue but my greatest expertise in all these roles is not just being a woman or just being a Member of Parliament, but for 38 years of my life I have been, I was born a Dene and I will always be a Dene. I know in my mind and heart and for the sake of common decency what that means. I do not have to read or research that subject. I know what the issue of life means to those people, the Dene, my people. This is not to say that I do not want to represent or try not to represent the best that I can all the other people in my riding.

On this issue, this is a subject that I know well within the context of my own culture and my own people. It has been a profound guide in all of my struggles, joys, failures, successes and hardships. Rather than to speak of things I know not well, I will speak of how my views are certainly a reflection of the utmost importance given

to life by my people. I know that that essentially overrides everything else.

My people are not dinosaurs ignoring life's problems. We understand change. We know not only change through a natural process but through imposition many times. We know that there are problems faced by many of our people. We understand disparity. We have understood that for hundreds of years, even thousands. We do not compartmentalize life just as it relates to people. Life is viewed in terms of who you are, what you believe and even how you relate to such issues as the land.

During the Berger inquiry of the early 1970s, Mr. Richard Nerysoo, now the Speaker of the Government of the Northwest Territories, said:

> It is very clear to me that it is an important and special thing to be an Indian.

He meant to be a Dene.

> Being an Indian means being able to understand and live with this world in a very special way. It means living with the land, with the animals, with the birds and the fish, as though they were your sisters and brothers. It means saying the land is an old friend, an old friend your father knew, your grandfather knew, indeed your people have always known—we see our land as much, much more than the white man sees it. To the Indian people our land really is our life. If our land is destroyed, we too are destroyed. If your people take our land you will be taking our life.

This is one statement of how much value life has even as it is expressed in the way life encompasses the land and what it means to our people and how valuable it is.

Where does the love of life, the joy of life, the sanctity of life, the reverence for life come from? How is it nurtured? There are enough theories, I suppose, but I venture to say as a student of my Dene elders that life is the most valuable gift we the Dene feel we are given.

I as a woman and we as women in my culture are viewed as the nurturers, the protectors, the bearers of a special gift called life and men, our companions, are bestowed the privilege of sharing in this experience. This may sound idyllic. However, it is our world view, it is our code of life.

This is not a newly found Christian ethic we have adopted. It is a world view that we have held to because our struggle for survival has been so severe and so harsh in many circumstances. We have faced rejection, alienation, colonialization, oppression and possible extermination beyond our control but we survived. Our people have been our greatest resource, our determination to hang on to life our greatest strength.

Listen to some of the views of my elders. They are far more eloquent on their views than I am. A lady by the name of Margaret Sabourin from Fort Providence says:

> When I married, my husband and I travelled far together by dogteam. We had two children and it was my greatest sadness when they died and no more children were born to us.

These people were constantly faced with tragic circumstances. Baptiste Gardan, another elder from the same community, said:

> My mother died when I was a baby and still nursing. How I used to cry for my mother's milk but my father couldn't do a thing about that. You couldn't buy milk then so I was given flour boiled in moose milk and marrow to suck on. I was so hungry I would cry all the time.

So much hardship to continue living. Elise Bonnetrouge, another woman, said:

> I never knew my father. He died when I was very young, leaving my mother to bring up my younger brother and me by herself. Then my brother died and my mother couldn't work any longer. There was only me to take care of her. As I held her, to change her bed of moss, she died in my arms. Now I was quite alone, without food and unable to fend for myself.

Maybe, just maybe because death was always such a close companion of my people, life was such a welcome friend.

The struggle of women in 1989 is not a new one. You have to listen to the words of women from my culture who are older women, the elderly women. Elise Gargan of Fort Providence said:

> Life was especially hard for the women. When the man is away the woman has to feed the children. No matter how cold it was I had to check the snares. Before I left the children, I had to tie a leather thong around the waist of one and tie the end to something stable, put another in the swing cradle, and leave the eldest to watch them all. That's how we used to live. The low points in my life were hunger and sickness. We didn't know how to help each other when there was sickness and there was no doctor. Sometimes we boiled herbs, sometimes just thinking of getting better helps you overcome. When you're out in the bush you sometimes experience real physical pain. It was especially difficult giving birth. Sometimes you don't know what you have to do. You are very thankful if your child is alive.

So few resources, so few options, so much hunger and sickness. How did the temptation to give up escape these people? How did they manage for generations to pass on this value placed on life?

• (2050)

It may be that when your constant companion is despair and uncertainty, the will to live and cherish life is much greater. Another aspect may be the enormous individual and collective losses my people experienced during epidemics and even the experience of harsh circumstances during childbirth. Adeline Constant of Fort Providence says:

> After I was married I had fifteen children. I have only five boys and two girls left to me now. The worst time in my life was when I came close to death. I was with child and went out to check my snares. I became ill and my baby was born dead on the trail. All my children were born on the land except one who was born in the mission.

Now having heard all that, I am sure people are saying, "Come on, wake up, it is 1989 and we all have to move on". Well, my people have moved on. These people have moved on but they have not left their minds, their hearts, their souls and their value for life behind. Their value for life is intact.

I know skeptics and critics will say, "What about the number of abortions being procured by young native women in the north?" I say, "What about all the other social maladies that also exist?" Those statistics are a huge indication of how much work we have to do.

We are not going to be excused from dealing with these problems just by passing legislation. This will not deal with the problems that face men, women and children in dire straits who need our help. We need action from the powers that be to make changes, to put forth the resources and the political will behind programs and policies to aid those that are in need.

Mr. Speaker, I say, through you, to my fellow Canadians: Dear Canada, we have a huge problem, a complex, divisive problem, one that great minds, hearts and souls have struggled over, legal minds have tangled over, and more experienced and talented politicians have debated. Such wisdom and eloquence, and yet no resolution, no consensus.

This human issue of life is more than just that, it is indeed a social dilemma that has virtually stumped the political process and all that engage in it. It is the debate of our very essence, I believe, maybe even our very existence. We have come closer to accepting our differences but no closer to altering or breaching the values and principles that guide us in our work and our lives.

It is extremely naive to think that we do not bring any bias to the process and that we have come unfettered by our experiences, our education, our close human associations and relationships, our distinct cultural ties. We are all different and the agony of each person is to find a balance that we can live with as being fair.

We are essentially forced into a corner, not just by the current legislation but the issue itself and the demands of the public. I can only say that we have to demonstrate courage to express our position.

My position is one for life. I choose life. I do not belong to the pro–life movement, but I belong to a people who believe that life is sacred and always have under the harshest of circumstances.

I also believe in people who are willing to take the unwanted; I believe in the people who adopt. I am an adopted child. I celebrate my mother and I am the oldest of 15 children. I celebrate my mother because she brought 15 of us into this world, under the harshest of circumstances, with great poverty and difficulty. I celebrate my aunt, my stepbrothers, and my stepsisters because they adopted me. I am a wanted person and I think I have given back to those people what they have invested in me.

I celebrate my people because they are willing to share and they are willing to value a human life and to give it a chance to grow and to nurture it. I celebrate the people who put me here, who have entrusted their votes to me, and I hope that I can, and more than on just this issue, represent them as fairly as I can. But this is indeed a huge dilemma for me and I have struggled with this as many of you have.

We, as parliamentarians and Canadians, have been faced in the past with the consequences of faulty legislation that excludes the rights, ignores the rights and even erodes the rights of groups and individuals, victimizing people who need representation. I cannot support this legislation, such as it is. I cannot take the chance of having this legislation pass. I will vote against it. But I can tell you once more, that for my people, children are

important, people are important, and life is the most valuable gift you are given.

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, my personal concern about abortion, as a member of Parliament, dates back to May 29, 1980, when I raised in this House my concern about Dr. Morgentaler opening up an abortion clinic in Champlain, Montreal, and my disappointment as a politician that the federal government could not do anything to close the clinics. The Minister of Justice at the time said this was a provincial matter and it would be up to the police of Quebec to lay the charges. Well, we know what has happened since 1980.

My question is, will Bill C-43 respecting abortion stop the Morgentalers of this country. If it will not, then I say no to this bill.

Why was I so concerned about the Morgentaler abortions and others? Abortion kills a defenceless human being. The unborn child is a human being and as such is entitled to the full protection of the law of the land for all human beings.

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops made an excellent statement on the sanctity of life in their response to the Law Reform Commission Working Paper on Crimes against the Foetus. They said that all human life must be valued, respected and protected, from conception until natural death. All human life, without exception, is sacred, irreplaceable and inherently worthy of protection and respect.

I would like to quote our own Prime Minister and his position on the sanctity of life. He said in this House:

> It is wrong to take life. I can think of no circumstances except self-defence to justify it—we hold for the sanctity of life— But for all else who uphold one simple principle: the inherent dignity of a human being, the inherent worth of human life. I will resist with all my strength, all of my life, any action that would diminish that reality and would lessen value.

If you believe in a principle, that principle should hold whether we are participating in a debate on capital punishment or on abortion. I campaigned as a pro-life candidate in the last election, but I promised my constituents that regardless of my personal beliefs, I would try to reflect their views, their wishes in this Parliament.

I did an extensive poll on the issue of abortion, whether we need a bill at all, and other related issues. I would like to place on the record in this House some of the findings that I received from my constituents of Parkdale—High Park.

To the basic question, do you feel there is a need for an abortion law in Canada, I did not get any clear direction even to that basic question, as 50.6 per cent said yes, 44.2 per cent said no, and 5.2 per cent had no opinion.

To the question, would you feel comfortable with an abortion law that would allow for abortions only under certain circumstances, here also there was no consensus; 50 per cent said yes; 47.4 per cent said no.

To the question, should any of the following circumstances be included in a law: rape or incest; women's health threatened by pregnancy; women's safety threatened by father; within 12 weeks of conception; child raised in dangerous environment; within 22 weeks of conception, the responses here ranged anywhere from 10 to 24 per cent. Again, there was no clear direction.

• (2100)

In response to the question "Do you feel an abortion law should treat abortion as a criminal offence", I did get direction because 60.3 per cent said no to this question. In other words, 60.3 per cent feel that having an abortion should not be a criminal offence. So if I want to reflect the wishes of my constituents on this bill I would have to vote no. Some 36.4 per cent said yes.

To the question "Should the decision for an abortion be made by the woman and a doctor", which is what this bill says, 30.2 per cent responded in favour. Again, if I were to reflect their wishes in this Parliament, I would have to vote no to the bill. Some 47.6 per cent indicated that the decision for an abortion should be made by the woman acting alone. Only 12.5 per cent said that it should be made by the woman and father.

The comments that people gave me also covered the whole of the spectrum on this issue. A constituent wrote:

> While I personally believe in rights for the foetus, I don't believe I have the right to inflict my views and beliefs on someone else. If a woman is going to get an abortion she is probably going to get it somehow or other, so why make it difficult or unsafe or illegal? Let each decide what is right for their conscience.

On the other end of the spectrum a constituent writes:

> A civilized society does not kill one individual to alleviate another's problems. Canada must have a new law against abortion which will protect unborn children from conception to birth.

The Minister of National Health and Welfare said in his remarks in this debate:

> We have been elected by Canadians to choose the course which best balances the rights of everyone concerned.

Well, Mr. Minister, the rights of everyone concerned must also include those who cannot speak for themselves. The weakness of our Charter of Rights and Freedoms entrenched in the Canadian Constitution is that it does not include protection for the unborn.

I would like to pay tribute tonight to the late Dr. Stanley Hudecki who voted against the Constitution of Canada because it did not have that protection of the unborn built into it.

Many members in this debate used the excuse that because we do not live in an ideal world this bill is the best compromise and they will support it. We are the leaders of this great country. We are the guardians of this planet. If it is not an ideal world, then for heaven's sake is it not our role as legislators to bring in legislation to make this world as close as possible to the ideal world instead of destroying it even more? Again, if we are talking about an ideal world or something close to it, let us build in protection for all minorities including the unborn.

Canada should receive an additional 425,000 children each year. It receives only 360,000 because over 65,000 are aborted each year. What a stigma for a country, one that I am not proud of.

Recently the Prime Minister announced the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies. What he should have established was a royal commission on why so many young mothers see abortion as the only solution to unwanted pregnancies.

Is it because of the lack of child care services and that women are afraid there will be no one to raise the child while they are out working? Or, is it because they are afraid to be caught in a poverty trap? Maybe it is time in our society for our politicians to think more creatively. For example, why can we not guarantee mothers of first and second born children a two-year paid maternity leave?

The Prime Minister should strike a royal commission that would provide recommendations to make adoption more appealing as an alternative to abortion. At present it takes five years to adopt a young child through government sponsored agencies. It takes only three months to adopt through questionable private agencies, and I say questionable because a young couple has to pay an average of $20,000 to adopt a young child. By aborting over 65,000 foetuses each year our society has created a supply management problem on the lives of adoptive children. Bill C-43 will keep the supply of adoptive children down so that the questionable adoption agencies can increase the price per head. That is not my idea of a just society.

To answer the debaters who argue that it is better to abort than have an unwanted child, I say nonsense. Thousands of couples are waiting to become parents through adoption. They will provide the shelter, the love, the security and the education that all children need. I speak as an adoptive parent. I am always reminded that if our daughter's mother would have believed in abortion we would not have Elaine today, a daughter who brings so much love and happiness to the whole family.

I would like to end by asking all hon. members a simple question: How many of us would be here today debating this bill if our mothers believed in abortion?

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address my comments to the legislation before us, Bill C-43, an act respecting abortion. It is not my usual habit to speak from notes, but since this is a very contentious bill and one in which there are subtleties of expression, I have written notes and I wish to refer to them so as not to have my meaning mistaken.

I must say that after only one year in this House I have not found any debate more stimulating than this one on the long awaited subject of abortion. I have found it stimulating because I recognize that more than usual, as each member speaks for him or herself, the truth about who they are as individuals in this place is revealed. It is a very emotional debate reflecting the seriousness of the matter for individual members and their constituents. Elections can be and were won and lost on this issue alone. However, it is also a fact that lives of future

Canadians and lives of mothers are nurtured or lost according to the decisions of this House.

From the outset I want to state clearly that I will be voting against this bill. I will express my reasons why, but first I would like to say that in my conscience I feel confident and totally at ease with my decision concerning this bill.

In fact, I will have to say that it was not a decision that I anguished over for I have addressed this issue and debated it for many years. That long period of discussion and reflection, which was entered into with close friends who fell on both sides of the issue, helped me to clarify and consolidate my views on abortion. I am grateful to my friends, whatever their point of view, for they cared enough about me to discuss this highly sensitive and personal issue with me. I count them all among my friends as I appreciate that each of them holds his or her own position sincerely and thoughtfully from a unique life experience as do I.

Among this group of friends, none like abortion, none are anti-life, none regard this to be a trivial issue whether they fall on one side of the issue or the other.

I mention the ease with which I come to my decision on this bill and some of my background because I have noticed considerable anguish and distress among anti-abortion colleagues on the government side who hold positions similar to mine but who feel compelled to vote in favour of this most unsatisfactory abortion legislation.

I am pleased that in this House, where each member is supposed to vote according to his or her own best judgment on this bill, I indeed can do so and am not coerced into doing otherwise. I must also say that no amount of party coercion on this issue or lobbying from the extremes of the Campaign Life Coalition or CARAL would convince me to subvert my principles in this matter.

• (2110)

I wish to speak to the substance of this bill, or rather the lack thereof, which causes me to express my opposition.

I believe that currently we are living in this country without any legislation in an environment of non-legal abortion on demand. This bill, if passed, would alter the situation only slightly creating an environment of legal abortion on demand with the proviso that a medical doctor would be available to perform the abortion procedure and would agree that a woman's physical, mental or psychological health was threatened.

The legislation has advantages for those supporting a pro-choice point of view. The definition of health in this legislation is so vague that I believe prosecution against a specific case would be next to impossible unless there was a gross negligence on the part of the presiding doctor. However, it also encourages women to lie to their doctor in order to easily fit the health definition and thus procure an abortion.

The legislation does not require abortion to be performed in a hospital which would ease the responsibility of provinces of having to provide pro-life taxpayers' dollars to support abortion facilities and procedures. It is not inconceivable that under this legislation abortion clinics would spring up in communities across the country where same day service from health assessment to completed abortion could be performed.

To the disadvantage of the pro-choice advocates it does not entirely leave choice in the hands of a pregnant woman but is dependent upon a medical practitioner's discretion which would be subject to the same variety of moral principles which we hear expressed in this House.

I would like to address more particularly why I will not support this legislation, which has more to do with what is left out than what is in the legislation. First, I believe that human life begins before a foetus is born alive and that every foetus has rights, especially the basic right to life.

Given the recent Supreme Court decision in the Chantal Daigle case, I believe it is incumbent upon this House now to express foetal rights in our Constitution and Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It is beyond my intellectual capacity to discern at what point in time foetal life becomes more important, more sacred. Is it conception, four weeks after conception, four months after, or five minutes before live birth?

I am a fortunate, happy mother of three of my own healthy children. As a nurse I have personally witnessed the miracle of life and the loss of that life at most stages of pregnancy. I have watched the anguish of parents when spontaneous abortion has occurred at many stages. You will not convince an anguished parent who has lost a

foetal infant life through spontaneous abortion that that was not a human being.

Because I believe in and try to live in the spiritual, sacred, mystery side of life, in my intellectual weakness I submit to the view that it is probable that the sacredness of life begins at conception. Therefore, I cannot accept abortion at any stage of life from conception onward.

On the other hand, through my personal medical experiences as a nurse on hospital wards or in public health among the poor, through my years of work among the poorest of the poor in the Third World, through my conversations and dialogue with friends on this issue of abortion, and then my own associations and experiences in my community, I recognize that there are many relevant, serious, socio-economic reasons why women seek abortions. I realize that many women, including young girls and middle aged women, feel that they have no choice for socio-economic reasons but to have an abortion. They have a sense of desperation, isolation and hopelessness in the face of an unplanned pregnancy. This legislation does nothing to change these circumstances.

I believe that any legislation which proposes to criminalize abortion and impose a penalty for illegal abortion must be supported by companion legislation which would address the major socio-economic reasons now have for seeking abortion. However, I also believe that that companion socio-economic legislation on its own would not meet all the needs. Society, communities, those who care about foetal life, must voluntarily reach out to support and sustain women through their pregnancies and be prepared to assist women and their children after birth to achieve the fullness of life.

Communities must work together to help pregnant women and young girls with life supportive counselling, group homes, family planning education, and other support services. These initiatives are beginning to spring up in my riding of Northumberland but to date are far too few to meet the need if this legislation or amended legislation were to be enacted.

To reiterate, abortion legislation is unacceptable without companion legislation which would assure women and children the minimum resources to assure each a full and meaningful life. To date in this country we lack adequate housing and adequate child care. Our social programs legislate against the independence of single women with children against the working poor. One million children live below the poverty line in this country to the sorrow and despair of thousands of Canadian parents. This abortion legislation does not address any of these problems. Many women seeking abortion are blinded in their decision making by the reality of these circumstances.

Until we have legislation in this country and community services which meet basic needs, you cannot convince me that this abortion legislation is in any way adequate to reduce abortion and protect foetal life. It legislates a penalty against many living in socio-economic distress.

Even if amended to severely restrict the health definition permitting abortion, I would not be satisfied for I believe that once this government has dealt with abortion through this bill, if passed it will have "done abortion", so to speak, and will be deaf to any further legislation which would reduce the incidence of abortion, especially if it were to involve any budgetary expense or priority readjustment. This government is free market driven with debt reductions, not human lives as a priority.

In conclusion, I reiterate that I do not want any abortion in this country. Bill C-43 as it now stands does nothing in my opinion to protect foetal life. Even if amended to restrict the health definition, it will not address the underlying causes of abortion in this country. Any abortion legislation must have companion legislation to support pregnant women and their children. I dedicate myself in this House to do all I can to encourage the enactment of that companion legislation.

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to stand here tonight and take part in this debate. Many of the people in this House are lawyers and many are doctors. When speaking to the member for St. Catharines who is a lawyer and the member for Delta who happens to be a medical doctor, I mentioned my sense of inadequacy in addressing this issue. They were quick to point out that some of the best and most emotional speeches in this House, with feelings of real concern, came from those individuals who do not have technical skill in this area.

I believe that we are all here for a purpose, and that is to create a better Canada, a better nation. As candidates many of us took positions on abortion to get us to this House, in a sense, so that people knew what we were all about before we were elected. I think that we must honour our own positions on an issue like abortion.

I am often reminded of my own words in this regard. I normally do not quote myself but in this particular case I will. My statement on abortion is as simple as this:

> I am opposed to abortion except in cases where the life of the mother is clearly endangered—further I will support all legislation that protects the life of the unborn child.

I will not deviate from that position. I am comfortable with that position.

• (2120)

I think we have to remind Canadians of what exactly is in Bill C–43 which we are debating here this evening. I am going to read part of that bill to remind Canadians of the exact wording of it. It reads in part:

> Every person who induces an abortion on a female person is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years, unless the abortion is induced by or under the direction of a medical practitioner who is of the opinion that, if the abortion were not induced, the health or life of the female person would be likely to be threatened.

I am not entirely comfortable with the words "likely to be threatened", because I think the lack of a clear definition leaves the door open in this particular case. I refer back to my own words in 1988 "except in cases where the life of the mother is clearly endangered". I believe that we are living in a compassionate society which has to look after those who are not fortunate enough to look after themselves.

I would like to quote a very famous American politician who is no longer with us. Hubert Humphrey is an individual who many Canadians came to know, and he had this to say about society and civilization:

> The true test of civilization is how society treats those in the dawn of life, the margins of life, the twilight of life.

That is very true. A civilized society can be judged on how it treats it most defenceless members. I believe that the foetus is exactly that, a defenceless member of our society.

I am going to go through a crash course in foetology, the study of the unborn child or foetus. This has become one of the fastest growing and most promising fields in medicine.

New techniques and sophisticated instruments have given us a new view into the previously hidden world of the unborn child. We can watch the child developing, moving, touching and responding. When ill, in some cases the the unborn child has been diagnosed, treated and cured within the womb.

I will point out some of the highlights of progression toward human life from conception. When the sperm and ovum unite in fertilization genetic make–up is complete and a unique individual comes into existence.

At 18 days the heartbeat can be detected. At 30 days foundations of brain, spinal cord, nerves and sense organs are complete. The new human being has eyes, ears, a mouth, kidneys, a liver and blood circulation although the mother may not yet know that she is pregnant. At 43 days brain waves can be detected.

At six weeks nerves and muscles begin working together, the skeleton is fully formed but made of cartilage, lips become sensitive to touch. At seven weeks all internal organs are present, the stomach producers digestive juices, the liver manufactures red blood cells, the kidneys eliminate uric acid from the blood, and legs, ankles and toes are formed. At the end of eight weeks lines of the hands develop and will remain a distinctive feature of the individual throughout life. At eight and a half weeks the child squints and the fingers close into a fist if the palm is touched. At ten weeks the thyroid and adrenalin glands function. At twelve weeks the child kicks, turns his feet and curls and fans his toes, swallows and drinks fluid, inhales and exhales and sucks his thumb. At 16 to 20 weeks hair grows on the head, eyebrows and eyelashes appear, the child sleeps and wakes and he can be aroused from sleep by external noises. As the basic structure of the human being has been in place for some time, all the unborn child now needs is time to grow.

I think we have to allow that foetus to grow and we as parliamentarians have to take the high road. It may, in the minds of some, be a difficult road, but I believe that we as parliamentarians have to recognize that life begins

at conception and we have to enshrine that into our Charter of Rights.

In 1987 when the member for Grey–Simcoe brought forward a motion setting out the idea that life did begin at conception it came very close to being supported. The motion was lost by a vote of 62 in favour to 89 against, a difference of only 27 votes.

That motion brought forward on June 7, 1987, is I believe the approach that we have to take if we are in fact concerned about the foetus and the life of a foetus. It has to go right back to the Constitution Act of 1982.

That motion stated:

> That, in the opinion of this House, the Government should consider the advisability of amending the Constitution Act, 1982, to include unborn human persons, and that the Governor General issue a Proclamation under the Great Seal of Canada to amend section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights so that it reads as follows;
>
> "7. Everyone including a human foetus or unborn being has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice."

I believe that is the direction in which we have to go.

I believe that only when speaking to a child can one really grasp the abortion issue. It brings it down to a very fundamental and very human level when you are speaking to an eight–year old child. My son, Christian, who is eight years old, one night asked me: "Dad, what is abortion?". Never in my life have I had more difficulty explaining anything to anyone than I did that particular evening in attempting to explain to an eight–year–old child what abortion is. You are constantly grasping for the right words, words that are soft enough to explain to an eight–year–old child exactly what abortion is and exactly what the outcome of abortion is.

Abortion is death. It is as simple and fundamental as that. It is a word that we hate to use but that is exactly what it is. I do not believe that as parliamentarians we can compromise human life and I believe that that is exactly what this bill does, it compromises human life.

In conclusion, I would like to go back to my opening statement, the statement on which I stand, that is:

> I am opposed to abortion except in cases where the life of the mother is clearly endangered—
>
> —further I will support all legislation that protects the life of the unborn child.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to the order made on Monday, November 20, 1989, a motion to adjourn the House is deemed to have been made and seconded at this time. Therefore the question is that this House do now adjourn.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, recently I asked the Minister of Finance about the effect of the proposed goods and services tax on the cost of health care in this country, specifically dealing with physicians' costs. The minister replied that there would be no negative effects on medicare because health care is within the so–called tax exempt category of the goods and services tax.

• (2130)

I rise today to clarify in the House and for the Canadian people what this government promises to do to health care in the name of good management. My remarks are generally applicable to all members of what is commonly called the "MUSH" sector, meaning, municipalities, universities, schools and hospitals, all of which will be in the tax exempt category under the goods and services tax proposal.

MUSH turns out to be a very appropriate acronym for this part of the GST because no one is quite sure what the government is proposing. We know one thing for certain. The Minister of Finance promised to the Canadian Hospital Association last January that under the national sales tax, hospitals would not bear a greater tax burden than they would under the existing tax system.

Unfortunately, given the other broken promises of the minister, revenue neutrality, simplicity, fairness, co–operation with the provinces, all promises he made with regard to the goods and services tax and all broken promises, no one is holding their breath for the fulfillment of this promise either.

Tax exempt is supposed to mean that no one in this class pays more tax after the goods and services tax is instituted than before. But this is very misleading in the

health care sector, although some system will be put into place to reimburse health sector organizations for their additional taxes paid on supplies and services purchased by the organization. There will be no mechanism in place to reimburse higher costs faced by these institutions which are a direct result of the goods and services tax.

Some of these higher costs facing hospitals, for example, will be administrative costs of determining what amount of tax should be reimbursed. Because some hospital purchases will be tax free, such as groceries, prescription drugs and some medical devices, not all non-labour expenses of hospitals can be used in calculating the tax paid. There must be a separate accounting of each item in order to determine whether it qualifies for the federal refund. Consequently, the administrative costs to each hospital will be increased.

Cash flow problems and lost interest will also be an added cost. A study prepared by the Canadian Hospital Association calculates that even at a rate of 8 per cent GST, that is 1 per cent lower than the proposed tax, hospitals will face increased costs of up to $2,000 per bed per annum or $356 million for health care facilities considered as a whole. This means that there will be enormous sums of money remitted to the government with probable delays of anything up to six months or perhaps even longer before refunds come back. Hospitals will be required to pay the carrying costs of such a loan to the government and absorb the interest costs.

In addition, inflationary effects on wage bills will have an impact on hospitals also. The largest expenditure in health care is for wages. The Minister of Finance has projected inflation of close to 3 per cent as a result of the goods and services tax, although many other economists expect it to be at least twice as high as that.

Unionized workers have quite reasonably given notice that they do not intend to allow their incomes to be eroded by this inflationary impact and will bargain for wage packages to make up the difference. This will result in enormous cost increases to hospitals and to other health employers.

We can see that the financial base of tax exempt institutions will be eroded by the goods and services tax. Other sectors of the health care system will also be adversely affected. Doctors will be facing higher input costs as well in terms of staff wages, rent and insurance costs, for example. In order to maintain their incomes, the Canadian Medical Association has given notice that it will be bargaining for higher fee scales from the provinces in order to compensate for this lost income as a result of the goods and services tax.

Other health care providers who are not insured by provincial plans will also be negatively affected. Such practitioners as psychologists, dietitians, audiologists, family counsellors, speech therapists and physiotherapists who are not insured under their provincial plans will see the cost of their services rise by the full 9 per cent. This sector is completely ignored by the so-called tax exempt provisions.

Every major study of health care in the past 10 years has emphasized the need to use alternative health care providers in the system, such as those I have just mentioned. There has also been an emphasis on the need to provide better out-patient facilities and nursing homes in these studies. However, all private providers of these services will also face 9 per cent increases in their costs, and consequently those who are purchasing those services will be faced with a 9 per cent increase in price.

All of these increases must be absorbed by the consumer. Higher health care costs for hospitals will mean that taxpayers must pay higher provincial taxes to make up the differences or the province's deficits will increase. This is doubly likely, given the huge cuts to Established Programs Financing made by this government and the further cuts to this program covering health and education under Bill C-33, which is presently before the House.

I would like to quote from the Canadian Medical Association statement regarding the goods and services tax and the problems it will create for health care. The treasurer, Dr. Railton, when testifying before the House of Commons Finance Committee stated:

> While it is impossible to calculate precisely how much, there is little doubt that the goods and services tax will increase the cost of operating hospitals and nursing homes—especially those operating privately. The GST will also increase the costs of community support programs, like homemaker services, that allow patients to be cared for at home rather than in the more costly health institution.

They also pointed out the impact of the cuts under Bill C-33 and by combining those two together felt that the government was creating severe problems for the health care system.

This government is putting Canada's health and education system into a vice. On the one side are the higher costs imposed by the goods and services tax as I have outlined. On the other side is the slashing of revenue from cuts to Established Programs Financing.

The total cuts to EPF over the next nine years for health and education will be $24 billion. That is $24 billion that will be taken out of the system which but for the government's Bill C-33 would have been available to the provinces for health and education.

This is a truly staggering figure, and if we add this to the impact of the goods and services tax we have a serious situation for our hospitals as well as our education institutions and our urban and rural municipalities.

We do not yet know the full impact the goods and services tax will have on costs in hospitals, but given the wide disparity between government projections and reality we can be sure that they are going to be enormous.

Mrs. Lise Bourgault (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I believe contrary to the member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing that implementation of the GST will work to ensure the future of Canada's health care system rather than adversely affect it. First, by providing the government with a stable source of revenue, the GST will help to ensure that we can continue to pay for valued programs including many of the services under our health care system.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the hon. member might refer to the GST technical paper and read pages 85, 86, 87 and 138, among others, where he would find answers to his questions.

Mr. Speaker, a wide array of health care services have been exempted so that Canadians may find effective alternatives to hospital care which will enable patients to remain at home. Just to name a few, they include mobile canteens, home nursing care, and non-profit homemaking services.

Allow me to say a few words about services offered by health care professionals. Among other things, in its June 1987 White Paper on Tax Reform the government recommended that health care services be exempted, provided they are covered under provincial health care programs.

Mr. Speaker, in consultations with health care professionals after the release of the white paper, the government was warned against the problems which might come up if indeed health care services covered under health insurance plans were to be exempted. The result might be unequal tax treatment of health care services available in various provinces.

So, Mr. Speaker, in the GST technical paper released last summer—I am showing it to you so you might have a look at it—the government set forth a number of criteria aimed at enlarging the scope of exemptions in the health care field. In accordance with the revised version, services provided by health care professionals will be GST-exempt if such services are covered under the health insurance plans of at least two provinces.

Mr. Speaker, what this means is that such health care professionals as chiropractors, optometrists and dental surgeons— once again, we can see on page 88— the Hon. Member refered to physiotherapists, they too are exempted. I just want to name a few, they will not have to add the GST when they bill their patients.

• (2140)

Mr. Speaker, in summary, I can say without hesitation that our commitment to health care plans is clear. We have established a system of exemptions for health care plans that is as wide as possible and we have also taken measures to offer health institutions like hospitals and extended care homes significant rebates on the GST they will have to pay on their purchases.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to conclude by reminding the hon. member that I attended the latest health ministers' conference as parliamentary secretary to the Minister of National Health and Welfare and I can tell you that the federal and provincial governments find themselves far short of the resources they require to meet the tremendous needs in the country for health care. It would take what the government pays for the debt plus the present equalization payments to the

provinces for health care to deal adequately with all health problems.

In this past decade, we have seen dehospitalization. This was meant to make health care services more humane, except that, with the way life is today, there are fewer families that can provide care and those that do have difficulty because the needs are great and their resources are slim. So I understand very well what the Hon. Member wants to tell us, Mr. Speaker. We also share these concerns, but I can assure you that the Minister of National Health and Welfare has seen to it that the GST legislation will not only guarantee health care but provide more money to invest in this whole area which needs more financial resources all the time.

DAIRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Jean-Guy Guilbault (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, when I rose in the House on November 1 this year, my question for the Minister of State (Agriculture) concerned dairy producers who were worried about the GATT talks, following the yogurt and ice cream decision which goes against their interests and might jeopardize the existence of our marketing boards.

Tuesday, farmers came to demonstrate on Parliament Hill, to tell the government that Québec agriculture faces an uncertain future, and I showed my support for the farmers by taking part in their demonstration. Unfortunately, the situation remains confused, and Canadian producers feel more threatened than ever. As we know, the GATT Council examined the report of the special GATT panel on ice cream and yogurt on November 7 and decided to postpone any decisions until December 5.

This is a faint but encouraging signal that shows how complex the decision is and also that the problem is taken very seriously by all concerned. By postponing its decision, GATT has shown it acknowledges the merits of the Canadian Government's position and wants to take enough time to reach the best possible decision. As you know, Canada has now had a supply management program for its dairy sector for over 20 years, and the dairy industry has become a key sector of our economy. It generates farm income totalling over $4 billion, and it is estimated that the total value of dairy products represents $7 billion annually. Supply management in the dairy sector has helped develop a downstream processing industry that complements and supports a primary production sector that relies on a complex system of quotas based on supply and demand, on a pricing formula based on production cost, enhanced productivity and import restrictions, all of which has promoted income stability on dairy farms and helped many farmers and their families meet the challenges of modern agriculture. Maintaining supply management is no longer the economic option it was when it was introduced. It has now become a political and social option.

As stated by the three federal ministers responsible for this area in a circular addressed to Canada's milk producers, and I quote: "Canada's supply management system is not for sale and is not negotiable. We will not abandon a system that is acknowledged and respected by all our foreign trading partners, because it is an essential component of our long-term agricultural policy". That says it all, but unfortunately for all parties involved in the dairy sector: governments, producers and processors, the situation that has developed as a result of the Free Trade Agreement, the recent GATT negotiations, and the subsidy war between the European Economic Community and the United States has emphasized the need for a thorough reform of our agricultural programs. However, what first appeared to be a welcome improvement for the world's agricultural economy has now apparently created a controversy among the various trading partners.

If our dairy supply management system is to operate properly, we must closely monitor imports of dairy products, otherwise we are no longer talking about supply management. GATT Article 11, and this is entirely legitimate, authorizes countries that manage the supply of certain agricultural products to restrict entry of similar products that would otherwise prevent the proper functioning of the supply management system.

During the FTA negotiations, Canada added ice cream and yogurt to the list of controlled imports. This decision was intended to provide more protection for the dairy sector, as authorized by GATT. We should add that the government was also responding to the expectations of Canadian dairy producers who had exerted enormous pressure to have these two products protected as well. However, the U.S. reaction was soon in coming. In December 1988, they filed a

It should be noted that the Americans are not singling Canada out. They previously used the same remedy against other countries, including Japan. But the basic question is rather simple—why? Why, in this era of free trade, are there so many jolts, so much uncertainty? How is it possible that simple farm products like yogurt and

ice cream lead to a situation that becomes a Gordian knot?

The GATT panel that examined Canadian restrictions to ice cream and yogurt imports favoured the Americans, but it also recognized that the requirements of Article 11 of the GATT, as interpreted by the panel, are difficult to adhere to. Article 11 leaves too much to the interpretation as to what a like product is, as to the need to restrict quantities, and as to the form a like product may take.

The Canadian Government is sticking to its position of maintaining a recognized goal, which is the establishment of a set of rules that are clear, fair, workable and acceptable by all parties, namely producers and Canada's trading partners.

For the time being, nothing comes out of this except this government's renewed faith in marketing boards. And also that, for the first time in Canadian history, a Prime Minister and his two ministers responsible for Agriculture, as well as his Minister of International Trade met with the president of Union des producteurs agricoles and its executive and some producers. This is a signal indeed that this government is going in the right direction and wants indeed to protect the industry.

International Trade spokesmen will have to become aware of Québec realities during the GATT negotiations, and I demand that we have French-speaking negotiators from Québec at the table.

Our joint schemes, our marketing boards and our quotas must be 100 per cent protected. Québec farm producers will not tolerate that a blind eye be turned on Québec demands.

This is why I am asking the Minister whether he can reassure Québec producers in terms of the current GATT negotiations. Can he tell us whether all parties in the various farm industries in Québec will be adequately represented by knowledgeable people at those negotiations?

[*English*]

Mr. Murray Cardiff (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the hon. member for Drummond that this government will continue to vigorously defend the interests of the Canadian dairy producers in the GATT negotiations.

We firmly maintain our right to develop programs that best respond to Canadian conditions, and this includes our right to set up supply management systems. Our position has been, and continues to be, that Article 11 of the GATT must be clarified and strengthened. The GATT panel ruling on Canadian import controls for ice cream and yogurt clearly confirms that. We want to see fair and equitable trading rules that apply to everybody in the international marketplace.

• (2150)

We are not taking this ruling lightly and we are seriously concerned. What this ruling means is that under current rules, U.S. ice cream and yogurt exporters will have greater access to our marketplace. At the same time, the American market will continue to be closed to Canadian producers of the same product. That is because the U.S. has a waiver from GATT that effectively prohibits U.S. imports from Canadian ice cream.

That is not at all this government's idea of fairness. As I have said, this ruling confirms our MTN position that Article 11 has to be strengthened and clarified. I want to assure the hon. member that we have raised this concern in Geneva. This is the route that the Canadian Dairy Industry itself has endorsed.

At the October GATT Council meeting, this government clearly stated its concerns regarding the implications of the panel ruling for the dairy industry. We pointed out the very narrow interpretation of GATT Article 11 used by the panel. Specifically, we have trouble with the terminology of "direct competitive products". We reiterated our concerns about the impact of this decision on the Canadian dairy sector at the November GATT Council meeting.

The Canadian dairy industry has been well represented in this process. In fact, this government is working hand in hand with the dairy industry to explore our options.

Just recently, a number of our dairy farmers travelled to Europe to discuss with their European counterparts the implications of this ruling on the Canadian industry. It is our view that the panel report is calling into question the original intentions of the GATT drafters. We certain-

ly do not believe it intends to exclude the entire dairy sector from Article 11 coverage.

We firmly believe that our supply management programs conform with international regulations as we understood them. We have played by the rules and we expect our trading partners to do the same.

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to further elaborate on a question that I asked of the President of the Treasury Board on October 26, 1989.

The subject of my two questions that day dealt with the government's refusal of a request for access to information by the Auditor General. Specifically, in this particular case, with releasing logs for the use of VIP aircraft by ministers of the Crown.

Now, as everybody knows, on October 24 of this year, the Auditor General released his report for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1989. In chapter 6 of that report, the Auditor General indicated that he had been denied access to certain files regarding ministerial expense claims and also regarding the government's use of VIP aircraft.

Now, on first blush, the documents that were requested by the Auditor General concerning the use of VIP aircraft seemed to be something that a government should have given as a matter of course. What he wanted to know was what was the stated intention of the trips that the ministers had taken on government VIP aircraft. He wanted to know that for the simple reason that he was trying to do his job. He was trying to find out whether or not the charges that had been sent to the minister or the department from National Defence were the proper charges. That is because there are three different classifications of flights.

The previous day, I believe it was, in response to a question from another member, the minister indicated that he had put the issue over to the comptroller general who would conduct an investigation and, yes, the information that was requested would be made available to Parliament, to members and to the public.

As reported at page 5051 of *Hansard* on October 24, the President of the Treasury Board said:

> —we will provide on a regular basis the total travel expenses of each minister, the number of times he takes an aircraft, where he is going, who he is going with, his itinerary, the reason for the use of the aircraft and the cost of the government aircraft.

The day before, the minister seemed to respond that the information which the Auditor General requested would be made available. That simply is not the case. I have been in touch with the Auditor General and I have carefully read the responses from the President of the Treasury Board to previous questions. The minister responsible for the Treasury Board basically said that all information from that date forward would be made available. The Auditor General had requested specific information from the period of April 1, 1989 onward, not October 24, 1989 onward. The question that I had asked was would the minister responsible for the Treasury Board—yes or no—specifically give the information that had been requested by the Auditor General. The minister's answers did nothing to allay the concerns or the questions that were posed by myself and some of my other colleagues. Consequently, on November 9, Mr. Paul Tellier, Clerk of the Privy Council, commented at a committee meeting in response to a question from one of the members of the Public Accounts Committee. I wish to quote from an article that appeared in the *Globe and Mail* for November 10, 1989:

> When Mr. Tellier was asked yesterday whether Mr. Dye would be allowed to audit ministerial travel, he told the committee: "That audit is not going to take place."

You can see why I am a little confused, you can see why I am concerned, you can see why I am looking for additional information, Mr. Speaker.

We have also been told by the President of the Treasury Board that that information could not be made available dealing with receipts and other matters requested by the Auditor General to do his audit because he said, and I quote from page 5086 of *Hansard* for October 25:

> I think that Opposition Members can well understand that in such cases, it is important to maintain confidentiality. It is government business.

I think that is an absolutely incredible statement for a minister of the Crown to make. The Auditor General is an officer of this place. In the conduct of his duties when he audits various government departments and agencies the information that he is given is confidential. Surely to goodness this government is not questioning the trustworthiness of the Auditor General, a man whose job and that of his department is to ensure that the public interest is being upheld by members of Parliament, by

government departments and government agencies. It was an incredible statement to make.

Every time an audit is done by the Auditor General, I would suspect that he would have access to confidential information. So the answers that have been given in this place are simply unacceptable and do not in any way address the request of the Auditor General, a request that I repeated, hopefully on behalf of the Auditor General and other parliamentarians in the House on November 26.

Is the government prepared to release to the Auditor General the documents that he has requested so that he can do an audit, not to find out whether or not the trip was worthwhile, but he wanted to find out whether or not the charges that were coming from the Department of National Defence for cost recovery purposes were correct?

The government has stated that it is quite prepared to give that information from October 25 onward. From a discussion I have had with one of the members of the Auditor General's staff, I found out that six months prior the government gave almost identical information when an information audit was done to find out what material was available so they could structure their audit.

I would ask the parliamentary secretary who is here tonight if he can shed some light on the questions that I have raised, subsequent to the questions that were asked in this place. He may wish to comment for a moment or two and because of the nature of the questions that I have asked, he may wish to provide me and the House with a formal reply.

Mr. Murray Cardiff (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I first want to apologize to the hon. member for Dartmouth. We have had an earlier discussion. He has had a number of questions on the Order Paper for the late show and we have had a slight mix-up in our responses. What he has asked for is some very detailed information of a question that he had asked earlier this year and that other people have asked. I think in all fairness and to give him the proper answer we will provide him with a written reply to the questions he has raised tonight. I believe that that would be the most fair way to look after his concerns. I give him my word that we will reply with a written response very shortly.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 10 a.m.

The House adjourned at 10 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, November 24, 1989

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S.O. 81—ELIMINATING POVERTY AMONG CANADIAN CHILDREN

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa) moved:

That this House express its concern for the more than one million Canadian children currently living in poverty and seek to achieve the goal of eliminating poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues.

[*English*]

One morning in the middle of June, lying in my bed, the alarm clock went off on my clock radio and I listened, as I usually do each morning, to the morning CBC news. On this particular day the news I heard was deeply distressing. The report on that particular morning was that we have in this country of ours 1,121,000 children living in poverty.

Normally I had been reasonably well aware, given my responsibility as the Leader of the New Democratic Party, of the general social policy oriented data, if I can put it in those very abstract terms, but I frankly say that on that particular morning I was totally surprised by how serious the problem of child poverty in Canada had become.

I went to my office that very morning, checked with members of our research staff and asked them to get me a copy of the report on child poverty which had just been produced and which formed the basis of the CBC news report.

It turned out that the figures used were true. There were well over a million poor kids in this Canada of ours in 1989, not 1939; in Canada, a developed industrial society, not a poor emerging nation in the Third World.

The situation is bad for our children. For the rest of us, no matter how we have been burdened by tax increases, no matter how hard done by we feel when we cannot buy an extra suit that we might have planned on, take our families out to another restaurant for a dinner on a given week, or have a more extended holiday, that is the reality for a majority of Canadians.

It is certainly our task as a party, our task as parliamentarians, to be constantly trying to improve the well-being of the majority, but the well-being of the majority in recent years has been improving. While this has been going on in our country, the well-being of a significant number of our kids has been getting worse.

• (1010)

From 1980 to 1986, when the child population of Canada actually fell by some 4 per cent, the number living in poverty in Canada at precisely the time the rest of us were doing better increased by 13.4 per cent.

A few years after I was elected to the House of Commons a survey was taken in 1973. In 1973 it was found in this land of ours that 21 per cent of our kids were poor. The most recent figure, according to the Canadian Council on Social Development, is that this percentage has increased from 21 per cent to 25 per cent, one child out of four from Newfoundland in the east to British Columbia in the west. Some provinces are obviously much worse than others, not necessarily because of the different political regimes but certainly because of the different capacities of the different regions to generate growth.

I repeat, while the over-all sense of well-being for most Canadians has been getting better, that of our children has been getting worse. While the rest of us have been better clothed, there are more kids going without shoes. While the rest of us have improved housing, we have literally thousands of children who are homeless in Canada. While the majority now take their families out to a restaurant from time to time for a meal,

we have thousands of kids, indeed 151,000 children, using food banks each month.

While we in Canada have witnessed in the statistics that Mercedes Benzes and Porsches and Cadillacs are selling in record numbers, one quarter of our children are wasting away. This is a national horror. This is a national shame. It is a horror and a shame that we should put an end to.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, one of the major obligations of our democratic responsibilities—and I say this to all members on both sides of the House—is to improve the well-being of the majority. That is a fundamental requirement of a democratic society.

It is also a requirement to go back to an old-fashioned and for me fundamental notion of democracy which predates the view that you have a democracy simply if you have a competitive political system, legal institutions and the rule of law. The early 19th century and pre-19th century notion of democracy was that you had a society, not just governmental institutions as important as they are, so organized that all of its members had fully equal opportunities to develop their capacities and talents as human beings. It is to that notion of democracy that we in Canada should be committing ourselves.

When we apply this test we have to understand particularly here, now, in our generation, that we have the obligation of persuading a majority of Canadians to take on the task in the interests of a minority, in the interests of our poor, in the interests in particular of poor children.

In my maiden speech 21 years ago I noted in the euphoria of that time at the end of the 1960s that our task as a people was not simply to praise our past and celebrate our present. I said that our task was to create a future, a different future, to defend what we have, and that to refuse to go beyond was to refuse to lead. We have an obligation always in this chamber to lead.

For too long we have refused to go beyond into the future when it comes to our children. For too long we have ignored the appalling poverty in the midst of affluence. For years the United States and Canada had been regarded not only here in North America but around the world as the world's two most affluent nations and in many criteria well beyond average personal income, this remains true today. However, today also among industrial states, Canada has the second highest rate of children living in a condition of severe poverty. We are second only in this terrible indicator to the United States.

I want now to get beyond the abstractions of some of these statistics.

[*Translation*]

What is the face of poverty? It is dangerously underweight babies. It is infant deaths. The infant mortality rate of the poor is twice as high as that of the rich. Physicians in Quebec have stated that babies born in certain poor areas of the province run the risk of being as underweight as babies in developing countries.

Poverty means chronic illness, infection and viral diseases. The rate of poor children in poor health is 150 per cent higher than the national average. This is appalling!

A recent study on poverty in Regina mentioned babies who were brought to the emergency ward with convulsions because mothers had diluted their milk to make it go further. We cannot allow this to happen!

[*English*]

An Ontario study found that being on welfare was one of the best and surest indicators of discovering a child with chronic health problems. Welfare payments are totally inadequate to deal with that problem.

Third, the face of poverty is malnutrition. It means going to school without breakfast and going to bed at night hungry. Again in the same recent study in Saskatchewan that I picked up and read when I was recently out there, it showed that a youngster from school during the summer vacation of two months lost 25 pounds. The weight was checked before school recessed and checked when the kids came back to school. Some 25 pounds in weight was lost by that child because the school lunches that that child was getting during the school year were not being provided at home during the summer in that it was a very poor family.

I repeat, this is happening in Canada 1989, not 1939.

Children dependent on welfare in British Columbia can meet daily nutritional requirements according to medical reports that have been done for only two and a half weeks per month. What are they going to do for the other one and a half weeks? Well, they suffer; that is what they do.

While the rest of us are well off, while the rest of us go to restaurants, while the rest of us have lots of pleasure, these kids are suffering. We should be suffering when we think about it so that we will move and put an end to it.

• (1020)

Being a poor kid means box lunches from food banks and soup from soup kitchens. Children make up 26 per cent of the population, but they make up 40 per cent of the users of food banks in Canada.

Around Thanksgiving I was speaking somewhere here in my home province. I picked up a copy of *The Toronto Star* and in that paper on Thanksgiving weekend, when most of us are with our families and enjoying our families and when most of us have lots to be thankful for, I saw a report that in Toronto, our richest city, there were 34,000 Canadians who could not feed themselves adequately. Over half that 34,000 were under five years of age. They have inadequate diets.

There are more food banks in Toronto than McDonald's hamburg outlets. Perhaps if we had neon signs in front of every food bank in the city of Toronto and in every city across Canada, when we drove around in this country of ours we would become as aware of poverty, and particularly poverty for young kids, as we are of McDonald's hamburgs.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, to be a poor kid means trying to read or write or think on an empty stomach.

A Harvard medical study has shown a direct link between poor nutrition and the ability to concentrate, so important in the learning process. A survey of 132 public schools in Calgary reported that in 46 schools, the number of children coming to school without breakfast was a serious problem.

It is not surprising that poor children are twice as likely to drop out of school as other children.

[*English*]

In Canada we know—and in every country where studies have been done they know it—that rich kids are not inherently better than poor kids, that they do not have a greater capacity to become musicians, poets, good hockey players or great skiers. The poor in our nation genetically have the same capacities over all, statistically, as the rich kids. But as every study shows if you are suffering from malnutrition and you are underhoused and you have all of the concomitant negative effects on your life that goes with that, you are not likely to do as well in the learning process, by a considerable proportion, as the rich or the average.

It is time we took our obligations seriously to ensure that every kid in this country has the right and the same right to develop his or her capacities and talents, that the child in Cape Breton Island ought to have the same opportunities to be what he or she can as the child in Rosedale in Toronto.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, to be poor means to be homeless and without hope. Three years ago, 30,000 children were looking for a place to sleep in shelters for the homeless. Others lived on the street or with poor families who skimped on food to pay the rent.

[*English*]

There is now in Canada and in the United States a vicious cycle involving the poor. Poor kids are undernourished, underhoused, more sickly, more poorly educated, get the second or third rate jobs, and when the lay-offs come, they get laid off first.

The same young people marry each other and then they produce children, statistically out of proportion, who go through the same cycle. We have a cycle of poor food, poor housing, poor clothing, poor education, poor jobs, poor spouses, more poor kids. This is a vicious cycle. It is a vicious cycle that can be broken and it is a vicious cycle that must be broken in this Canada of ours.

Our children, 25 per cent of them, are imprisoned in poverty and we must get them out of that prison. There is a problem in this relatively well off democracy of ours in dealing with this. It is to get the problem recognized for what it is. It is to get people reasonably well off to care about the problem so that they will come to grips with it.

First and foremost, there has to be a change in attitude. Let me just cite some examples. I will not give names, but I will give positions here.

The Social Services Minister in the Province of Saskatchewan, when asked about poverty in that province, said—and I do not exaggerate—that poverty among children in Saskatchewan does not exist. Saskatchewan has the second highest level, in excess of 25 per cent, of child poverty in Canada.

A premier in one of the western provinces said if poor kids go to school hungry, it is because their parents do not love them. That is outrageous. It shows a terrible insensitivity. Every member in this House has poor families in his or her constituency. Every member in this House knows them. Every member knows that poor parents care for their kids just as much as any other parents. It is terribly offensive to suggest that we have poor kids because their parents do not care for them.

In another province a cabinet minister said kids go to school hungry in her province because their parents spend their money on booze and cigarettes.

There is a psychological explanation for this. We have learned during the course of the 20th century about the psychological mechanism of denial. We all do it in varying degrees in our personal lives. People in political life people do it too. That is to say, when there is a reality out there that you do not want to recognize, you do not recognize it. You pretend it does not exist, and at a certain profound level you believe it does not exist. This reaction, the psychological mechanism of denial, is going on at too many levels in our country.

If I may be personal again on this subject, when I discovered this in the middle of June and woke up to the reality myself from that newscast, I began to speak, and for five months, I spoke in every province of Canada on this subject. Every speech I have made since the middle of June, with the exception of two speeches which were exclusively devoted to the Constitution, I talked about child poverty. There is, to my knowledge, one and only one news report about that issue that has been made on a speech that I gave in five months of making speeches from coast to coast in Canada.

It would be interesting to understand why the news media in our country has ignored the question. Is there a kind of denial mechanism that is going on there as well? Is it because it is not conflict laden, not entangled in personality battles of some kind, or regional battles? Whatever the reason—I repeat, five months of speeches with the exception of two in every part of Canada—I have said almost word for word what I have said today, and the nation has little knowledge of it. There is a problem. The reality is there. The reality is abominable, and the reality is correctible. But many Canadians—I believe most Canadians—do not know about it.

• (1030)

A friend of mine many years ago, Michael Harrington, who is now dead, wrote a remarkable book on poverty in the Unites, a book called *The Other America*. That was almost three decades ago.

As a result of that book and because it came to the attention of a president, a young man named John Kennedy, it did get attention. It was taken up in the centres of power, which is normally what happens in a society. I say to the minister, those who have power are in a position to do something. Something was done. There was going to be something done in that particular instance. President Kennedy was planning a 1964 campaign based on the issue of poverty in America. As the whole world knows, he was shot and it was not done.

It was written about the United States, and it happened to take off for reasons I know not exactly, but I know it became a political issue because a president took it up. I am convinced that this will become an issue in this country of ours when premiers from coast to coast and when the Prime Minister of Canada say, "We have to put an end to child poverty".

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: I quoted some of the statements by ministers and governments who blame poverty of children on their parents. Many Canadians will believe that, and average Canadians will believe it as well. But I want to say that that is not the case. The study done recently for the city of Regina looking into hunger produced, as I understand it, a virtually unanimous report on the following points when it came to the causes of the poverty.

It was not due to waste. It was not due to laziness, mismanagement, bingo, booze or wilful neglect. It was due to the fact that the families were without money.

Poor kids are poor kids because they are poor kids. If we want to overcome poverty in this country, we have to do something about getting more money into the hands of poor people. That is where we have to start.

On Monday of this week the United Nations adopted the first-ever Convention on the Rights of Child. Canada co-sponsored that landmark agreement. Let us as a Parliament use that as a nation for a starting point. Article 14 of the Convention imposes on us to recognize, and I quote:

> —the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.

According to this Article we are now obligated to take:

> —appropriate measures to assist parents and others responsible for the child to implement this right and shall in case of need provide material assistance and support programs, particularly with regard to nutrition, health, clothing and housing.

We can, we must take up our obligations now.

The point that I want to make is that it can be done. In Sweden, Norway and West Germany there is a level of child poverty one-fifth as high as ours. Where over 25 per cent of our children live in poverty, theirs are around 5 per cent. Other societies that have cared, that have targeted the problem, have understood it is a problem, have done something about it.

In Canada, all parties—and I am not going to talk about the political genesis of it beyond that—in the late 1950s and early 1960s recognized that we had a serious problem with our elderly. We saw then that statistically speaking a much greater percentage of senior citizens were living in poverty than the percentage of children living in poverty today. The people of Canada did not sit back, and at one point people in all parties did not sit back. We all have parents. We know senior citizens. We know it is a human right that a man or woman, who spends his or her life working for the nation and with his contribution whatever it is in labour, ought to be able to retire with dignity, not just survive but retire with some dignity.

We began to move as a country. In the early 1960s we began the important struggle for elderly Canadians. In 1963, 41 per cent of elderly Canadians were poor. The Canada Pension Plan came in. Old age security was significantly improved. Indexation of pensions and pension benefits took place. By 1966, the percentage of elderly couples living in poverty had dropped from 41 per cent to 9.5 per cent. We still have poor citizens. More has to be done, of course. But we made real progress for the elderly.

There is one person who is sitting here—I see him now—who sat here day in and day out, often in the front-benches of the New Democratic Party rows, now before the Speaker, who in particular did a remarkable job for senior citizens, and that is Stanley Knowles.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, I say to you if we want to succeed with our children we have to deal as specifically with their poverty as we did with senior citizens. We helped to bring dignity to the lives of the elderly. We must now do that for our children. We must show that for us human dignity is to be cherished as much in life's first pages as it is in the concluding chapters.

I say to the minister that the federal government must show leadership. The Prime Minister said this fall that our goal for social programs must be those that "bring us both peace of mind and pride in citizenship". I agree. All Canadians would agree. I simply say it is time to match the rhetoric with action.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Mr. Broadbent: Basically, at the federal level the government must start by increasing the minimum federal wage which is now the lowest in the country and has not been increased in three years. It should be indexed to the cost of living, just as pensions were indexed several years ago. Second, the federal government must increase family allowances and the child tax credit and index them to the rate of inflation. This money goes directly to low—and middle-income families to pay for food, housing and clothing. Third, the federal government must increase federal financing for low-cost housing.

Ten years ago, the government financed construction of 30,000 new low-cost housing units per year. Today, this number has dropped to 20,000.

[*English*]

We must also move to bring in child care legislation which has as its purpose and fundamental goal an increase in the number of spaces that will be available for children throughout Canada.

• (1040)

This in itself will help thousands of Canadian women who love their children, who want to care for them but who are now locked into welfare. They cannot afford adequate child care and so are forced to stay home when they would prefer to be spending part of their time working in the economy out of the house and part of their time looking after children but they know that they cannot leave them if there are not adequate child care spaces available.

One recent survey showed that there were over 21,000 Canadian women who specifically said they would prefer to be off welfare, would prefer to be working out of the house if only this nation of ours had taken the proper steps some time ago to ensure adequate child care service is available. We must begin to make that child care spacing available for these women.

I would like to propose that the Prime Minister or the federal government before long convene a national conference on the elimination of child poverty, inviting first and foremost the provincial governments because much of the responsibility as we know in this federal constitution of ours to deal with this problem resides with the provinces. Also invited should be municipalities to send delegates, volunteer agencies, the trade union movement, chambers of commerce, service clubs and poor peoples' representatives themselves.

There should be a national effort to talk about and understand the gravity of the problem and to understand that things can be done. This conference should be called. In my view such a grand coalition that could be brought together should not be a one-shot deal, but it should obligate itself to meet on an annual basis to establish targets. I am aware we cannot do this overnight, as I am aware if we begin to spend money now and target spending to overcome the disgrace of national poverty for children certain other priorities would have to be set aside. No serious man or woman in political life can escape from that. I am aware that it cannot be done overnight and without some sacrifice in some other domain, but by God I am saying we should now organize our political community like we have never done before. This can be done by bringing in groups that have not been involved before, setting out a national target, and monitoring it on an annual basis until we eliminate child poverty in this country.

I want to conclude with these observations. Whatever their philosophical basis, whether Canadians are Conservatives, Liberals or New Democrats, I know there is not the slightest bit of difference in terms of their commitment to the well-being of children. However else we may differ on other political matters, and the differences are real and serious, on this issue there is no difference on the commitment to overcome child poverty. I believe there would be no difference about that goal.

I think that if we speak to all of Canada and if all Parties took this on, we could get a response. I am convinced that a great attempt to mobilize the energy and effective imagination of Canadians would meet with a great response from the people of Canada. We have the resources. We have the ability. We have done it before on pensions. We have done it before on medicare. What we need now is to demonstrate the same will concerning the needs of our children.

For the sake of our children, let us find that same spirit of reform, of hope, of courage, of tenacious intelligence that has led this nation of ours to great accomplishments in the past. Let us affirm today in this Parliament that as a nation by the beginning of the 21st Century—only 11 years away—child poverty in this great Canada will be a relic of the past.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to participate today in this debate about child welfare and child poverty. However, before addressing the motion perhaps the House could bear with me for a minute while I make some remarks with regard to the hon. gentleman for Oshawa.

The hon. member, when he moved his motion and gave a very eloquent address today, did not make mention of the fact that this is probably the last opportu-

nity that he will have as Leader of the New Democratic Party to put a motion before the House of Commons.

He made mention of the fact that throughout his long and distinguished career in federal politics he has been very concerned about issues related to poverty. Indeed, over the years we have seen that this hon. member has been in the forefront of the fight against poverty at all levels.

He mentioned the struggle that was led by the Hon. Stanley Knowles on pension reform, on the rights of seniors. The hon. gentleman from Oshawa was there at all times as well strongly supporting any initiative which could reduce poverty. Indeed, he talked with considerable eloquence and force about the commitment he made earlier this year in all of the speeches which he gave, with the exception of two which dealt exclusively with the Constitution, that in every instance he raised the issue of child poverty because of a sense of deep personal commitment.

I think it is probably appropriate, knowing the hon. gentleman and the depth of his commitment, his sincerity, his compassion for people who have fewer benefits than the rest of us, that he would put as his last motion a motion which is forward looking, which tries to provide for the children of the future, which is compassionate, and which recognizes that there are far too many Canadians who do not share the benefits that the rest of us do. It is a motion, as well, which in its very tone and its phrasing is non-partisan, which seeks the support of members on all sides of the House.

I think it was striking, and I know that members of the press gallery will have noted as well as other Canadians that the tone of the hon. gentleman's remarks today was one which was non-partisan and an appeal for Canadians transcending all differences of philosophy, all differences of region, culture, class, faith and of language to work together to try to deal with the common goal to ensure that all of Canada's children have an opportunity and to ensure that the scourge of poverty is ended. I think the extent to which we can work together in trying to achieve that goal will be a fit legacy for the hon. gentleman for the contribution that he has made to Canadian public life.

There was some speculation in the news media today as to where the hon. gentleman is going after he leaves the federal Parliament. It is not for me to speculate on that and, indeed, I do not know. But I do know that on the strength of having sat in Parliament with him for some 17 years that there is a depth of commitment there to public service which will lead him in whatever capacity, whether in Parliament or outside of Parliament, to continue to have a concern about the welfare of Canadians and to continue to work conscientiously for the betterment of all Canadians. Parliament has been better and the country has been better for his service in Parliament and our best wishes go with him for the future.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Beatty: Mr. Speaker, I would be more effusive in my praise if I had not had the experience last time there was a major party leader's resignation back in 1979 when Mr. Trudeau announced that he was stepping down. The news struck me and I was moved to write a column for my weekly newspapers, praising Mr. Trudeau and his contribution to Canada, saying things which never could have escaped through my lips while he was still party leader, talking about what a tremendous contribution he had made to Canada because I was absolutely confident that he was going.

• (1050)

Two weeks later the government was defeated. We were back into an election campaign and the first thing that greeted me in my weekly newspapers was a column by me praising Mr. Trudeau and saying what a great guy he was. Until the NDP convention is actually over, and until I see the results, this is the last of the praise that I will be offering in the direction of the hon. member for Oshawa.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Beatty: The motion which the hon. member put before the House today asks that the House express its concern for the more than 1 million Canadian children currently living in poverty and seek to achieve the goal of eliminating poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000. Members of the opposition would like to see us agree with this motion, and indeed we do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Beatty: All Canadians, regardless of political affiliation, care deeply about the future of our children and about the future of our country. All Canadians can work together to try to deal with this issue.

There is no question that poverty affects many Canadians. Poverty oppresses more than 3.5 million people in Canada. Despite a generous system of elderly benefits, approximately 450,000 seniors, most of them single, continue in poverty. The problem which is most troubling to us all is that almost one child in six—close to 1 million children—will find it difficult to break out of this vicious cycle.

These numbers are bad enough on a national basis but when we look at the pattern region by region we see even more disturbing trends. In Newfoundland, for instance, we see that more than 25 per cent of the children are poor. In Manitoba, Saskatchewan and New Brunswick the rates are 20 per cent or higher. This is far too high.

[*Translation*]

Canada is not the only country to have reached this conclusion. Every night, two-thirds of the world's children go to bed hungry, and every day more than 38,000 children die of hunger, or because they have no shelter or are not getting proper health care.

One of the objectives of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is to reduce that number. There is only one way to ensure that children enjoy those rights and have a chance to develop: We must deal with the underlying problem, which is poverty.

Now that the convention has been adopted, we intend to support the agreement, in close co-operation with the provinces, so that Canada's name can be added to the list of signatory countries.

[*English*]

But in Canada the problems facing children are much simpler to define than in many of the other countries of the world. For instance, the Convention calls for basic rights for children, including the right to a name. Most of the rights that are listed are fundamental in our society and are already being met in Canada.

We know that the lot of children in Canada has been improving step by step. In 1984, more than 1.1 million children lived in poverty. By 1987, that number had dropped to under 1 million. This is a significant improvement but the number is still too high.

As we look at the goal of eradicating poverty by the year 2000 we have to ask ourselves this. How was this progress achieved and what can we do as the federal Parliament to continue this trend?

There are two ways to put more money into the hands of our children. The first, which was largely the emphasis of the speech by the hon. gentleman from Oshawa, was by redistributing the wealth that we have. The second is by increasing the total amount of wealth available.

Let us talk first about the programs we have to target support to the most needy. The foundation of Canada's support to the needy is the Canada Assistance Plan. This year we expect to transfer $5.1 billion to the provinces for a range of social assistance expenditures. In addition to basic income support payments to families, the Canada Assistance Plan supports social services such as counselling and emergency shelters.

When we began our first mandate in 1984 we were determined that families with children should receive more support. The segment of the population most in need was obviously lower income families. The first thing that we did was to increase the child tax credit by more than 50 per cent. The child tax credit was increased to $565 per child and a new $200 supplement was brought in for children six years old and younger. We wanted to help families break out of poverty. Because 70 per cent of Canadian families have children at home, we knew that we needed a program for small children.

The growing numbers of two-income families and single-parent families showed us that an effective child care program is needed. We have already brought in a $100 million child care initiatives fund and developed child care programs which really work for different communities. This year we expect to spend another $240 million under CAP for subsidized child care spaces. That is a 20 per cent increase in CAP in just one year. All of our spending on child care this year at the federal level will amount to a figure just under $1 billion. We will implement a new national child care program by the end

of the current Parliament, as both the Prime Minister and the Speech from the Throne have announced.

As I have already stated, there are two ways to increase the amount of money available for low-income Canadians. The first clearly is the redistribution of wealth. The second involves increasing the total amount of wealth within a country.

The hon. member for Oshawa made reference to the commitment of President Kennedy to the eradication of poverty. It was President Kennedy who said that all ships float higher on the flood tide. As we can increase national prosperity in Canada, all Canadians should benefit from the increases, both in our ability to finance increased transfers to individuals who are in need in Canadian families and in terms of new opportunities for Canadians.

In 1984 this country had just come through one of the worst recessions seen since 1929. Runaway inflation robbed pensioners of their life savings and of their dignity. The level of unemployment was so high that when young people looked for jobs they were told that their skills simply were not needed.

We embarked on a program to revitalize our economy, enlarging our foreign markets for Canadian goods and services, turning Crown corporations that had outlived their public policy purposes back to the private sector, and deregulating industries which were stifling under government intervention. We needed income tax reform because the system that we had inherited choked initiative. We removed 850,000 lower-income Canadians from the tax rolls. We wanted to free up disposable income and improve incentives for people to work, thereby generating economic activity and jobs for others.

In just five years these and other initiatives have helped to create 1.5 million jobs for Canadians, the majority of them full-time jobs. Retail sales are up by 48 per cent. Manufacturing shipments are up by 28 per cent. It goes a long way to explaining how we are able to remove some 549,000 Canadians from below the poverty line. We are continuing to look for ways to further develop the strategy. Mr. Speaker, we are going to continue to make progress in this area to ensure that economic growth can continue.

An important part of this package showing the government's continuing concern for those with lower incomes is that those with incomes lower than $30,000 will be better off after sales tax reform than they are now. This would be possible because we will have a progressive GST credit. We are doing this because we want Canadian families to have opportunities. This is a prosperous country and each Canadian should have the right to better his or her own situation.

I am a married man and I have two small children. I know how parents agonize over how to raise their children well. The fundamental responsibility for raising their children will always remain with the parents themselves. Within the Department of National Health and Welfare we have taken some important steps to help families with problems.

Perhaps we could call it eleven o'clock at this point, Mr. Speaker, and I could resume discussion of some of these initiatives following Question Period.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We will now proceed to statements by members with the hon. member for Miramichi.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

MIRAMICHI

Mr. Maurice A. Dionne (Miramichi): Mr. Speaker, for the past six months the people of Miramichi have gone through hell. Four people, Mrs. Annie Flamm, Linda and Donna Daughney, and the Rev. James Smith were brutally and senselessly murdered. Nina Flamm was brutally beaten but fortunately survived. Father Smith was the brother of my predecessor, G.A. Percy Smith, who many members will remember. All the victims were gentle and good people who had never hurt anyone.

During the night and early morning the prime suspect was apprehended as a result of the work of brave, careful and dedicated police men and women of the RCMP and the towns of Chatham and Newcastle. I am told that the officer who was instrumental in the apprehension is a female member of the RCMP.

I want to take this opportunity to applaud and thank most sincerely all the brave and courageous men and women who put their lives on the line to bring this awful

nightmare to a successful conclusion. We are fortunate indeed to have such people in our police forces.

I also want to congratulate the people of Miramichi for their stoicism in the face of this awful nightmare.

* * *

• (1100)

THE ELDERLY

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): Mr. Speaker, the B.C. government and the pharmacists have instituted a program of voluntary drug review for our senior citizens. In one case, a senior had 48 bottles of pills on hand. This may occur when old prescriptions are not discarded, when the medications are changed or discontinued, or as a result of different doctors prescribing medications for the same patient.

The elderly are much more likely to develop adverse reactions and be much more sensitive to medications, particularly sedatives and tranquillizers. They are also more likely to be confused as to the directions and may have difficulty remembering if they have taken the medication.

This program is designed to eliminate inadvertent, excessive and duplicate drug use. I would encourage all governments, pharmacists and doctors across Canada to work together to protect the elderly in this way.

* * *

VIA RAIL

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, the fight to save VIA Rail continues across this country. Following on the heels of the Standing Committee on Transport's report that recommended a moratorium on the VIA Rail cuts, rallies are springing up across this country. In Windsor, in Toronto, and yesterday in Vancouver, union members and Canadians rallied in support of rail passenger services.

A group is travelling to North Bay this weekend; troubadours, labour leaders and other Canadians, to point out to the government that VIA Rail is important, it must be maintained.

I want the Minister of Transport to reconsider. In order to assist him in reconsidering, I have booked passage from Ottawa to Toronto, Monday morning, train No. 41, a ticket in my name and a ticket in the name of the Minister of Transport. I would like him to join me, ride to Toronto, talk to the people who use VIA Rail and find out what they think about his decision to cut their services and then he can catch a plane back with me to Ottawa so we can be here for Question Period.

The minister has a ticket to ride, but does he care?

* * *

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL AWARENESS—DRUG ADDICTION

Mr. Jean-Marc Robitaille (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, this is National Drug Awareness Week and it is important for each and every one of us, whatever our field of activity, to combine our efforts to fight the scourge of the various forms of drug addiction.

In this regard, Mr. Speaker, I would point out an important event that I chaired at the beginning of this week, namely the first regional conference on addiction, organized by *Unité Domrémy Lamater*, which brought together more than a hundred participants from all backgrounds—educational, cultural, social, industrial—to be better informed, but especially to establish a joint regional strategy and thus better reach the target population.

It was a success and I wish to mention the outstanding work done by the president of *Unité Domrémy Lamater*, Pierre Sigouin, and by Noël Beaupré and their whole team.

Mr. Speaker, addiction knows no boundaries and everyone must get involved.

* * *

[*English*]

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Gus Mitges (Bruce—Grey): Mr. Speaker, there is no question that the present manufacturers' sales tax works in favour of imports from other countries, creating jobs there at the expense of the Canadian labour force. That is why this tax must be replaced with a new proposed GST tax. In this regard, I have received petitions and correspondence from many people and businesses in my riding pointing out some of the inequities in the proposed tax.

In particular, many ask that all pre-cooked and ready-to-eat food to be consumed at home be treated the same whether purchased in fast food outlets, groceries or

supermarkets as far as the application of the sales tax is concerned.

Others have expressed concern that the proposed tax rate is too high and should be lowered. Still others propose that the tax be abandoned altogether.

I am confident that the government has been listening and will continue to listen carefully to these representations and others and will make the right decision so that the proposed goods and services tax will be as equitable as possible.

* * *

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East): Mr. Speaker, although women have entered the workforce in record numbers over the past few years, their income levels are still only 60 per cent of their male counterparts. Economic security is still a dream for many women and this is especially true for those who are retired or are entering retirement age.

[*Translation*]

In many cases, women who have chosen the more traditional role of homemaker do not have access to the private pension plans which are essential to a decent retirement. Because most of them count on their husband's income and the financial plans he made, they can quickly find themselves in poverty if they are suddenly widowed or some other misfortune strikes. Four out of ten households headed by women in Canada are poor.

[*English*]

A recent report by the National Council of Welfare stated that the disparity of benefits paid to men and women under the Canada Pension Plan is increasing. Instead of introducing regressive pension clawback schemes, this government should be concentrating on programs to improve the quality of pension plans for women.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, as Canadians, we are most fortunate. For the most part, we can send our children to school, go shopping, go to work, and go about our normal daily lives in relative security. We are free of the terror and horror that disrupts daily life in so many countries around the world. Only when terror and horror strikes close to home do we realize how fortunate we are as Canadians. This has been the case in my home province of New Brunswick.

Over the past number of months, as convicted murderer and prison escapee Alan Legere terrified, brutalized and horrified residents of the Miramichi, we were not at ease. I am pleased to report that Alan Legere has been captured and hopefully life in the communities along the Miramichi will gradually return to the quality and standard that we take for granted in this great nation of ours.

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VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, November 25 is the eighth annual International Day to End Violence Against Women. This day was initiated by women in Latin America in 1981 and is now celebrated with marches and demonstrations throughout the world. The threat of violence against women is a growing phenomena in the developing world.

In Mexico, a woman is raped every nine minutes. More than 80 million African women and girls are victims of various forms of genital mutilation. In El Salvador women have banded together within the National Co-ordinating Council of Salvadoran Women known as CONAMUS. Under the shadow of civil war, CONAMUS organized the women of El Salvador and established clinics for battered women and women who have suffered sexual assault. On November 15, in response to the good work of CONAMUS, the Salvadoran military raided and looted their office and destroyed their clinic.

One in ten Canadian women will be abused by her partner. As we mark this special day it is important to remember that violence against women is an ever-increasing problem in Canada and throughout the world.

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[*Translation*]

NATIVE PEOPLES

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, Pope John Paul II granted an audience to the delegation from the Attikamek-Montagnais Council of Quebec and assured

them of his full support in their campaign against low-level military flights over their ancestral land.

In his communiqué, the Pope stated clearly that the Church recognizes Amerindians as the ones mainly responsible for their own development, which must be based on their own spiritual and moral values, that it is with them in this task and supports them in their search for just and equitable solutions to situations that threaten their welfare and the future of their communities.

Mr. Speaker, Amerindians have succeeded in making people in Canada and abroad aware of this cause, on which I have already spoken, declaring myself to be against these low-level military flights.

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[*English*]

LEBANON

Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau—La Lièvre): Mr. Speaker, the tragic news of the assassination of the newly elected president of Lebanon is another cruel and senseless blow aimed at all of the Lebanese people. Such an act of violence can only destroy and further complicate the process of national reconciliation so desperately needed after 15 years of civil war.

I think it is only normal that the Lebanese people in this country should call upon this government which sits in the United Nations on the Security Council. The only solution to the problem is to have an international conference concerning the problem in Lebanon. Obviously, the solution will be achieved if the two invading armies on Lebanese soil go back to their own homelands.

The Middle East is a holy land. Lebanon is as holy for the Lebanese people as for any other people in that area. Therefore, it is the role of the Canadian government to call upon the two invading armies of Israel and Syria to withdraw and regulate the Palestinian question once and for all.

• (1110)

FEDERAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BANK

Mr. Geoff Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, the latest tempest in a teapot over FBDB making loans to companies which operate strip clubs is useful because it raises once again the larger question as to why government would be in the lending business at all. Each government lending agency means a duplication of personnel and facilities and additional expense for Canadians.

We have in Canada an excellent system of private-sector lending institutions, including banks, credit unions and trust companies, all of which are perfectly capable of providing the financial intermediation services that Canadians need. Why on earth do we need another layer of government bureaucracy in the lending business?

Given the national debt and deficit situation and the clear message from Canadians that government should cut spending, I suggest it is time examine the whole question of government involvement in the financial intermediation field.

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NORTHERN TAX ALLOWANCE

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, residents across northern British Columbia and other provinces are expressing outrage over the report of the task force on the northern and isolated tax allowance.

New Democrats have been leading the fight against the regressive recommendations and we are pleased that the member for Prince George—Peace River and a member of cabinet have now joined our call to scrap the report. In a November 17 Prince George *Citizen* report the minister is quoted as saying that he is disappointed with the task force recommendations and that he will ask the finance minister to take another look at the report.

The minister should listen to northerners, New Democrats, and his cabinet colleagues and scrap the task force report.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Mr. Speaker, since accessibility to the American market as promised during the free trade debate is now seen as a myth, as witnessed by the countervail being imposed on Canadian pork entering the American market, when can the Canadian farmer expect to see some counter steps taken or hear some positive announcements by the government? This would put stability back into our domestic markets, since that expanding market in the U.S. is gradually being closed through harassment, as the Minister of Agriculture so aptly described, according to a news item in the *The Ottawa Citizen* on October 28. The minister said: "Rather than harmonizing, we're being subjected to harassment and it is timely and necessary to remind our American friends of the spirit within which the free trade agreement was negotiated."

When can farmers expect to hear the plans that the government has to counter this harassment?

* * *

[*Translation*]

OPPOSITION TO BRUNELLE REPORT

Mr. Darryl L. Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to protest against the Brunelle report on isolated posts in the north and other areas. You will understand that my constituents, and I agree with them 100 per cent, are very upset about the possibility of further cuts in certain programs. We are really isolated, because we lack a number of essential services. There are a number of examples of this in remote areas. Take our transportation network, which is quite primitive compared to the rest of the country. Compensation through this isolation allowance makes it possible to level some of the disparities in the system, in a country the size of Canada. Our economy has benefited from this allowance, Mr. Speaker. The young, the not so young and the elderly are starting to enjoy living in this part of the country. Before making this decision, I think we should sit down and consider ways of giving people a fair deal. Today I want to ask the Minister of Finance to reject the conclusions of the Brunelle report so that we can discuss the matter again.

[*English*]

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, the harbourfront of the city of Dartmouth is one of the last underdeveloped waterfronts of any major city in Canada. Over the last number of years, the city administration has examined various redevelopment options which would encompass a mix of recreational, commercial and residential development.

One of the major impediments to this project going ahead is Canadian National's marshalling yards located directly on the waterfront. In the past, CN has either refused to cost share any studies of harbourfront development or to fund any studies dealing with the relocation of the marshalling yards to other parts of the city of Dartmouth.

Early this week I met with CN president Ron Lawless to discuss this urgent and pressing matter. I have asked no more than the city of Dartmouth be treated in the same manner as that of Toronto, Edmonton, Montreal or other Canadian cities where CN has participated in harbourfront or downtown redevelopment in partnership with municipalities and the private sector.

I therefore ask this government, and in particular the Minister of Transport, to support this important initiative to the fullest, and to encourage Canadian National's active and early participation in this very necessary, timely and exciting proposal.

EDUCATION

Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, this current week has been selected to mark the great contribution which our community colleges and technical schools make to the life of our country.

Canada's community colleges and technical schools offer a wide diversity of job-oriented, educational programs designed to create the skills which will be required as Canadians face the impressive challenges of our national future. Graduates from these programs step into every area of our nation's life, using their new skills and knowledge to make a significant difference both for their own lives and for Canada.

Whether it be in the fields of health or social services, in our primary manufacturing industries or in the business services sector, the impact of community college

training on our social and economic fabric is enormously beneficial.

As the theme from New Brunswick's community colleges states, they are reflective of our province and responsive to our people. Whether you need the skills to enter the new job market or the upgrading to improve your present position, they have the training that works. I feel certain that those words speak for all community colleges and technical schools right across Canada.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

EL SALVADOR

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. This morning I spoke to Miss Karen Ridd, the young Canadian aid worker who has just returned from El Salvador and who also happens to be a constituent of mine. She spoke of the very deep and urgent need for this country to press for a negotiated settlement in that strife-ridden country, and particularly for the protection of human rights. The Catholic bishops who appeared before the external affairs committee yesterday said exactly the same thing, that it is time for Canada to take advantage of its new position in the OAS and to take action in this area.

Can the Deputy Prime Minister tell us if the Government of Canada has expressed its deep desire for the government of El Salvador to begin negotiating a settlement in that country? Have we expressed our concern to the United States government, suggesting that it stop providing military aid to the government of El Salvador during this strife? In other words, what action is the Government of Canada taking to try to bring an end to that horrible situation in El Salvador?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Monique Landry (Minister for External Relations): Mr. Speaker, I can inform the hon. member that, with all the members of this House, we deplore what is happening today in El Salvador. Of course we are trying every possible means to make this terrible situation come to an end and provide some relief for the population. At the OAS meeting in Washington yesterday, we discussed the situation with the entire team, and I can inform the hon. member that talks have now ended but will resume Monday, and of course we hope that as a result of all these negotiations, the situation will come to an end and peace will return to El Salvador.

[*English*]

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the minister who has just spoken. Yesterday when the Catholic bishops appeared before the committee, they expressed a very important concern that there be a form of independent inquiry and independent protection for human rights in El Salvador. They had just returned from the funeral of the six slain Jesuit priests and said that the threat, the danger and the menace that exists in that country is repressive.

Has Canada taken advantage of its new position in the OAS to ask that organization to undertake an independent inquiry into the deaths of those priests? Have we or will we use our position on the Security Council to ask for an international presence in that country to protect all those people whose human rights are presently being threatened or being menaced? In other words, is Canada taking specific initiatives to try to provide for the protection of the lives of the people of El Salvador?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Landry: Mr. Speaker, I am of course aware of the fact that three priests appeared yesterday before the Standing Committee on External Affairs, where they too expressed their concern about the situation.

The hon. member knows very well that the government wishes to see a negotiated peace in El Salvador, and we have indicated our position through the OAS. We shall continue to urge all parties, all governments to cease their intervention in El Salvador, and we continue to hope that the parties will be able to sit down and negotiate a lasting peace, which is the only way to bring back peace to this country and eventually ensure the development and well-being of the people of El Salvador.

• (1120)

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Speaker, as the Minister knows, Canada can act alone right now with regard to El Salvador. For example, we can have an open-door policy for refugees. We can make our aid conditional on respect

for human rights. We can also increase our diplomatic presence.

My question is this: Will the Government take immediate action to help Salvadoran refugees? Will it change our aid program to reflect our concerns? Will our diplomatic presence in El Salvador be increased? Indeed, will the Government take action to help that country?

Mrs. Landry: Mr. Speaker, again, I think I understand my hon. colleague's concerns.

We now have in El Salvador two representatives from our embassy in San José who are there to help with the situation.

Refugees are quite able now to apply as provided for in our system and we believe that the present staff there is sufficient.

Of course, if the need should increase, we would agree to add staff to meet the demand.

As for our aid, I would repeat to my hon. colleague that given the present situation, we saw fit to suspend the distribution of aid projects, if I may say. But I would repeat that in spite, perhaps, of my hon. colleague's objections, the aid which has been delivered is really reaching the displaced and impoverished people. Many have confirmed that our aid projects do really reach the people. Last year, these projects helped 200,000 people suffering from the situation in El Salvador.

I can assure my hon. colleague that we shall continue to monitor the situation very closely and act so as to restore lasting peace to El Salvador.

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FISHERIES

Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Beauséjour): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

In early October, the Prime Minister tried to reassure thousands of Atlantic lobster fishermen that they would not be affected by American legislation to limit the import of live lobsters of a certain size into the United States. An industry of over $100 million is at stake!

The Prime Minister told us that he had spoken with the President of the United States and that External Affairs had undertaken a series of very special representations.

In spite of all that, we know that the U.S. bill has now passed all stages and only requires the President's signature.

Obviously, the Prime Minister and External Affairs failed completely in their task.

So here is my question: Where is the Minister of Fisheries on this issue? What other representations does the Government intend to make to ensure that Atlantic fishermen will not be affected by this U.S. measure which threatens to cause them serious losses? And finally, how come, with the free trade treaty, we are still harassed in this way by the Americans?

[*English*]

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of State (Forestry)): Mr. Speaker, perhaps you would permit me to answer on behalf of the Minister of Fisheries who is unavoidably absent today.

As my hon. friend knows, the minister is very much seized with this issue. It has been dealt with at the highest level. As the member himself said, the Prime Minister discussed this issue with the President himself and the President's signature is not on any document. I can tell the hon. member that the minister is very much concerned as is the hon. member and others, and we are on top of the situation.

Mr. Robichaud: The minister is now seized with this question, the fishermen will be seized this coming Monday when they set their traps in Nova Scotia for a new lobster season.

What assurances can the government give the fishermen that they will not be affected by their ineffective action? What assurances can he give them that the price of lobster will not be affected and that the revenue of all those families will not be affected. Can he give them those assurances?

Mr. Oberle: Mr. Speaker, with respect, the hon. member has acknowledged that action has been taken. The Prime Minister discussed this issue with the President. So why do we not wait to see what the outcome of those deliberations are and not raise any fears that may not be justified.

Oral Question

CHILD CARE

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. The minister knows, as we were talking about it in debate earlier this morning, that there is not only a serious but a growing problem of poverty among Canada's children.

There are in fact more than 1,000 bodies active from coast to coast in Canada, providing food for the poor, including 151,000 children every month. Food banks are growing so rapidly that they are now outpacing the number of McDonald's outlets in the country. In the city of Toronto there are more food banks than McDonald's outlets.

Given the expression of concern that we heard from him this measure announced on the part of the government to deal with the serious problem—will the minister on behalf of the government now tell us what measures the government is taking to alleviate this alarming situation.

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons why the hon. gentleman has not heard yet of the government's proposals is that the very eloquent speech that he gave went on for some 40 minutes. I have not had a chance to complete my remarks. I hope over the course of my remarks following Question Period to talk about some of the initiatives that we have taken and some of our goals in terms of eliminating child poverty.

Our approach is essentially twofold. The first is to ensure that in transfers to individuals and to families, adequate assistance is given to ensure that we can deal with problems of poverty. The second, which he did not deal with in his remarks, was the question of ensuring prosperity and growth in Canada which creates opportunity for all Canadians.

As a result of the government's policies, we have significantly decreased the number of Canadians in poverty over the course of the last five years, including the number of Canadian children in poverty.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, I say to the minister that I look forward to hearing the concluding part of his speech after Question Period, but I also want to say that the government's reliance on continual growth in the economy will not be adequate in the future just as it has not been in the past.

The economy has been growing in the last few years, but while it has been growing the situation for children has been getting worse. There has been over a 13 per cent increase in poverty among children in recent years.

In those things that he may be announcing this afternoon, will the government now deal with the level of the federal minimum wage? The federal minimum wage now is the lowest in all of Canada, lower than all the provinces. An increase in the federal minimum wage would not cost the federal treasury scarcely a cent. It would be obligatory for all those companies working within federal jurisdictional authority. Will the federal government now show some leadership to the provinces by announcing an immediate increase in the level of the federal minimum wage?

Mr. Beatty: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. gentleman knows it is not for the Minister of National Health and Welfare to announce changes to the federal minimum wage. Obviously that is a question which should be put elsewhere.

The hon. member should be careful when he uses statistics. He has been here long enough to recognize the fact that the base that is used is very important in determining what the statistics mean.

The hon. gentleman says there has been a 13 per cent increase in child poverty. As he will recall, in my remarks I took as the base line 1984 when this government came into office. In 1984, more than 1.1 million children lived in poverty. By 1987, that number had dropped to under a million. That is a 20 per cent decrease.

The hon. gentleman may say that there are fewer children, the birth rate has fallen. It has not fallen by 20 per cent. The fact is that the number of Canadians living in poverty and the number of children living in poverty has decreased during the term of this government in office. It has not increased. I think the hon. gentleman should recognize that fact.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, the minister knows that we are operating with different statistics, but as has been the case in the past if the government has statistics which show that the degree of the problem is not what I said it was compared to recent years, I am quite prepared to accept that.

• (1130)

Also as the minister knows, whatever the nuance or difference between those statistics may be, the alarming reality is that we still have over one million children living in poverty. That presumably to him, as well as to me, is unacceptable.

[*Translation*]

The last question concerns what the Government does concretely to finance home building.

Ten years ago, the government financed the construction of 30,000 new homes. Now it is only 20,000, a major reduction.

Would the Government, and the minister speaks for the government today, would the minister announce today or soon that this figure of 20,000 will be increased to provide more adequate housing for the poor in Canada?

[*English*]

Mr. Beatty: Mr. Speaker, again the hon. gentleman is asking me as Minister of National Health and Welfare to make announcements on behalf of my colleague. He could more properly put the question to him.

What I can do, though, is give the House some information about the progress that has been made in dealing with poverty during the tenure of this government. Some 550,000 Canadians have escaped poverty since the government took office according to Statistics Canada low income measures. The poverty rate declined to 14.1 per cent in 1987 from 16.8 per cent in 1984. The child tax credit was increased by more than 50 per cent between 1984 and 1989.

In addition a new CTC supplement for children aged six years and under was introduced. There was a refundable sales tax credit introduced in 1986 to help support low income families. It will double by 1990 to $140 per adult and $70 per child.

The 1988 income tax reform removed 850,000 Canadians from the tax rolls. I accept the point the hon. gentleman makes that as long as there is one Canadian who lives in poverty, as long as there is one Canadian who cannot share the benefits of the prosperity that we have in society, more needs to be done.

I think we are on the right track. The fact that we have reduced poverty in Canada and that we continue to do so indicates both the commitment on the part of the government and the knowledge on the part of the government on how to achieve this.

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FEDERAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BANK

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for the Federal Business Development Bank.

Yesterday the minister refused to table in the House a list of all strip joints funded directly or indirectly by the Federal Business Development Bank, preferring to tell members and Canadians that such information was available from the House of Commons Order Paper.

Now we discover through the media that the minister has ordered a probe of the FBDB to determine how many such loans have been made.

Given that such is the case, is the minister now prepared to commit himself to tabling the list, either now if he has it or as soon as it is provided to him by the officials of the Federal Business Development Bank? If not, why not?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I do not believe the hon. member is accurate in stating what was asked of me yesterday, nor my response. I was asked yesterday for a list of notaries and legal agents who work for the FBDB, and my response to that was that that is more properly directed to the Order Paper.

I do not recall in answer to the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell mentioning the Order Paper at all, so I think he has mixed up a couple of questions there. I think he should reread *Hansard* from yesterday.

On the question of the propriety of funding nightclubs that feature this kind of entertainment I think I have answered quite clearly. It is improper. We have beefed up the policy of the bank to make sure it does not happen again.

I have asked the bank to examine and to make sure if, in looking back over the records, it is able to establish a

flagrant disregard for that policy on the part of some officers, they should be dealt with appropriately, and if in fact they were errors of omissions, if you will, loopholes in the policy and so on, then to be sure that the new policy will prevent that happening in the future.

I have not asked them to assemble a detailed list but if it is part of their examination, and if the hon. member has some curiosity in this regard and it will not violate business confidence or trample on the rights of people who need not have their rights trampled on, I will certainly give consideration to his request.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, first I want to tell the minister that on page 6094 of *Hansard* of yesterday I specifically asked him to table the list in question.

[*Translation*]

I would now like to put my supplementary question to the Deputy Prime Minister. Is the government prepared to initiate, as of today, a complete investigation by a parliamentary committee of the administrative practices of the Federal Business Development Bank? Is the government prepared to respond to this issue today?

[*English*]

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, in answer to the first question, I told the hon. member that his reference to the fact that I had suggested he put it on the Order Paper was improper. That response on the Order Paper was in regard to another question. He knows that. He should not try to misrepresent what I said in the House.

In terms of an investigation, as I have indicated I have instructed the President of the Federal Business Development Bank to determine how in fact we have this situation where strip clubs receive mortgage financing from the bank in contradiction of the bank's policy.

In terms of a committee of the House of Commons, under parliamentary reform a committee is free to take whatever action the committee decides to take.

[*Translation*]

LAY-OFFS

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Prime Minister. Yesterday in Montreal, Fonderie CSF announced 250 lay-offs at its plant in East Montreal. Since the beginning of this year, we have now had over 80 lay-off announcements involving nearly 7,000 workers in Montreal. When does the Government intend to take these lay-offs seriously? And what is the Government prepared to do to reverse this deplorable situation?

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of State (Youth) and Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons)): Mr. Speaker, I don't know why but every Friday, the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce rises in the House and asks his usual question, claiming that jobs have been lost in Montreal and that the government has done nothing about it. And every Friday I give him more or less the same answer. I may inform the hon. member that he has a very selective memory, and that from time to time, plants close down in Montreal as they do anywhere else. However, there are also plants that open their doors in Montreal, thus creating new jobs. In fact, one of the reasons why Montreal and the Quebec economy are more dynamic is that in Quebec and Montreal, the entire economic community, the economic elite was in favour of the Free Trade Agreement and Bill C-22. We have created far more jobs in Montreal during the past five years than were created under the previous Liberal government, and that will continue, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, it so happens that every week there are more and more lay-offs at Montreal. The answer of the minister is a very harsh and cold response to the situation of these workers.

Since the beginning of this year nearly 7,000 lay-offs have been announced in Montreal: 900 hundred plus at VIA Rail, 500 at Domtar, 200 at Eastern Airlines, 590 at Gillette, 1,100 at Simpson's, 360 at Weston's, 380 at Vickers, and the list goes on and on. These are real lay-offs affecting real persons, not simply estimates based on surveys.

I want to ask the minister again: What is the government going to do about this deplorable situation at Montreal?

Mr. Charest: Mr. Speaker, the member from Notre-Dame-de-Grâce goes through the same routine every Friday. He gets up and puts forward a list of jobs that would have been lost when in fact there are thousands of jobs that have been created on the Island of Montreal and in the Montreal area since this government has been in power.

The unemployment rate has been down not only across the country but also in the Montreal area and the province of Quebec. One of the reasons why unemployment is down in Montreal is that this government, for example, put forward Bill C-22, a bill his party obstructed. This created thousands of jobs on the Island of Montreal. Why did the Liberals do that?

Another good example is the space agency that went into Montreal. There are numerous measures that this government put forward, and the best answer I can give to this House is that if they want to compare their record of 1980 to 1984 to our record from 1984 to today, I think the answer will be very clear for all the people of Montreal and of Canada.

* * *

• (1140)

FEDERAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BANK

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, my question is also directed to the minister responsible for the Federal Business Development Bank. He will know that yesterday loans out to strip joints and topless bars and so on had reached $3 million. By this morning another $600,000 has been uncovered. It is going up like a fund-raising chart by the day.

He will be aware of the rage that is growing across the country from the small business community and people like the hon. member from Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia who has joined with the chairman of the finance committee to condemn the government for failing to act and failing to monitor adequately to ensure that loans in the millions of dollars were not being made to strip joints and the like.

Recognizing just how outraged Canadians are as they learn more about this situation, will the minister indicate that indeed an investigation is being conducted and that he will report to the House the extent of the loans that have been made to these kinds of business operations?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I would hope the hon. member would agree with me it is appropriate that immediately upon becoming aware of this situation, even the one case, it brought about that policy change. The fact that there was more than one case is in a sense immaterial. There should not even be one. We have introduced the policy. I hope he would have the grace to admit that was the appropriate action to take.

I hope he would also have the grace to admit that I have asked the president to ascertain whether in fact any of the loans in question occurred as a result of flagrant disregard for what had been the policy all along, since 1944 I am informed, of not funding these kinds of organizations and how that occurred. If it occurred through administrative error, he is to ensure me through whatever legal advice is necessary that in fact the existing policy will prevent that from happening in the future.

As I indicated earlier to questions from other members, we are looking into the files. We know they go back as far as 1972. It did not start in 1984.

This minister has not looked into a single loan of the FBDB. I have not authorized a single loan. It is a Crown corporation, one of those government run organizations the NDP likes to see in operation. It operated at arm's length. It made decisions contrary to government policy. Remedial action is being taken.

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, today we found out more about loans from the Federal Business Development Bank to clubs which exploit and degrade women. These loans bring the total so far to $3.5 million of taxpayers' money used for these clubs.

At the same time this government has cut $2 million for the funding of women's organizations, despite intensive lobbying by both the government's own status of women department and women's groups across the country. The FBDB has refused to set up a special fund for women entrepreneurs.

When will the government redress the balance between the millions of dollars given to businesses that degrade and exploit women and the millions cut from

programs designed to help women participate fully in Canadian society?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I have to repeat, because the questions keep coming back with the accusation that somehow there is concurrence or agreement on the part of the government for those loans, that there is not. There never has been. We do not support it. It would be helpful if members would try to avoid the temptation of putting that accusation into their preambles.

It is perhaps technical, but the fact is that there has been no taxpayers' subsidies involved here. In fact the FBDB makes a small profit. It should not be making a profit off of these kinds of loans, but it does make a profit.

Third, let me say that over the past three years the bank has authorized some 16,000 loans for $2.7 billion.

Most of the loans are less than $100,000. Small business is its clientele.

I do not have the exact numbers available, but I will look into them because the small business secretariat of my department tells me that, in fact overwhelmingly, women are a much higher proportion of small business entrepreneurs than men. They have a higher success ratio, I might add.

I would not be at all surprised that after going through these statistics we will find that the FBDB funds more women owned small businesses than men owned small businesses. I hope that is the case.

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FINANCE

Mr. Geoff Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance and concerns the suggestion that there are thousands of Canadians, individual and corporate, who are "profitable but pay no tax". A couple of obvious reasons are that they carry forward farm and business losses from previous years and the use of business investment tax credits on the purchase of production equipment, and there are regional incentives.

I want to ask the Minister: Are these the real reasons? Who are these individual Canadians and Canadian corporations? Are they really profitable and what are the reasons for these allegations?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has pointed out two reasons why there are profitable corporations that do not pay taxes. The interesting observation that I would make is that the NDP referred to 93,000 large corporations in 1987, the sense being that 93,000 large corporations are not paying tax.

If we go back to the large corporations tax that we introduced in the last budget, only 3,500 corporations qualified to pay for that. There are a large number of very small corporations that are in that 93,000 number as has been identified by the NDP.

The second point I would make is that that information was for the calendar year 1987. That was the year before tax reform came into play. It also is before the impact of tax reform on financial institutions.

I believe one-third of the corporations in the listing of the NDP were in the financial services area. The large amount of money in that is with banks and large trust companies.

The tax reform that came into effect in 1988 is directly pointed at ensuring that banks and large financial organizations do pay their fair share of tax. They are paying tax now; they were not paying tax in 1987. That is clearly a demonstration of the resolve this government has of making sure that we have a fair corporate tax system and that those who should be paying tax do pay tax.

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IMMIGRATION

Mr. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister in the absence of the Minister of Employment and Immigration. I notice he also walked out. However, it is for whoever wants to get up and answer it.

Some Hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Beatty: That was before you even got up.

Mr. Karygiannis: In August, while visiting England to celebrate—

An Hon. Member: Where did you find this guy?

Mr. Karygiannis: If members across the hall listen, there might be something they want to hear about human rights.

In August, while visiting England to celebrate the Ahmadian centenary, a request was submitted regarding a number of Ahmadian refugees in England whose visas were expiring and faced deportation back to Pakistan. They expressed their wish to come to Canada.

The Ahmadian Muslims are facing many forms of persecution in Pakistan. An official at the Canadian Embassy, Mr. Gerard, gave me assurances that he would give this matter his immediate attention. To this date nothing has been done.

Would the minister responsible instruct her officials to make haste in processing the necessary documentation for these people so that they may finally get on with rebuilding their lives?

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of State (Youth) and Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport)): Mr. Speaker, it might be of some use for the hon. member to know that the Deputy Prime Minister left at approximately 11.40 because he had a scheduled flight to take and a previous engagement. I think it might be useful for him to know that when such things happen it is not always within our own control, and that he was here as is usually the case doing his duty.

I can't say I was very surprised by the remark. Is this not the member who suggested that we should throw Quebeckers into the ocean, I think? It is the same type of remark.

I will be very happy to take up the representations that the hon. member has just made and to transmit them this day to the Department of Employment and Immigration so that it may offer its usual rapid response.

• (1150)

Mr. Karygiannis: Mr. Speaker, I did approach the Minister of Employment and Immigration a week and a half ago and I was expecting an answer. However to this date I have received nothing.

My supplementary question, if somebody would have the decency to answer it, is: Would the government instruct the minister responsible to make haste and instruct her officials in England who are fully aware of what is going on to proceed with these particular cases because their families back in Pakistan are being persecuted?

Mr. Charest: Mr. Speaker, as I have already said, I will take up this matter with the minister as rapidly as possible and get back to the hon. member as rapidly as possible.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TAXATION

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. According to the Association provinciale des constructeurs d'habitations du Québec, the GST, and I quote: "—will increase the price of homes by at least 2 per cent and in the long run restrict access to home ownership in Quebec". Since there is already a lack of affordable housing, how can the Minister justify this new sales tax on housing, and furthermore, how is he going to deal with the problems that will ensue?

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I do not accept the numbers that the hon. member has put before the House.

We have demonstrated in the technical paper that as a result of the very generous housing rebate the impact of the GST on the price of housing will be quite limited when you take into account that there is an existing hidden sales tax, a sales tax that I am sure the hon. member does not agree we should keep. We need to move to this new sales tax system, but there is that existing sales tax in the price of a new house which is about equivalent to the net of the GST less the housing rebate. So in the large majority of communities across the country there will be no increase in the price of houses.

Mr. Manley: Mr. Speaker, the minister has the wonderful capacity to dismiss everybody else's figures on this and all of the criticisms of the GST.

It is an amazing thing, not just the construction people in Quebec but elsewhere in Canada have shot the department's figures full of holes on the housing side. The minister knows that the tax on housing is unfair. He knows that its burden is going to fall most heavily on the major cities like Toronto and Vancouver, and he knows

that his attempt to claw back the housing rebate has a major loophole in it.

In the most recent Gallup survey, which I am sure has been brought to the minister's attention, done for the Canadian Federation of Independent Business only 7 per cent of Canadians still support the GST.

Why does the minister not admit that his tax first of all should not apply to housing? Second, why does he not do what Canadians are demanding and withdraw the GST and bring about some real tax reform based on fairness and ability to pay?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member refers to my not accepting figures of other people. Let me refer him to a quote from *The Edmonton Journal* to tell you why I do not accept the figures of other people.

This is a statement made by an unnamed senior treasury official in the Government of Alberta who said that "the Treasurer of Alberta made a simple math error" in the figures he had been quoting quite aggressively about the impact of the GST.

I also point out to the hon. member that the provinces have a report. It was leaked over two weeks ago. We have not seen this report, but we have seen that the chief economist of the Conference Board who did the analytical work for that report has distanced himself from the conclusions that have been draw by the provincial treasurers and finance ministers, saying that he regrets the conclusions that have been drawn by the treasurers and that finance ministers have been used; they are too pessimistic. He said he would take the more optimistic side of the analysis he presented to them. He believes that the result has been an unfortunate and misleading one.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Yesterday, the minister joined the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans in announcing a fishing ban and consumption advisory for commercial, recreational and native fishing for crabs, clams, oysters, prawns and shrimp. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans is further quoted as saying that the poisonous dioxins have been found in shellfish, crabs and bottomfish.

A lot of this food is in the food distribution system. Some of it is in our homes, some on retail store shelves, and in grocery warehouses.

The consumption advisory is what bothers me. Would the minister recommend to the people who have these products on their shelves that they consume them or throw them out? Indeed, would the minister feed these products to his own children or his own grandchildren?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, certainly not to my own grandchildren. When we issued the advisory what we did was to indicate by type of fish whether they should be consumed or not. I would be pleased to make available for the hon. gentleman copies of that advisory so he could look by type of fish, by location in terms of where it was caught, whether it poses a threat to human health, whether there should be limitations in terms of consumption, or whether it should not be consumed at all.

Mr. Stupich: I am not sure whether the minister was talking about the food that is already on shelves or whether he is talking about what might have been fished had they not banned fishing. He did not make that clear.

That is not the end of the story.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, perhaps my question should be to the Minister of the Environment. Environment Canada and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans are requesting the companies in the areas affected by these closures to stop pouring these poisons into the water. They are requesting them.

This is not a new problem. These problems have been operating for two, three and four decades. All we are doing at this stage is asking them not to continue doing it or asking them to change their habits. This problem arose because the government did not accept its responsibility to deal with this problem even when it knew about it years ago.

What plans does it have to tighten up on those procedures? What plans does it have to insist that the pulp mills clean up their act and to start levying fines if they do not?

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the results of those studies stem from an operation which was launched last year by our department to know more about the level of dioxin and furans in effluent waters around those mills. We now have the conclusions. I will send letters to all companies across Canada next week notifying them that a new regulation will be enacted next year.

This regulation will call for the virtual elimination of all furans and dioxins throughout Canada. It will be a very tough regulation. It will oblige the companies to change the technology and process. This work will be done.

We have warned the companies last March that we were drafting those new regulations. Many companies now have begun to change the process, and we think that by next year we will have eliminated those very dangerous toxins all over Canada.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General, the minister responsible for prisons and prison security.

Over the past number of months convicted murderer and escapee Allan Legere has terrified and horrified the people of northeast New Brunswick, the Miramichi region. What assurances can the minister give this House and all Canadians that the series of events, mistakes and misjudgments that led to the escape of this individual will not happen again.

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Solicitor General I would like to advise the House that when that occurrence took place there was a full internal inquiry into the reasons for the escape. It is my understanding from the documents available to me that all or most of the suggestions in the report have been implemented in order that this will not occur again.

• (1200)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: To conclude question period there will be one question from the member for Kenora—Rainy River and one question for the member for Saskatoon—Dundurn.

* * *

CANADIAN CENTRE FOR OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister of the Environment. It relates to the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. I do not think that the government understands the ramifications of the decision to withdraw funding for the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. Canadians believe environmental issues are a number one priority today. The centre had plans to provide crucial information to Canadians on the environment. When the government decided to withdraw its funding, the centre was forced to put a stop to those plans.

My question is this: How can this government claim on the one hand to be concerned about the environment but, on the other hand, cut the funding to this centre? Would the minister explain this to the House and will he guarantee the future of the centre to Canadians who are very interested in environmental issues in this country?

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of State (Youth) and Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport)): Mr. Speaker, my understanding of this issue is that the government is not necessarily the only source of funding for this centre. Other alternatives can reasonably be looked at as to whether those who have a stake in the centre should also be called upon to help fund the centre. Beyond that, I will be happy to make some representations to the Minister of Labour.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE OF CANADA

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Mr. Speaker, there are 2,200 public servants off the job from federal vessels. My question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board. The issue of wage parity is one which any thinking person can certainly support. People who face daily risk to save lives should be decently paid regardless of which coast of the country they live on, whether they live near the Great Lakes or work on the Great Lakes or on the St. Lawrence. These public

servants are anxious to get back to work but they want to see fairness prevail. Will the minister use his office to bargain constructively and do the right thing by immediately establishing wage parity across the country and help to bargain for a fair and liveable wage for these esteemed public servants?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the President of the Treasury Board is not in the House today. As the hon. member knows, my colleague is very much aware and very much involved in the discussions on this particular matter. I believe he commented on it in the House three or four days ago. Certainly I will draw the attention of the President of Treasury Board to the question of the hon member and I expect he will get back to him next week.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

WAYS AND MEANS

TABLING OF NOTICE OF MOTION

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give notice of a ways and means motion to amend the Income Tax Act, and I ask that an order of the day be designated to debate the motion.

* * *

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table in both official languages the government responses to several petitions.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION

PRESENTATION OF REPORT OF DELEGATE TO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE POLLUTION OF THE SEAS

Hon. David MacDonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34, I have the honour to present to the House the report of the Nordic Council's International Conference on the Pollution of the Seas in Copenhagen, Denmark from October 16 to October 18, 1989, in both official languages.

I would just say, Your Honour, since this invitation came through you, I was asked to lead this delegation along with the official critic on the environment, the Member for Hamilton East, the Member for Skeena, the official spokesman for his party, and Senator Robertson of the other place.

This important conference attempted to urge a number of major advances with respect to the marine environment, in particular the ratification of the Law of the Sea in which Canada played such a crucial role, a series of measures to restore the marine environment of the North Atlantic, North Sea and the Arctic Ocean, urge a 50 per cent reduction of toxic and bio–accumulating waste in the marine environment, a ratification of the 1989 Basle Convention and a ban on ocean dumping and incineration. I believe the initiative of the Nordic countries to call this conference, which included both eastern and western Europe and Canada, was an important advance and I look forward to a further follow–up of the important decisions and discussion that took place at that time.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Jean J. Charest (for the President of the Privy Council) moved for leave to introduce Bill C–47, an Act to amend the Canada Elections Act.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Shall the hon. minister have leave to introduce the Bill?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: When shall the bill be read the second time? At the next sitting of the House?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

* * *

[*English*]

PETITIONS

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present a petition on behalf of a number of residents of the province of Manitoba concerning the proposed goods and services tax that the government is presenting. These petitioners present the ways in which the tax will unfairly affect them and they ask humbly that the government withdraw this goods and services tax.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to present a petition today on behalf of a number of western Canadians who point out a whole set of reasons why they are disenchanted and very disappointed with the government's decision to reduce and curtail VIA Rail service, and they are asking the government to reverse that decision and actually invest in an effort to improve and modernize our passenger rail service, as virtually every other western industrialized nation has done.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, on a second issue, there are hundreds of petitioners who point out their concern with the government's goods and services tax and are asking the government to reconsider what it is doing and essentially forget the tax.

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour and duty today to present petitions from my constituency of Saskatoon—Humboldt and the constituency of the Minister of National Defence. These constituents ask the government to reject the goods and services tax and to put in place a tax that is more fair to all Canadians and not one that is regressive.

It is interesting that small-town Saskatchewan is supplying these petitions as in many cases every member of the community signs the petition.

Mr. Robert E. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition from roughly 800 residents of the riding of Comox—Alberni on the west coast of Canada who call upon Parliament to reject the current proposal for a goods and services tax which they characterize as shifting the tax burden on to ordinary Canadians through a regressive consumption tax instead of through real tax reform, and they call for reform of the taxation system so that there is an effective minimum tax on wealthy individuals and corporations.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of private music teachers in my constituency, and I know that this reflects the concerns of music teachers in Manitoba and across Canada, I want to present this petition which asks for the abolition of the goods and services tax on music, which is an enrichment for all of us. It is another tax on education, another tax on culture and another tax on children and others who, quite rightly, profit from music education.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to present a petition from another 100 residents of Ottawa West and other ridings in the national capital region objecting to the fact that the government has increased the manufacturers' sales tax by 50 per cent, from 9 per cent to 13.5 per cent, and now proposes to replace that increased tax by the goods and services tax. These petitioners call upon Parliament to reject the proposed goods and services tax.

• (1210)

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, it is my duty and honour today to rise to present a petition on behalf of a number of producers from western Canada who are concerned about the future that this government is providing with respect to agriculture.

They are particularly concerned with the fact that the government has removed oats from the jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board and are concerned over the future of supply management and orderly marketing in this country.

They call upon this government to replace under the jurisdiction of the Wheat Board and to give oats and barley the same protection that wheat now has under the Canadian Wheat Board.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions from residents in my part of British Columbia who wish to bring attention to this tax-crazed government.

The first petition is with regard to the additional tax on long distance calls which they feel is an unfair burden on northern and rural Canadians who must use these services.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, my second petition is on the grief and suffering tax as it is known across the country. The residents of the riding of Caribou—Chilcotin and other areas are expressing their concern to this government in introducing this very unfair tax.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to Standing Order 36 with two petitions signed by a number of residents from Calgary, Alberta and the cities of Revelstoke, Kimberley and the communities of Winfield, Nakusp, Westbank and Burton, all in the southeast corner of British Columbia.

The petitioners condemn the cancelling of the Canadian line of the VIA system and call upon Parliament to maintain VIA Rail's present national network to upgrade VIA Rail with new equipment and to give VIA Rail the sufficient budget to maintain its national mandate for passenger service.

VICTIMS OF CRIME

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise under the provisions of Standing Order 36 to present to the government a petition signed by Vernon residents, members of the Communities Against Sexual Abuse, that call on the government to revise the laws of Canada and allow the Canada Evidence Act to better serve victims with disabilities, allowing them to communicate their account of their victimization in court.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to also present to the House today again under the provisions of Standing Order 36, my first instalment consisting of 88 petitions, a total of 7,500 signatures, residents of the Okanagan—Shuswap area, who re simply outraged with the government's proposed goods and services tax.

The 7,500 petitioners call upon the government to reject the proposed goods and services tax and to consult with business, labour and consumer groups to reach a broad consensus on reform of the tax system before implementing further changes and to ensure that there is a process of fair tax reform that will ensure a healthy climate for future economic growth in Canada.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 133 and 164.

[*Text*]

IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE BOARD

Question No. 133—**Mr. Heap:**

1. What number of person-years are allocated to the Immigration and Refugee Board?

2. What number of these person-years will be applied to the Appeals Division of the IRB?

3. Will any adjudicators now being hired be solely responsible for refugee claims or will they work in other areas?

Hon. Barbara Jean McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): 1. For the fiscal year 1989-90, a total of 525 person years have been allocated to the Immigration and Refugee Board. A further 217 members of the Immigration and Refugee Board, who are appointed by the Governor-in-Council, are not included in the Board's person-year allocation.

2. Staff person-years are not allocated by Division. Of 217 members of the Immigration and Refugee Board, 22 are allocated to the Immigration Appeal Division.

3. A claim to refugee status may be initiated at two distinct stages; when a person still has valid status in Canada or within the context of an immigration inquiry with respect to Immigration allegations brought against the person concerned.

All abjudicators preside over all aspects of the inquiry/hearing process. This applies whether the refugee claim is submitted by a person who has valid status in Canada, or whether the hearing into the eligibility and credible basis of the claim is conducted within the context of an immigration inquiry. In the latter case, abjudicators are also responsible for considering evidence and rendering decisions with respect to the Immigration allegations brought against the person concerned.

NATIONAIR CANADA

Question No. 164—**Mr. Keyes:**

Has the government provided (a) capital grants (b) loan guarantees, or (c) any other type of financial assistance to Nationair Canada, and, if so (i) in what amounts and (ii) in what years?

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): I am informed by the Department of Regional Industrial Expansion, the Federal Business Development Bank and the Department of Transport as follows:

a), b) & c) No.

i) and ii) Not applicable.

[*English*]

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The questions as enumerated by the government House leader have been answered. Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S. O. 52

EL SALVADOR

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair has received an application pursuant to Standing Order 52 from the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre.

Supply

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, under Standing Order 52, I rise to request of the chair an emergency debate on the question of El Salvador.

We have seen this morning the fact that the situation is deterioration greatly. Canadians from all walks of life and the Catholic bishops appeared yesterday to talk about the importance of the Canadian presence in that region. We listened to the minister and understood that the Government of Canada is not doing anything to represent its new position, yet we were promised by the Prime Minister in his acceptance of membership at the OAS that this would now become an area where Canada would have an active and important involvement.

I think it would be important for this House to represent the concerns and feelings of many Canadians about this desperate situation in El Salvador and to give members of this House an opportunity to express their concerns on behalf of constituents and to try to develop the kinds of initiatives we think the Government of Canada should take to respond to the very tragic situation in El Salvador.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair has carefully reviewed the application made by the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre. The Chair recognizes that the matter is most serious in El Salvador at the present time.

However, the Chair does not feel that the application made by the hon. member meets the strict requirements of the standing orders at this time.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S. O. 81—CHILD POVERTY

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Broadbent:

That this House express its concern for the more than one million Canadian children currently living in poverty and seek to achieve the goal of eliminating poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000.

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, when we broke an hour and a

quarter ago I was pointing out to the House that the fundamental responsibility for raising their children will always remain with Canadian parents themselves.

Within the Department of National Health and Welfare we have taken some important steps to help families with problems. Our family violence initiative is in its second year. This $65 million program which works in co-operation with the provinces will create many more shelter spaces for battered women and their children.

In the past family violence and child sexual abuse were seen as strictly private matters. We are only now beginning to understand the depths of these problems and the number of child abuse and wife battering cases being reported to authorities is growing dramatically.

[*Translation*]

The Badgley Report shows that 42 per cent of our population has at some point been a victim of unwanted sexual acts and many of these victims are children. This is a most disturbing statistic. Canada can no longer tolerate exploitation of the most vulnerable by brutal individuals.

We must pool all our resources to fight family violence. Special attention must be paid to the needs of native Canadians who, because of their isolation and poverty, suffer the tragedy of family violence.

Early in the new year, my special adviser on the sexual exploitation of children, Rix Rogers, will present me with his report, the result of two years of consultations across the country.

[*English*]

In the meantime, I announced recently that the federal government would support an important new national service for children in distress with $1.3 million in funding. The Kids Help Phone received more than 45,000 calls in its first six months. Three thousand of them reported that they had been abused. With an outlet like this we can start to identify those children who really need our help and concentrate more of our future efforts on them.

We will be working over the next few months to further develop programs which will be helpful. I think there is much more that we can do.

Let us focus for a minute on the future. The motion before us today sets an important goal. It calls for the elimination of poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000. What can we expect in the year 2000? What will Canada be like? We have just completed the most comprehensive demographic survey in Canadian history and it gives us a pretty good idea what is happening to families and where the population is going.

By the year 2000, roughly 12 per cent of our population will be 65 or older. Today Sweden and West Germany have more than 15 per cent. Both of these are dynamic and vibrant economies which have no difficulty supporting their social network, nor if we act prudently should Canada have difficulty, but what will change significantly over the next 10 years is the nature of the family itself. The more that I learn about families the more I realize that even today there is no such thing as an average Canadian family.

We see examples of the nuclear family, single parent families, extended families and families who choose not to have children. In our attempts to be supportive of families, we have tended to concentrate on the disfunctioning family. It is critical that we assist those who are in difficulty.

I want us to look as well at what we can do to help families which are functioning well but which may need help in some of the routine affairs of life. This means reaching children in school and teaching them that drugs or smoking will damage their mental and physical health. It means reaching parents in the workplace and teaching them how to cope with stress. It means developing a child care program which will be supportive of families. When all that fails and families break down, it means intervening and giving them the tools that they need to help themselves.

We need to develop a seamless approach to what we are doing, stitching together the disparate programs available today to build a comprehensive policy for the future.

We know that by the year 2000 there will be more women in the workforce, a trend we must expect to continue for some time. As a result we must make sure that women have full access to the labour market. This means that we have to ease the transition back and forth from child raising to the workplace.

A major challenge to the lives of children in the developing world today and possibly in the year 2000 is disease. Children in the Third World die from diseases which are easily preventable. Until recently that has not been a serious problem in Canada. We have a universal

health care system which has eradicated many of these killers.

In 1982 that started to change. That was the first year we identified a case of AIDS in Canada. Since then 3,000 more have surfaced. As the disease spreads through the heterosexual community, we see more mothers giving birth to children infected with HIV.

• (1220)

In New Jersey one in seven children has the virus at birth but with many of the diseases plaguing the Third World, the situation is completely preventable. AIDS is still a new disease and we must make sure that it does not have an opportunity to become an old one.

Looking toward the year 2000 the burden of the national debt may not lighten appreciably without several more years of continued economic growth. The cruel truth is that this year we will be spending more on the debt interest payments than on old age security, family allowance, child care, health care and all of the other programs and services delivered by my department put together.

If we keep going at this rate, which is adding another $30 or $35 billion to the debt each year, by the year 2000 our accumulated debt would approach three quarters of a trillion dollars. That would be the worst thing that we could do for the future of our children.

Why should they be saddled for the excesses of their parents? We came to that realization about the environment. Why can we not come to that realization about the debt?

Over the years Canadian governments have developed a national network of social support programs that are admired by people in much of the world, including many, I believe, in this country. Despite tensions in the system today, our health care system is remarkably successful, so much so that I was recently invited to Washington to explain its workings to a group of American health care experts looking north of the border for solutions.

Each and every child in Canada must have access to adequate health care. Our goal must be to make sure that each and every child is also freed from the trap of poverty. The hon. member for Oshawa has asked us to try to eliminate poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000.

During Question Period he asked whether or not I was making new announcements today. I am sure that the hon. member would not expect that having just received notice of his motion late yesterday afternoon the government would redesign whole new programs simply in response. What I have tried to do is indicate today that important progress has been made, that we commit ourselves to the principle of making more progress, that we believe that we are on track in terms of moving ahead in the right direction and that by working together there is substantial progress that can be made.

Simply redistributing wealth will not help us to achieve that goal. It is essential that we increase the total amount of wealth by encouraging our economy, removing impediments to growth and reducing the burden of debt facing our children.

The point that I must repeat, almost whenever I speak as Minister of National Health and Welfare dealing with this issue related to the debt and dealing with our children's future is this. We are spending more money just for the interest charges this year on the national debt than on all of the programs administered by my department put together, all of our national health care, all of our welfare programs, all of our old age security, family allowances and so on. It is the very survival of these programs which help us to have a humane and compassionate and caring society that is in question if we do not get our economic house in order.

Our generation, the generation of the Leader of the NDP and myself, must take that initiative now. We must stop borrowing from our children's future to finance expenses today. We are concerned about poverty. We are concerned about our ability to maintain progressive social programs which will help us to alleviate the suffering of those people who are in poverty in Canada and to give opportunity to Canadian children.

It is essential that we ensure the very survival of those programs. It is essential that we get our economic house in order.

Let me conclude this way. We do not have to be afraid of the future. We have a prosperous and a dynamic economy which if managed well promises to improve even further. We have the tools to reduce the number of

children living in poverty as we have for each and every year since 1984.

In a few short weeks we will be entering a new decade. This is a good time for us to reflect on the very real progress that we have made in the past and to think about what accomplishments we want in the 1990s. Any society that cares about its future must care about the plight of its children today. This government has demonstrated that commitment and I can assure you it will continue to demonstrate that commitment.

Ms. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I listened with care to the minister's remarks. I appreciate that he did not have some overnight programs to introduce today. On the other hand, I would like to ask him if he would be prepared to make a commitment to the proposal put by my leader earlier, and that is to give leadership to calling together a national conference on the topic of elimination of child poverty.

If I recall correctly, my leader described this as a vehicle that certainly needs government leadership and would involve provinces. More than that, it would involve poverty groups, chambers of commerce, voluntary groups and all other groups that are able to become involved in solutions to poverty.

He also proposed that this action group meet annually, establish timetables and targets and have a monitoring function.

I would like to add to that. During Question Period the minister felt he was unable to answer anything about housing or tax measures, things that were in other departments, or whether such a conference would involve a number of federal ministries so that there would be a comprehensive consideration of solutions and then an action plan.

Would he commit himself to at least calling this kind of a conference during the next year?

Mr. Beatty: Mr. Speaker, in his remarks the leader of the New Democratic party made about six or seven separate proposals for steps that he felt would be important steps in dealing with poverty, ranging from increasing subsidized housing to increasing the minimum wage to having a continuing national conference with regard to child poverty.

Certainly we will look at all of the recommendation he made. We are pleased to do that. We appreciate any suggestions that are made by him and by his colleagues. Additionally, the issue of poverty is obviously one that is on the agenda on a continuing basis when we meet with the provinces and when we meet with colleagues from other departments.

The focus I have had during the time which I have been Minister of National Health and Welfare is broader than simply the focus on child poverty. I think that is one essential element of the concern we should have. My concern has been a broader one in trying to look at problems of families. It means economic problems, socials problems such as familial violence. It means problems such as child sexual abuse. It means a whole range of other issues that we should be pulling together and not looking at in a disjointed, separate isolated way. Rather the tests that we want to apply, the government initiatives at all levels, should be: Are these initiatives supportive of families? Do they help families to function well and do they help with interventions in cases where families become disfunctioning?

Today the leader of the NDP asked me to give a commitment with regard to increased subsidized housing. One of the areas where the government has acted and which I can tell him about today where significant progress has been made is in Project Haven, a program that was under the leadership of my colleague who is responsible for housing.

What we have done is significantly increase moneys going to the provinces to provide shelters for women and for children who are in homes which are abusive. We are pleased to say that the take–up on that program has been very considerable by the provinces. It allows us to intervene in instances where children and wives are in situations where they are physically in danger and to provide alternatives.

The leader of the NDP would no doubt propose other initiatives that we could take as well. We are glad to take a look at any of those. I think it is important when we deal with family measures to not look at them simply in an isolated way, independent of everything else that is being done, but begin to stitch them together, take a much more holistic approach and begin to apply a test to government programs as to whether they are supportive

of families or not, instead of looking at them in a scattered and fragmented way.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I just want to ask the minister a very specific question.

During the course of his remarks, he talked about the government wanting to fulfil its commitment of two years ago to bring in the child care program. I want to ask the minister specifically when exactly can we expect that child care program to be brought into the House? Do we have a timetable? Is it going to be at the end of this term or is it going to be within the next month or two?

• (1230)

The fact is that we have waited a year since the election and there has been absolutely no indication of when there would be a bill, so I want to know, does he have a timetable that he can share with the House today?

Second, in bringing forward that legislation, has the government looked at the very serious criticisms raised by the number of associations representing child care workers and previous bill brought in by his predecessor which showed serious inadequacies? It was really not going to add any new spaces. It was going to sort of eliminate a number of the opportunities that child care should have. Can we expect a new, better, reformed, revised child care bill taking into account those commentaries and critiques that were raised by the child care community in Canada?

Mr. Beatty: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. gentleman knows, I wish that we had national child care legislation in place today. He knows as well as I do why we do not. The legislation died on the Order Paper before Parliament because of delays in the House of Commons and the Senate in getting it passed before Parliament was dissolved.

I think that members who opposed the bill made an error. I do not think the government ever held it out as something that was perfect or that was beyond improvement. But it would have given us a basis on which to establish a national child care system and on which to build and evolve a new system.

The commitment that has been made by the Prime Minister, by the Minister of Finance, by the Speech from the Throne, by myself and by the minister responsible for the status of women has been that during the life of this Parliament, we will have a new program in place, not promised, not progressing through Parliament but in place.

In the meantime, we continue to fund programs for child care. As I mentioned earlier in my remarks, this year if you consider the tax measures, if you consider spending under CAP, if you consider the child care initiatives fund and a range of other initiatives we have taken, the federal government will be putting slightly less than $1 billion into child care in Canada. It is a significant amount of money.

In the case of the Canada Assistance Plan, it is entirely open-ended. We are anticipating an increase of some $40 million this year in transfers to the provinces under CAP. But if the provinces decide to increase spending on child care beyond that, the program is open-ended and the federal government will pay some 50 cents out of every dollar that is eligible that is spent by the provinces. As a consequence then we are seeing a significant commitment to child care and one which is going to increase.

The other element of the hon. member's question was whether the government is taking on board criticisms or comments or suggestions made by people in response to the previous legislation. Yes, we are.

I have had the opportunity to meet with my provincial colleagues and a number of national organizations and to visit a number of child care centres. As we come back to Parliament with proposals with regard to child care, what we will be doing is trying to ensure that the package we present to Parliament is one which is as contemporary and responsive to present circumstances as possible and one that meets the national need.

What is the need? The need is to dramatically increase the number of spaces in Canada. The need is to ensure that they are high quality spaces. The need is also to ensure that Canadian families have freedom of choice and that parents themselves have the ability to take a decision as to what the most appropriate form of child care is for them.

I think that within those principles, I am certainly open to have representations from any member of the House or from others with regard to what the nature of the program should be. But in the meantime, we are

continuing to spend a significant amount of money to provide child care spaces.

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, the motion placed before the House by my colleague, the hon. member for Oshawa, is of profound concern and of great importance to Liberal Members of Parliament as well as to the rank and file of the Liberal Party of Canada.

The substance of the motion, that is dealing with the plight of poor Canadian children, ought to be one of the highest priorities for all members of this great institution. Today, many Canadians enjoy a quality of life, a standard of living, which leaves many throughout the world envious of our socio-economic status. There are, however, certain hard realities whose consequences are inescapable. To deny that childhood poverty is not common in Canada would be totally irresponsible and factually incorrect.

I believe it important that we place on the record certain facts which are indisputable. More than 1 million Canadian children live in poverty, up 120,000 since 1980, and over 60 per cent of these children come from single female-led families who are poor.

Canada's children are poor because their parents are poor. The gap between the rich and the poor is sadly growing and growing under this administration. The poorest 40 per cent of Canadians received less of Canada's total income in 1986 than they did in 1980. At the same time, the wealthiest 40 per cent increased their share of the total income.

Poor children suffer ill health, hardship and educational failure. Twice as many poor children fall behind in school as do children from rich families. According to the National Council on Welfare, children now make up the single largest group of poor people in the country. In 1986, more than 1 million children were growing up in poverty. That is about one child in six.

The poverty rate for families headed by persons not in the labour force is approximately 23 per cent compared to 9 per cent for families in which the head of the family is doing paid work. The risk of poverty is greater for young children. Twenty-one per cent of children below the age of six and 19 per cent of those between the ages of six and 14 are growing up in poverty.

There are almost 7.5 million Canadian children under the age of 20 in Canada. In 1985, 6,000 of those children died. Of the 365,000 babies born in Canada in 1985, nearly 3,000 died before reaching their first birthday.

A recent Canadian survey indicated that the child mortality rate is twice as high among families at the lowest income level than among those at the highest income level.

Other facts are clear, unequivocal and very disheartening. The major cause of hospitalization of children under 14 is respiratory illness. A recent Canadian study indicated that the mortality rate from respiratory illness was twice as high among boys and six times higher among girls from low-income families than among children of high-income families.

A recent study in Ontario found that being on welfare was one of the strongest predictors of psychiatric disorders and chronic health problems among children. When you review the statistics as evidenced by agencies of the Government of Canada, one is not only disconcerted with these facts but, indeed, I find them to be alarming.

Child poverty statistics on a province by province basis in 1986 show that in the province of Newfoundland, a province dear to my heart, families in excess of 44,000 were believed to be in poverty. Female single parents in that province number roughly 7,800, that being a percentage of 72.9 per cent. In Nova Scotia, my own province, 39,000 families were found to be in poverty. The female single parents in that province number roughly 15,000 for a percentage of 70.9 per cent found to be below the poverty level for children under 16 years of age.

Such families in the province of Alberta number 93,000. Female single parents number 34,000 for a percentage of 51.3. So goes the statistics which for all of us must be alarming and it deserves our careful attention and speedy action.

• (1240)

Let me discuss native people. In 1977, the number of hospital admissions of native Indians because of infections and parasitic diseases was about seven times higher than the national average. In 1983, the mortality rate among native infants was two times higher for Indians, four times higher for Inuit than the national rate. In 1982, the mortality rate was almost three times higher

for native children ages one to four years than for non-native children. And the facts go on.

Native Canadians are also at risk. In 1981, 50 per cent of native people were in the labour force and the average income was two-thirds less for natives than for non-natives.

I put these facts on the record, not to be disputatious with my colleagues who will speak after me, but it is an attempt to have members of Parliament focus on the true meaning of those particular facts and the consequences of them for young Canadians.

I do not speak today of bridges. I do not speak of airplanes, bricks and mortar. I speak of young Canadians who have dreams and aspirations as diverse as those of the men and women who occupy these seats in perhaps the greatest institution in the world.

The human face of poverty in our country must be described, it must be articulated, but more important, it must be felt and it requires action by those of us who now occupy positions of responsibility.

A report in my own province entitled *Women and Children Last* of February, 1989 talks about single mothers on welfare in the province of Nova Scotia. For the benefit of those members who are here today, I would like to read two excerpts for their edification and, indeed, for their reflection.

This is a social worker in the province of Nova Scotia commenting on a situation. I quote from page 56 of that document:

> A social worker at the Izaak Walton Killam Children's Hospital has seen single mothers bringing their babies into the emergency room with diarrhea and vomiting. They tell the doctors who examine their babies that they have been feeding them diluted whole milk, or Similac diluted at twice the normal amount. Their welfare checks were insufficient to permit them to buy Similac, which is much more costly than milk, or to buy enough of it. A month's supply of Similac costs around $60. These mothers are not aware that their efforts to stretch an inadequate income have led to their babies' illnesses. "They just blanch at the thought of having to give the proper amount of Similac because of the cost."

A basic necessity of life for young children is milk. We have not only in my province but across this country individuals confronted with similar serious situations. I believe that to be horrifying for Canadians anywhere in this great country.

Page 57 of the same document talks about a child with asthma:

> The medications and Medi-Mist he needs cost between $80 and $100 a month. But $80 or $100 is far beyond the means of his mother, who receives Family Benefits. The tragic consequence for this child and others like him is that he is not getting the treatment he needs. When asthma is poorly controlled, a child is much more likely to suffer from attacks of life-threatening breathlessness. Hospitalization may follow such crises. The child may have to spend approximately ten days in hospital before his asthma can be brought under control. Then the vicious cycle is likely to repeat itself a few weeks or a few months later, when once again, the child's parent is unable to afford the treatments he needs.

This again is another real life example, not some bare-faced statistic found within Statistics Canada or the National Council on Welfare. It is real people experiencing the difficulties and the necessities of trying to have a healthy and happy life.

For what it is worth, it must be frustrating for those who are out there confronted with these serious issues and the problems that they manufacture not only for poor children, but for poor families, to see that our government has reacted not in a great positive way but indeed in a negative way. There has been the partial deindexing of family allowance, the reduced turnover point for the refundable child tax credit threshold which the RCTC has decreased based on family earnings from $26,300 to $23,500, partial deindexing of this threshold level, the net effect which will be an increasing number of near-poor families losing some of that child tax credit. There has been a reduction in the child tax exemption from $710 to $390 by 1989, and a partial deindexing of this exemption. Tax reform has since reduced this exemption to a rather insignificant credit of $65.

I could go on with regard to the lack of programs in terms of child care or in terms of the proliferation of personal income taxes that have caused grief to many Canadians and particularly poor families.

The motion put forward by my colleague from Oshawa was done, I think, in an attempt to marshall and harness the spirit which is within Parliament to address this problem not only conceptually but, indeed, from an action perspective.

The causes of child poverty are great and many. Child poverty is directly related to family poverty, and families without meaningful employment and economic opportunities in this country continue to find that their plight

and the plight of their children will be directly related to those economic opportunities.

An inadequate educational and training system both at the federal and at the provincial levels is also facilitating the difficulties in terms of causing poverty and child poverty in this country. The lack of affordable, accessible and quality child care in this country again is another cause, a cause in which I believe all of us should join and try to find new child care spaces in this country.

There has also been a failure of institutions, the failure of Parliament to deal with the necessities that young poverty-stricken children will have to face, but also the failure of other institutions such as the courts which have been less than adequate, have not persevered, have not been vigorous in forcing maintenance orders upon those spouses who duly must and ought to pay those maintenance payments to families who are in need of that financial assistance.

It is an absolute disgrace that an institution such as the courts across this country, administered by the provinces, are allowing individuals to act irresponsibly and not pay the maintenance orders that a court deemed to be appropriate.

About the welfare system itself, I could tell you story upon story. I come from a riding where the poverty is real and the welfare system acts to prohibit and restrict the incentive of the individual.

• (1250)

In Nova Scotia, we have a system which I would deem archaic. The cross-examination and the evaluations that these people must go through in order to receive some assistance to care for their children and their families is, in many instances, unbelievable.

When you lose your dignity, you lose everything, and I would hope that as we reflect upon the substance of this motion, as we reflect upon what we can do as parliamentarians, we will look squarely and clearly at the national systems that we have in place which are very inadequate indeed in addressing the concerns of our welfare system.

Many of those individuals who work in that system are caring, compassionate, loving persons. But equally so, I am afraid to say, there are numerous individuals who have lost the compassion, the sensitivity and the understanding to deal with those problems with which they are being confronted with on a daily basis.

I recognize that my time is limited. However, I would like to close, if I may, with a quote from a book entitled *Two Worlds of Childhood*. It says the following which I believe to be descriptive of the substance and the spirit of the motion today and hopefully can be descriptive of the action that we as a Parliament may take:

> This is the place to start, for that is where the children are. For only a hard look at the world in which they live—a world we adults have created for them in large part by default—can convince us of the urgency of their plight and the consequences of our inaction. Then perhaps it will come to pass that, in the words of Isaiah, "A little child shall lead them."

I urge all members to support the motion to demonstrate to Canadians that Parliament, the rock of democracy, has the capacity, and, more important, the political will to confront and to resolve child poverty throughout this great nation.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Bourgault: Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member's speech in the lobby and here in the House, and the Minister has said, and we will say it again today in the course of this debate, that we fully support the motion presented by the Leader of the New Democratic Party However, poverty among children is not something that came out of the blue. I may remind the hon. member that a political party and a government must have vision and look to the future.

When the Liberal government was in power, at the beginning of the quiet revolution, it was a time when families started to have problems and women were taking their place in society. At the same time, divorce, separation, and so forth, were becoming more common. And at a time when this country needed a long-term policy that would prepare for the impact of the quiet revolution on today's society, the government went off on an incredible spending spree with taxpayers' money. In my own riding, we had the expropriation of 97,000 acres for Mirabel. Millions of dollars of taxpayers' money was spent for nothing, because the government was later obliged to sell the land back to the owners.

I would like to ask the hon. member who was a member of the Liberal government for almost a quarter of a century, for 25 years, how he can—we all agree that child poverty is insidious, it is unacceptable, it does not

make sense and that everyone must do what he can to help alleviate the problem. However, I wish the hon. member would explain how we can deal with child poverty if we take only a fraction of the money we need to pay the interest on the cost of servicing the debt, because that is what we are doing now. We have a national debt that has assumed incredible proportions, while at the same time, as we approach the year 2000, we must deal with the problems of sexual abuse. I am very much concerned, and the subject was brought up by the hon. member and the minister as well, and the Rix Rogers report will be submitted very shortly, and I am sure that all members will be appalled when they read that in Canada, more and more children are suffering sexual abuse, children that today need treatment because after sexual abuse something must be done. But all this takes enormous amounts of money! The last ministers' conference made it abundantly clear that the needs that exist are an administrative nightmare. So could the hon. member explain what he did when he was in the government to try and deal with this problem or to take preventive action?

[*English*]

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, the time allowed me is sufficient to explain all of the positive things that my government was able to do in the years in which I was fortunate enough to be a representative of the people of my constituency from 1980 to 1984. I do wish to say to the hon. member that I know she would not want us to enter into a long, winding debate of political partisanship and of pointing the blame at different individuals. However, since she has done that, it may be necessary for me to accommodate the hon. member in response to the question she raises.

There is no question that for governments at every level, Conservative, Liberal and NDP, provincially and federally, there is sufficient blame to go around. If members of Parliament want to point the finger at someone else other than themselves, that is fine, but that does nothing to eradicate the serious situation which affects young children and families in this country.

Yes, there were family allowances. Yes, we did something with regard to the Canada Assistance Act. Yes, we did many things with regard to the child tax credit. A whole host of things took place with regard to trying to address some of those issues.

But I say to the hon. member that that ought not to be the question. The question that she poses is: Where is the money? Where is the money going to come from in addressing this most serious situation? I suggest to the hon. member that one must have a vision of one's nationhood. You must have a vision as to where you wish your children to be, and then you assess your priorities accordingly.

We learn every day that governments give moneys to questionable enterprises. We learn every day that national governments refuse, for whatever reasons, to collect appropriate taxes from corporations that ought to be paying them. We learn that governments give moneys to their friends and to their political cronies. But on the other hand—and this is a serious point—we give very little in terms of money, time and concerted effort with regard to child poverty and poverty as a whole.

So I would say to the hon. member that perhaps she ought to change her vision as to where she wishes this nation to go. Yes, members on this side are concerned with regard to the deficit as are members on that side and I am sure are members to the left. But if you want to eradicate child poverty in this country, your view must change. You must have the political will. You must have the courage to say no to the corporate elite in this country who get off without paying appropriate taxes. You must say no to your political cronies wherever they may be and provide the appropriate money for child care. You must say no to those provincial governments who wish to extract money from the Government of Canada and then spend it elsewhere. That is what you must do.

• (1300)

I urge the hon. member to change the vision that she may have, that her party certainly has, in order to rectify and to put a priority with regard to child poverty and poverty as well.

Mrs. Bourgault: Are we still on questions and comments, Mr. Speaker?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Dionne): No, we are not.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Bourgault: Mr. Speaker, for your information and that of hon. members, the government agreed that we would get ten minutes speaking time and—

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Dionne): That is not a point of order.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties. I think you will find that there is agreement that while we will continue with our usual rotation of speakers, if one of the parties wishes to break up the 20-minute speech and 10-minute question and comment period they could do that by having a 10-minute speech and a five-minute question and comment period and take two of those. I would seek the unanimous consent of the House to allow that to occur for the rest of the day to enable the maximum number of speakers to have a chance to raise their voice on this most important issue.

Mr. Dingwall: This matter has not come to my attention since the hon. member has just raised it. Perhaps we could continue on with the speaking order that we have in place I could report to him very shortly in terms of whether or not that consensus can be given on behalf of our party.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Dionne): In that case I recognize the hon. member for Vancouver East.

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I will try to limit my remarks so that others will have an opportunity to speak on this very important topic.

I am sure all members of the House were very moved, as I certainly was, at the last address from my leader, the hon. member or Oshawa, when he spoke so emotionally about the importance of us taking action together to eliminate child poverty in Canada. His approach was non-partisan and appealed to all parties and to all leaders across Canada because, of course, provinces have a very important role in this mission.

He appealed to the media. I could not agree with him more. The media must take a much greater responsibility to make the public aware that this is one of the most tragic aspects of life in Canada today. We do not want it just to be done at Christmas time. I think a lot of us talk about the funds for children at Christmas and then we forget them the rest of the year.

Our leader spoke about the tragedy in the fact that one in four children in Canada are poor. This figure is not diminishing very quickly at all. He said that 151,000 children line up at food banks each month. From 1974 to 1986 we know that 86 per cent of the working poor families increased and this was an increase of about 19 per cent. Poverty for families is still in a very devastating situation and there is no question that we need concerted action from all of us.

Last year I had the honour to chair an interparliamentary committee which met as part of the Interparliamentary Union Conference in Hungary. We studied the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and made resolutions to the larger body.

I want to say that I was very moved by the representations from delegates from many different countries of the world who spoke of the situation of children. They spoke of children in many Third World countries who are dying of starvation and preventable disease, children who were being brain damaged and permanently disabled by malnutrition, children who were abandoned because of war and poverty and the movements of people in many countries, and the serious neglect that comes with poverty in every country of the world. The people we talked to from Third World countries could not understand how, in a country as affluent and well endowed as Canada with our rich resources and our low birth rate, we could have over a million children who are poor.

We know that in Third World countries one of the reasons they cannot make any headway, in fact they are going backward in trying to provide a floor of health and welfare services that would protect children, is because of the immense pressures of international debt, a debt which we should be doing something about. We do not have those kinds of restrictions. Yet we have children who are lining up at food banks every month.

Canada is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This week we actually signed the formal declaration that passed the UN. We have an obligation to act here in Canada. We must bring our standards up to recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. That is

what we said we would do when we signed that agreement.

The motion that is before us today in the House asks us to seek to achieve the goal of eliminating poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000. I wish we could agree to take major steps in this direction during 1990. I, for one, am not satisfied to wait until the year 2000. If we were to delay action until the year 2000 we would have a whole generation of children who would continue to be victimized and damaged and who as adults would be unable to function adequately in society. The unending cycle of poverty from family to family would continue.

As my leader pointed out, the solution to poverty is to get more money into the households of poor families. He proposed several specific measures to reduce poverty which I would just like to summarize again.

He proposed that we should have action on the part of the federal government, something which could be done immediately, to raise the federal minimum wage which is the lowest in Canada, and that this minimum wage should be indexed so that it provides jobs at adequate incomes for poor families.

He proposed that family allowance and the child tax credit, the two federal programs that are targeted directly to families and to children, and particularly to low-income families, should be raised. I would propose that we consider raising this to 20 per cent in 1990.

He proposed reintroduction of effective and affordable quality child care programs.

He also proposed a national conference on the elimination of child poverty involving the provinces, municipalities, voluntary agencies, labour, chambers of commerce, and all people, including all federal departments that can make some impact on poverty in Canada. He proposed that this group meet annually, establish targets and timetables and in fact to act as an advocacy group and an ombudsman group to make sure we take practical and specific steps as quickly as possible to alleviate poverty for children in Canada.

The minister talked in vague terms about redistributing wealth and rationalized some of the credit programs which we do not believe have been very effective for low-income families. He talked about increasing the amount of wealth in Canada. I want to say that children are being victimized now. They will not be victimized further because of the national debt in Canada. Children should not be sacrificed to the national debt.

• (1310)

If we were to put money now into satisfactory incomes for low-income families with children, we could have one million poor children over the next 10 years who would be adequately nourished, have adequate housing and child care and the opportunities to grow into mature adulthood. This would, in effect, result in one million adults and their families who would break the poverty cycle and who would become contributors to the tax system of Canada. Even in economic terms, we have to take action.

We need the political will to address this problem, and we need it on all sides of this House. Unfortunately, I must say that the policies carried out by this government have not addressed this issue, and I do not want to dwell on this today, but we must remember that the trade deal and the shifting of production south of the border is very hard for families. Changes to UI will restrict benefits for many low-income families. The national child care program has been indefinitely postponed. The clawback of family allowance and old age security benefits are a direct impact on low-income families.

The lack of monitoring of the Canada assistance cost-shared programs and the threats to cut shared programs with the provinces are also of great concern, not to mention the increasing impact of both the goods and services tax and the inflation that will hit low-income families as a result.

What can we all do together to really make some impact on poverty? First of all, we need to have major increases in family incomes. I would suggest that although there are many people who are poor, including single people and still many single older women, who we must not forget, that probably there is some justification to targeting a major income increase to families with young children.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Dionne): I regret to interrupt the hon. member but her speaking time has expired. There are five minutes for questions and answers.

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): I was wondering if perhaps the hon. member who has just spoken might have further comments in this regard she would wish to make.

Ms. Mitchell: I would be very pleased to finish my remarks very quickly, Mr. Speaker.

Not only do we need to increase incomes, we need to have affordable housing for low-income families. So much of their incomes goes to rent. We must have an affordable, good child care program across this country. Of course, we have to change policies in order to redistribute income.

I just want to say in closing that I hope we will all work, perhaps through the Standing Committee on Health and Welfare, as an all-party action group to sponsor a national conference on the elimination of child poverty, and to get on with the specific measures in the federal jurisdiction which we can take immediately to make some impact on this problem.

Mr. Robert E. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my appreciation for the opportunity to join in this debate. I wish also to congratulate my leader on his last speech in this body for bringing up a subject that I think this body tends to avoid or to steer around because we are all a bit ashamed of the figures concerning child poverty and the figures relating to poverty in this country.

I was pleased to see at the beginning of the debate how members seemed to adopt this issue as one that was rather non-partisan, we would all like to deal. I hope as a result of this debate the few examples of partisanship that did introduce themselves will be forgotten. I hope that ultimately the wording of the motion will be the thing that will be remembered by people in this House. Essentially, what this motion is asking us to do is to set as a priority the elimination in this country of child poverty by the year 2000. If there is anything we choose to remember about the Leader of the New Democratic Party and about this debate, it should be the challenge that he has thrown out to the House of Commons and to the people of Canada. This is a personal challenge that I think he has taken on, to eliminate this terrible child poverty that we experience in this country by a certain time period.

I do not think we could expect the Minister of National Health and Welfare to come back within the scope of this debate and list a series of priorities which he would adopt under this motion. I certainly would have hoped for a commitment from the minister and perhaps from his parliamentary secretary that he would go out and take part in the structure suggested, such as a national conference on poverty, or perhaps by referring the issue to the health and welfare committee of this House. I hope that he will work to develop a series of programs that would ultimately result in achieving the challenge that the Leader of the New Democratic Party has set for us.

I do not want to go through the statistics that have already been enumerated by a number of the speakers in this debate. They are terrifying statistics especially, for those who experience the reality of poverty in their day-to-day life. What struck me was one of those statistics which points out that in the industrialized countries of the world, Canada is the second worst in terms of child poverty. We are second only to the United States in how poorly we deal with this problem.

The member for Oshawa pointed out to us that there are other countries to which we can look as models and countries which seem to have established as a priority the elimination of child poverty. These are countries which are doing much better than we are. If there are these models around the globe, then at least we should be committing ourselves to look at these models to see how they do it, at least to examine their priorities and possibly try to match our priorities to theirs in terms of eliminating poverty.

The fact is hundreds of thousands of Canadian children go to bed hungry every single night of the year. Hundreds of thousands of children go to school every morning without an adequate breakfast and without a school lunch. They do not perform well in school as a result of the fact that they have a problem of poor nutrition. They suffer academically as a result and often cannot complete their schooling because of nutritional and other problems.

There are tens of thousands of children in this country who as a result of inadequate clothing, inadequate insulation in their homes and sometimes a lack of fuel altogether, suffer more than other children in this country from common diseases such as respiratory diseases and others which can be easily dealt with if they had proper clothing, shelter and fuel or the wherewithal to acquire those things. Unfortunately in Canada there

are tens of thousands of children and tens of thousands of families who do not have the wherewithal.

In large part the blame for that problem lies with we in this House, because of the things we do or neglect to do. It is because of the priorities that we establish or neglect that those children and their families are suffering in poverty.

There is a group in British Columbia called End Legislative Poverty. Poverty in this country is not an accident. It is not an accident of any individual. People who are poor are not necessarily lazy or incompetent. They are not necessarily people who cannot obtain the wherewithal to live normal lives. Poverty in this country is legislated. It is legislated through what we do in this House or what we omit to do in this House. We on all sides of this House are the people who are responsible for the problem of poverty in Canada.

I reject the suggestions made by one member opposite who would wish to blame a previous government for creating the debt problem here.

• (1320)

I recall the minister saying that one of the problems we have is that when the economy expands we are going to be able to look after the issue of poverty. On the other hand he is saying that when the economy goes down again those people are going to become poor again. We are going to leave those people subject to the variations in the economy. That does not make sense. We have to establish an absolute priority in this House that no Canadian is going to be pushed into poverty as a result of the variations in the economy. If any government has that policy, it does not belong in government. If any member has that policy, they do not belong in this House.

I look back on a statement made by Abraham Lincoln. He said, "This nation cannot exist half slave and half free". If he qualified that statement by saying, "except in bad economic times", we would never remember that President as a great liberator. In fact, his name would have been tarnished from that day to this.

Our object in this Parliament should be to follow the challenge that the Leader of the New Democratic Party has laid out for us, that is, to set as a goal for the year 2000 that no child in this country should be a poor child, that no family in this country should be a poor family. This country is rich enough and we as a collective are wealthy enough to make sure that is the case. I think what simply remains for us to do is to set that goal for ourselves and to work hard to reach that goal. That can be done through the conference that our leader has suggested, as well as through establishing priorities through a committee of the House—whatever it takes. Let us, out of this debate, establish that as our goal.

I think we should put a banner up in the House outlining the goal to eliminate child poverty in this country by 2000. I think we should put other banners up showing how we perform as those figures go down. By my stars, if those figures do not go down, then we do not deserve to be re-elected as members of this House. Let us establish that goal. Let us set it up where we can see it. Let us challenge ourselves every single day to make sure that we accomplish it.

A part of the problem in this issue is the attitudes that we hold as a group. People in Canada think that those who are poor are all on welfare. As the gentleman who spoke previously pointed out, in fact the vast majority of people who are poor in this country work for a living, and they work hard. In some cases because they work at minimum wages, very low wages, they work at two jobs. In some cases, both heads of families work. So it is very difficult when you tell people that they should work in order to get out of poverty and they find themselves going deeper and deeper into poverty. While costs go up, while taxes go up, and while interest rates go up the fact is the minimum wage has stayed very low. The minimum wage in this country is not sufficient for hard working people to work themselves out of poverty. I applaud my leader for his suggestion to raise that minimum wage so that we can bring those people who work for a living out of poverty.

There is also the suggestion that poor people are all on welfare and that they do not pay their own way. Studies which have been carried out across this country, in particular at Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia, have analyzed the taxes paid by poor people. The results show that not only do they pay for their own programs, they pay more. They pay for other people as well, people who are not poor.

There is a serious problem with the way taxes are structured in this country. There are taxes that favour rich people and which are generous to them but which create a burden and an oppression on the poor. There

are many things that have to be done in order to eliminate the problem of poverty in this country.

I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, and I will tell the rest of the people in this House, the one thing that first needs to be done is the one thing that is called for in this motion. Members of Parliament unanimously have to establish as a goal the elimination of child poverty by the year 2000. We should establish that out of this motion making it a goal of this Parliament.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Bourgault: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member whether he could give us some suggestions, since he says the government should introduce legislation. Does he have any suggestions about the kind of legislation the government should table in the House to deal with the problem of child poverty, and doesn't he think that one way to deal with poverty is to ensure that families have access to jobs? Is he prepared to acknowledge that the government—although of course it was not 100 per cent, since nobody is perfect—has made considerable progress, since the unemployment rate has declined from 11.6 per cent in September 1984 to 7.4 per cent in October this year, and the youth unemployment rate has declined from 18.2 to 11.3 per cent? Will the hon. member acknowledge that the government deserves some credit for introducing policies that promote job creation in this country?

[*English*]

Mr. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): Mr. Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for her question. I would like to point out that many of the jobs that have been created since the recession of 1981–1982 are part-time jobs at very low rates of pay, in fact at minimum wages both in the provinces and nationally. As I pointed out in my speech, those people who are working at those minimum wages, in some cases at two jobs, simply cannot make the money to make ends meet, to feed their families, to get decent shelter, to put decent clothing on their children and to provide for decent education and medical care.

As a response to the question I just want to give the example of a woman in my riding who, as a result of a marriage breakdown, went on welfare. She felt humiliated by being on welfare. Her daughter had a chronic illness. Although welfare provided her with a less than adequate income, fortunately, it provided her with free medical care, free dental care and with prescription drugs that her daughter desperately required.

When she tried to take training to go back to work to become a legal assistant she was disqualified from welfare because the course was one year long. She went anyway and was able to beat the system and take that course.

Then she went to work in a lawyer's office and she was paid at the minimum wage. She lost the right to those free medical, dental and prescription drug benefits. She ended up making less on the minimum wage than she made when she was on welfare. Her daughter's health was put into jeopardy as a result of that.

What we need is a system that addresses those kinds of obstructions to work and that raises the minimum wage so that people who are working can look after their children and are not forced to sacrifice the health and safety of their children simply by getting off welfare and going to work.

There are a lot of things that need to be done. We are the people who have the power to do it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate. The parliamentary secretary to the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

Mrs. Lise Bourgault (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity today to speak to the motion on child poverty.

On behalf of the Minister of National Health and Welfare I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the leader of the New Democratic Party on behalf of the poor childen in this country, for addressing their concerns in his last speech on an opposition day. It is an eloquent example of the hon. member's great sensitivity to the problems of the neediest in our society.

I sincerely hope that after he leaves Parliament, the hon. member will continue his active involvement in addressing the terrible problem of child poverty and especially, Mr.Speaker, the appalling increase in child sexual abuse.

I think that as a private citizen, the hon. member for Oshawa would be in an excellent position to increase Canadians' awareness of this very serious problem.

The family is our starting point in this world. It is the environment in which we grow up and it teaches us sharing and compassion.

Although we are aware of the problems facing families today, we must not forget that most families, whatever their structure or status, are responsible and take care of their family members and are proud to see them grow up and make their way in this world.

• (1330)

When I was growing up, Mr. Speaker, most of our families consisted of a father who worked outside the house and a mother who worked at home. We had strict discipline and felt secure in our family unit. However, as we approach the year 2000, the family is undergoing major changes and faces economic pressures and significant challenges.

In over 60 per cent of Canadian households, both spouses are in the labour force. Thus, most children live in an environment where their parents do double duty: Work outside and family responsibilities. Many of these children, who do not receive the same family support as I did when I was growing up, do not feel loved and wanted; they often feel as though they are in the way because when their mother comes home from work, she is pre-occupied and perhaps unfortunately does not have the time to give them all the attention they deserve.

Furthermore, one marriage in three ends in divorce or separation. Therefore, the probability that Canadian children will spend part of their childhood in a single-parent family increases every day.

These facts shape the daily reality of today's younger generation, and as decision-makers, we cannot escape them. Child poverty is also another reality for some Canadian families. One child in six is poor, as poverty is defined in Canada. This situation could jeopardize the development of some of tomorrow's adults and their chance to reach their full potential; we cannot be indifferent to it.

That is why the government has taken action to support the family. Without resting on our laurels, of course, we must be glad that child poverty has declined since the Conservative Government took power. This improvement is due to the economic recovery of recent years, the lower unemployment rate which has benefited all families and social programs for the economic betterment of families. Economic priorities are the guarantee of our future prosperity.

In that respect I should mention the value of the refundable child tax credit which is designed to help low—and middle-income families and which has gone up by 50 per cent since 1984, from $367 to $565. Close to five million children stand to benefit from this measure this year. For that credit alone the federal government will issue cheques totalling about $2 million.

Aware of the tight financial situation of families with children, in November the government sends an advance part payment of the child tax credit to eligible households. Mr. Speaker, God knows the month is well chosen—just in time for Christmas! We also help support families through the monthly family allowances paid for each child under age 18.

This year, roughly 6.6 million children will be entitled to the allowance and the federal government's outlay will amount to about S2.6 billion. In the Province of Quebec alone, 1.6 million children receive the monthly allowance.

Mr. Speaker, I might point out that pursuant to specific Family Allowances Act criteria the provinces may choose the way to distribute the allowances. This enables them to give greater consideration to their own priorities. The Province of Quebec avails itself of this provision. For instance, Quebec youths aged 12 to 17 inclusive get a higher allowance than younger children. The amount of the allowance also increases according to the child's rank in the family.

We know for a fact that poverty is more prevalent among children of single-parent families. It is more difficult for a single parent to assume his or her economic and family responsibilities in a world where two parents generally look after the child. What is more, the economic situation of a single-parent family takes a turn for the worse when the marriage breaks up.

Anxious to help the provinces enforce support orders and family agreements, the federal government has created two services. The first uses federal data banks such as the unemployment insurance benefits central file

to keep track of parents who have defaulted in their financial obligations. The second service recuperates from the defaulter parent the amounts administered and paid out by the federal government such as tax refunds and public pension plan or unemploymewnt insurance benefits.

Although these services have been operative for only a few years, they report that the number of retraced parents and seized funds is on the increase. Single parent families are the first to benefit from these improvements. Thanks to the new GST, the tax system will be made more equitable through a number of integrated changes which will make it possible for low income families to receive tax credits. So, following the implementation of the new GST, families earning under $30,000 a year will be much better off.

The government has publicly commited itself to supporting families through social measures aimed at developing a day care network and at ending family violence. Let us not overlook the significance of the Canada Assistance Plan whose costs are equally shared by the Federal and Provincial Governments and whose purpose is to provide financial assistance to needy families. Let us not forget either the convention on the Rights of the Child which was proposed and adopted this week by the United Nations, more specifically on November 20. The purpose of this Convention is to set up modern international standards aimed at protecting the social, economic, political, religious, cultural and civil rights of children.

Mr. Speaker, in order to live up to these new international standards, we will have to amend our relevant legislation. In my humble opinion, I feel that in view of these rights, we will have to take steps to make sure that physically and sexually abused children are getting the help they need to overcome the trauma they have suffered. I am thoroughly convinced that as we near year 2000, the growth of this country will largely depend on our investments in our human resources, and this from childhood.

I have examined here only some of the steps the federal government has taken in its effort to eliminate poverty among young Canadian children. At the provincial level, non-government and community organizations play an essential role. I will mention for instance the province of Quebec which has adopted a family policy dealing with several aspects of family life.

In conclusion, I should like to say that the family represents our main institution and our children the future of our society. I am 39 years old and childless which I consider a personal tragedy. For that reason, I love other people's children, and I just could not tolerate anybody hurting any of my nephews, nieces or any other children I know.

Within the next few months, Rix Rogers, a special advisor on sexually abused children, will submit a long awaited report. I wish to emphasize once more that I am determined to ensure that the federal government, together with the provinces, implements its recommendations, in order to deal once and for all in a fair fashion with the serious problem of child abuse.

Mr. Duhamel: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for her comments, and I agree that a number of programs have been continued, that some improvements have been made in some cases, and that a few new but rather limited initiatives have been taken.

[*English*]

Here is the record as I understand it. There have been 31 tax increases during the last five years. There has been a goods and services tax proposed affecting disproportionately the poor. In spite of the comments that have been made to the contrary, we get no agreement from the poor on that.

• (1340)

There will be a goods and services tax that taxes sports such as ringette, hockey, bowling, private music lessons, books and other reading materials, many of those very important to children and poor children in particular, non credit college and university courses, and even the simple niceties of life such as candies and other treats, as well as certain health services such as psychological services and the services of psysiotherapists. There is also the content of the last budget which a lot of people called an anti-family budget; it claws back from seniors and it claws back from families. How have these helped? If one looks at the total context, how have these helped to reduce the three and one-half to five million poor in Canada, and the little over one million children, the almost one million families, many of them single parent familiesled primarily by women, and the over one million unattached adults, most of whom are women? How has it

reduced the food banks that we are told are of the order of 150 to 160 and the soup kitchens? How has it helped the unemployed who do not appear on the unemployment list because they have run out of benefits and lost hope, or the almost 25 per cent youth unemployment in Newfoundland?

If we look at these new initiatives that my hon. colleague speaks about in the total context, can she tell me honestly that the poor in this country are not as numerous and that they are better off than they used to be?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Bourgault: Mr. Speaker, at the present time, incredible demands are being made on the federal government, both in the area of health and welfare and the environment. The amounts of money required in these two areas alone are astronomical.

I hope hon. members don't think that the government is particularly happy to have to raise taxes in order to achieve a more equitable distribution of the tax base. But although much remains to be done, some progress has been made. I may mention that the number of Canadians living below the poverty line has declined by more than 549,000, which means 179,000 children, 61,000 senior citizens and 198,000 women are no longer living below the poverty line. It may not be spectacular, but it is a positive development.

Personal disposable income after taxes, Mr. Speaker, has risen by $1,400 per capita, in real terms, since September 1984. Of course these are statistics, and when in our ridings we see children and families who are poor, we wonder why they can't be part of the statistics. It is clear the government has some very serious problems with the deficit, and at the same time we have a very serious social problem that we must deal with.

Of course, the only way the government can do anything is through the tax base. And although we don't particularly like raising taxes, we have to if we are to make any attempt at dealing with the problems facing so many poor families in Canada.

[*English*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate with the hon. member for Cambridge.

Mr. Pat Sobeski (Cambridge): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased for the opportunity to speak to this important motion before the House today. The emphasis we in Canada place on our social programs and the intensity of our national belief in sharing and equity help make Canada the great country that it is. We take pride in the deep rooted tradition of caring for the less fortunate among us.

For these reasons, the issue of poverty is a distressing one for all Canadians; poverty in a country so richly endowed as Canada should not be happening. It is a matter of serious national concern. We are among the most concerned about those in our society least able to overcome poverty by their own efforts and we are speaking, of course, of those children who live in poverty.

It must be pointed out that there are clearly problems associated with the definition and measurement of poverty in Canada and with child poverty in particular. Thus, for example, the number of children cited in the motion as living in poverty cannot be accepted as an accurate picture of the real situation. That fact in no way diminishes the seriousness of child poverty nor the importance of seeking to reduce or eliminate it. The intent and spirit of the motion deserves the support of all members of this House.

It is an unfortunate fact that the welfare of children and the opportunities they have to life to a great extent depend upon the economic circumstances of their parents. Those children who are raised in poor families may very likely experience significant material deprivation. The lack of an adequate family income will very likely impose relative hardship on children in those families. Clearly, improving family income, raising the standard of living of low-income families is fundamental to reducing child poverty and eliminating the roadblocks to opportunities that it creates.

The best way the government can help raise many families out of their low-income situations is to ensure Canada has an economy that is operating at its potential. Canada needs to have a strong productive economy to generate the jobs and economic activity that translate into higher incomes and to finance our social network. In short, a key to reducing poverty among children is a strong economy.

The Conservative government has been working to build a dynamic and competitive economy that will raise standards of living and provide the means to sustain the valued programs that are part of the social fabric of this country. It has done so through an economic strategy introduced n 1984, which this government has been following ever since. There are two basic aspects to this economic plan: To ensure sound stewardship of national finances and to make fundamental changes to the economy so as to unshackle the private sector and promote competitiveness and innovation.

Over the past five years we have made substantial progress on these two fronts. The government's annual deficit has been reduced considerably below the levels of the 1984–85 period. We have also made and are continuing to make significant changes that improve the way the economy operates. By removing frictions and distortions, we are making the economy more productive. By improving productivity we are raising the living standards of Canadians and thus making headway in fighting poverty.

The actions we are taking are many and far–reaching: The Canada–U.S. Free Trade Agreement, forward–looking trade initiatives with Europe and Pacific Rim countries, the deregulation of energy and transportations sectors, tax reform, privatization, new skills training for the labour force and a new competition policy are just a few.

These changes have contributed to a healthier, more confident private sector. They are part of the new foundation we are building for a stronger, more dynamic and prosperous economy in the next decade and beyond.

This plan is working. Over 1.5 million new jobs have been created in Canada over the past five years, unemployment rates have dropped in every region of the country and, more important, Canadians have benefited from these improvements. By helping to put in place and maintain a healthier economic environment, the government has laid the groundwork for social programs, lower levels of poverty and unemployment, and a more progressive distribution of after–tax income.

Over the past five years, we have taken a number of specific steps to help alleviate child poverty by increasing child benefits through the tax system to low–income families. For example, in the February 1986 budget we introduced a three stage increase in child tax credits and a new supplement to the child tax credit. There is a prepayment now of two–thirds of the child tax credits to about 700,000 low income families that was also started in 1986.

In stage one of tax reform, we converted the child tax exemption to a credit in order to benefit low income Canadians. The federal sales tax was increased in the April 1989 budget. These increases represent a first step to the new refundable sales tax credit that will accompany sales tax reform. Increased assistance provided through the refundable GST credit will protect low and middle–income Canadians. Families earning less than $30,000 will be better off once the goods and services tax has been implemented than they are under the existing system.

• (1350)

Our economic policies are designed to ensure that Canada is able to protect and strengthen the fundamental values of a caring society that define us as a nation. Our goal continues to be to ensure that Canada is economically strong and competitive, able to meet the needs of Canadians, and to provide for a better future.

All of the steps we as a government have taken to restructure the economy, to improve social programs and ensure that as a nation we can continue to afford strong social programs will count for little if we do not also ensure that our children are prepared to take advantage of the opportunities we are working to provide for them. Therefore, one of the avenues out of the vicious circle of poverty is education.

We must ensure that all Canadian children, whatever their family income background, receive the best possible education, a world class education to meet a world class challenge. Our children's future lies in our system of education. If it is to do the job we want, we must also seek ways to ensure that the school drop–out rate among poor children is no greater than it is among children who are not poor.

At the recent First Ministers conference in Ottawa, the Prime Minister outlined his concerns about education in Canada. He expressed a desire to work with the provinces, the private sector and with all interested Canadians to improve our national education systems

from coast to coast and to ensure that they match, if not exceed, those of our toughest competitors world-wide.

Education is a national issue, not a federal or provincial issue, not just necessarily a government issue. Indeed, it is an issue that affects all Canadians and demands the co-operation of all Canadians. To this end, the Prime Minister called on the provinces to join him in establishing a national task force on human resource development for the year 2000. Its objective is to assess Canada's human resource development needs and to ensure that our education system is capable of meeting the challenge in the year 2000 and beyond. If we are to meet that challenge, we will need to draw on the potential represented by the children of all families in this country, whatever their income situation.

Throwing money at the education problem is not the answer. Canada already spends huge amounts on education. Indeed, on a per capita basis we are second only to Sweden among the industrialized countries. Money spent on education is clearly a wise investment, but we want to increase the return on this investment. We want to get better results. We want to ensure that young Canadians across the country and across all income levels can take advantage of the opportunities that will be accessible to them through a better education.

We must and we will work together with all Canadians to achieve our educational goals. This is indispensable if we are to achieve our long-term goal of eliminating poverty among children everywhere. As Canadians we want a Canada in which poverty is minimized, a Canada that continues to be caring and compassionate with a capacity to maintain social programs and services Canadians need. A Canada that is economically strong and fully competitive with the nations of the world is a Canada that can best reduce poverty and provide social services and social support where it is needed.

I trust that all Canadians will join in helping to build a stronger, better Canada where poverty among children is not a present reality but just a bad memory of the past.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to add my witness on behalf of my constituents and my caucus to the parliamentary last will and testament that was issued this morning by the member for Oshawa in what I thought was providing an important service to this House in not only drawing attention to an issue that troubles all of us, but also in the challenge he raised about the need to change our vocabulary, perception, the way we think, the way we act and the way we begin to absorb the harsh reality of poverty among children.

Unfortunately, after listening to the last two speeches of the spokespersons for the Conservative government, I feel that challenge is not being taken up. This is not a time for an apologia such as we heard from the member from Cambridge about how the wonderful economic record of the government is eliminating poverty.

I thought there might be the opportunity for some honesty in this House today, honesty which says that regardless of all of what he, the parliamentary secretary and the Minister of Health and Welfare described, the situation over the last four or five years for children has become worse. That is the hard reality.

To have members of this House get up and tell us about the kind of neo-Conservative economic growth and all the rest of it as being the answer when it flies in the face of reality is in fact a rejection of the honest and sincere challenge raised by the Leader of the New Democratic Party.

I invite the member from Cambridge and the parliamentary secretary to look at the reality of Canada. I have had an opportunity to see it during the last three or four months. The Leader of the New Democratic Party said his conversion came in listening to a broadcast of the CBC last June. Mine started a bit earlier. It started in this House of Commons.

In 1985 I was sitting in this chair listening to the debate on the government's proposal to deindex family allowances. That is part of their economic record. I was listening to members talk about the conditions of that family and I realized all of a sudden that really no one in this House knew what they were talking about when it came to the condition of the modern family, including myself.

I went back to my riding. I spoke to the churches and social agencies in my riding and asked them to tell me what was going on, to describe to me what the family was like in my riding, and what was happening there. They did not know exactly either.

We put together a consortium to study the problem. About 20 organizations were involved, churches, social agencies and others. We knocked on doors like one does during a campaign, only this time we were asking serious questions about the condition and state of the family in what was my riding at the time, Winnipeg—Fort Garry. We talked to 12,000 families. Some tell me it is the largest study ever done at a local level in terms of family life in this country.

That was a revelation because all of a sudden I began to see that part of the problem of discussing children in poverty is that it is a different kind of circumstance. It is a more invisible kind of circumstance. Let me tell you what I found. I found young single mothers living in the downtown part of my riding in around Broadway, Roslyn Road, River Avenue who had to move every six or seven months in order to find some proper child care. They could not get sufficient, adequate, or proper child care accessibility because the day care centres were full, so they had to move around to try to find a proper place to look after their kids.

When you are moving around that way, there goes all your energy. There go all the resources you have simply to find somebody to look after your children. I discovered that, in my riding alone, there was at least a couple of thousand teenage kids out on the streets, not necessarily children from poor families per se but children from all kinds of families who were out on the street trying to find a place to live. Sometimes they were living with a friend, sometimes they were living on the streets, and sometimes they were just bouncing around from agency to agency.

It might be interesting to the member from Cambridge who was extolling the virtues of a government that I went to a place called Rossbrook House which is an agency that deals with poor children in downtown Winnipeg to ask what the problems were and how were they coping. They deal with 200 or 300 street kids coming in off the streets.

They pointed out that one of the really serious problems they were now facing was because of the cut-back in the budget of employment and immigration and because of the change in rules, they could no longer get job creation funds going to social agencies. That particular agency had to cut back its program by 30 or 40 per cent. They could no longer hire young street kids to work on other street kids. They could not hire teenagers to work with the young ones because your government said that that was no longer an acceptable way to spend public money which was to give money to agencies working with poor children. That is the great economic record of this government, taking money from an agency that was dealing with street kids in downtown Winnipeg.

When the member from Cambridge and the ministers and the parliamentary secretary get up and say that they are dealing with the problem, they don't know what they are talking about. They are dealing with a society that is becoming further divided, further split, and they only represent one half of it. They only represent one part of it. They do not understand the reality of the other part of Canada. They do not understand it and they do not care about it, that is the problem. They get up and read a set speech without trying to use their intellect or their energy to understand what is going on. That is the reality of Canada as it is today.

You can go into the Rousseau Indian reserve which is not too far from the city of Winnipeg and still see children having to drink water that is shipped in 30 or 40 miles and getting gastroenteritis every week as a result of that. That is a product of a policy of this government. Is that something that members on the other side want to get up and defend and say this is part of the proud achievement and accomplishment of this regime?

• (1400)

I ask members to shed the speeches prepared by their departments. Open your eyes and your hearts a little, start looking at the reality of what is going on, and begin to talk about what is the real vocabulary in this country.

A day does not go by in this House of Commons that we do not hear ministers or members of the Conservative regime talk about the deficit. That has become the icon of our times: The deficit.

I never hear the Minister of Finance talk about the real deficit in this country, which is those one million kids in poverty. That is the real lack of investment. That is the real tragedy. In 10 years from now those are the children who should be tomorrow's teachers, business people, politicians, or journalists. They will never get there because they are never going to get to the starting line. When you have a million children living in poverty

that is the greatest lack of investment. That is the greatest deficit we face. That is the problem, and there is nothing being done to address that kind of issue.

If this country is to be competitive, if it is to be productive, if it is to meet the international challenge, it will need every one of those children who are living in poverty today. We will need their skills, talents, brains and abilities. We cannot afford to have them on the scrap heap today, which is where we are putting them. We will need those kids to be the adults of tomorrow, to be the productive, contributing citizens of this country. This is not in the far distant future. We are only talking about something that is six or seven years away, and that is not much time.

We hear about educational forums and new task forces being set up. I do not buy that. It is simply a stall tactic. It is another way of studying the problem to death. We are going to need those children as contributing adults in a very short period of time to make this country prosperous, to make this country productive, to make this country competitive. We cannot afford in a country of 26 million people to have 1 million of its future citizens pushed to the sidelines, put on the scrap heap and told that they are forgotten. That is why it will take immediate action and a substantial change in the way we are doing things.

While we are on the question of deficit, members opposite say: "Well, maybe we would like to do more" and they use cliches: "Don't throw money at problems" and everything else. The fact of the matter is that you have to make a choice about where you are going to invest your money. Do you want to invest it in those kids? Do you want to give them a chance through decent income to become productive citizens, or are we to continue investing in megaprojects which are presently on the books for $7 billion under this government.

That $7 billion would do an awful lot to turn this country around and give those one million children a chance in this world, but this government easily will go off and sign $2.5 billion here—$800 million for Oerlikon and all the rest of those types of expenditures.

A government member said today, and I applaud him for it, that we should look at the whole gamut of business subsidies, grants, loans, guarantees, support and say that if you really believe in the private sector it is about time that it starts doing those things for itself. The role and the responsibility of this federal government is to put the money where it counts, and that is with the children of Canada. That is where the real investment should be made.

I challenge members opposite: "Stand up for your principles. Do you want to be free enterprisers? Do you want to believe in the market–place? Then start believing in it and start saying that its time to stop the giveaways. We are going to put our money where it is really going to do some good. We are going to make sure that five, six or seven years from now we are going to have well trained citizens, because we are going to take those children and give them a chance".

That means not simply withdrawing from the programs; it means building something new. It is about time that we started looking at the inadequacy of our family programs. I am prepared to say today, without any equivocation, that the existing arrangements we have do not work. The family allowance was developed 40 or 50 years ago and was a very important program at the time. It does not meet the need today.

I will give you an example that is very clear. As I went through that family study I talked about in my riding what I discovered was that many families no longer have any flexibility whatsoever to meet a crisis. They no longer have a support system. The same kind of range of institutions and families are not there. They do not have the margin of income to meet a problem if there is a family breakdown, illness in the family, or if they discover their child has a learning disability.

Let me give one example of a couple who came to see me in my riding about two or three months ago. I think he is a bus driver and she works as a retail clerk in a department store. They found out that their child is a hyperactive kid and was then put on Ritalin. The school board said: "You can't have this kid in the school any more". They have to send him to a private school for $5,000 or $6,000 a year, and they are making a combined income of $38,000. Where does the $5,000 come from, other than going on welfare? It means giving up their payments on the mortgage on their house. It means going to the Canada Assistance Program, but they are not going to do that.

There is no capacity or ability to meet that problem, and it is what every single family faces as it goes through the cycle. There is no margin left to meet those crises. One suggestion was that we do a fundamental revision of the way in which we provide income support, to give it the flexibility to meet those crises, to create a sense of a family trust so we can provide that support to our children and their families to meet those particular problems.

It may mean that finally the day has come when we recognize that while the family is changing, and we have all these two-income families, many of them are not working because they want to but because they have to. The government loves to cite statistics about employment creation, but the fact of the matter is that much of that employment is at the minimum wage.

There is the phenomenon called the working poor in this country. There are hundreds of thousands who are in that circumstance, which again suggests to me that we have to break through a lot of the old shibboleths and the old conventional wisdom and say that maybe it is time for a proper kind of guaranteed income in this country that will provide an income base for children and families so that every time they make an extra income it is not going to be taxed away. We need some chance to move ourselves forward in our society.

That is what I think the member for Oshawa was trying to tell us this morning. I think it is about time that we expand our ideas beyond the existing paradigms and traps we have found ourselves in. He is not asking members of parliament to stand up on their feet and try to defend or apologize for what is but to try and think of what should be. Where do we go from here? That is the importance of this debate.

Perhaps I might just talk about an issue that has not been raised today. We have been concentrating, and I think rightly, on the problem of poverty of children in Canada. Let us stop for a moment, pause, think about the problem of poverty of children outside Canada and how we are contributing to a substantial decrease in the standard of living of children in the Third World.

I am not going to take a long time. I know we are Debating poverty in Canada, but for a moment I would like to draw the members' attention to a report that was prepared by UNICEF last year called *The State of the World's Children*.

It is an important document. I think every member should read it because it states that as a consequence of policies that we accede to as a government and as a country, we contribute to a more serious reduction of nutrition among the world's children; we contribute to a reduction in the standard of education; we contribute to a reduction in the standard of health. What we are doing is putting the squeeze on Mexico, Venezuela and all these countries to pay their bills. They are paying them by cutting back on their schools, on their sewage systems, on the nutrition they provide their children.

The industrial nations of the world this year alone will be net receivers of $50 billion from Third World countries. In Canada alone we will receive a net of $1.7 billion. It exceeds our foreign aid budget. We are going to be taking back more money than we put out, and the consequence is that we are contributing for the first time since the end of the Second World War to the net decline in the state and condition of the world's children. We are contributing to it as Canadians.

When you ask those questions as we are studying the problem of what to do with the debt before the external affairs committee, we have the bankers coming to us and saying: "We have no choice. We have our shareholders to meet." They are running up the reserves with tax write-offs. They say that that is okay, that it is okay for them to protect their shareholders.

• (1410)

Who is protecting these kids out there? Who is looking after their interests? I know they do not vote in Canada. They do not have a constituency. By God, it is an awful commentary on the way we conduct our public business when we are prepared to tolerate that condition year after year and not raise a voice to say there is something wrong with us, when we allow that to happen.

I would like to add to the commitment and concern that was raised by the hon. member from Oshawa this morning and say that I think there is a broader constituency and a broader set of issues that we have to be addressing when we talk about poverty among children. I do not think it is sufficient for Canadians simply to attack the poverty of our own children, as deep, as serious and

as tragic as that may be, and leave our responsibility to the rest of the world alone.

We cannot be an island unto ourselves, because we will not be allowed to survive in those circumstances.

The question is: How do we begin to approach this issue? We have heard recommendations for a conference. I think it is a useful idea to bring all the people from the different sectors together to begin to examine it. I think it is useful to talk about how we can begin to get the involvement of others, but I now simply want to address the responsibilities of this House.

I remind hon. members that we have a responsibility too. I remind the House of the words of George Wald who is a Nobel laureate. When he received the Nobel prize several years ago he said that while he was very pleased to accept this prize "there is not much that I can do that is going to affect my life from now on. I am who I am. I have become what I am by other people's helping so there is not an awful lot I am going to do to either help me or my generation". He said: "But I want to offer this advice: There is one simple test that I want to pass on to politicians around the world, and that is, when you ask yourself about a policy, ask yourself how it will affect children, their lives and the kind of state that they live in?"

I want to ask members of the House about how we have considered the new increase in taxes will affect children. Has the Minister of Finance really asked whether the GST, in its application in terms of the reduced standard of living of families in Canada, really helps children? Will it help them to buy their books? Will it help them to go to school? Will it help them to get the kind of music lessons that my colleague from St. Boniface has talked about? Will that tax help children? Will it really help in aiding their education? Will it help people to get out of poverty?

Let me ask how the changes to the Unemployment Insurance Act will help children. Will the changes enable their mothers or fathers to get training to get into the workforce?

From the answers we heard in committee, it is going to be more difficult. There are going to be more of them on the street unless you believe in the harsh discipline of the market-place. It is not going to add substantially more investment in those areas. Will the kind of debates that we have been having over the last few days about the Federal Business Development Bank and the wide range of government programs for business help children? The answer is no.

It seems to me that we have a clear priority. My colleague, the member from St. Boniface, can talk about it more eloquently than I can because he has the facts and figures. We have to invest in people, our children. That should be the fundamental responsibility and that should be the test that we begin to apply to all our government programs.

I suggest to the hon. parliamentary secretary that rather than simply tinkering with the system, rather than looking at how you might provide another half a million dollars for a grant, to go ahead with initiatives. We have in front of us the priority of child care. Why are we waiting? It has been a year. Why is it not brought in, incorporating the incredible number of recommendations that were made by all those who appeared before the committee over a year and a half ago?

The government should not take the time to deal with the Minister of Finance's problems. Do it now. At the same time the government should look at the kind of income security program that would give sufficient base for working poor families and single parent families to meet their needs. It is not sufficient and you know it is not. I ask the parliamentary secretary to speak to her minister, so he might advise the cabinet to bring in that kind of fundamental revision of the way in which we deliver income and security. If so, you are going to get a response from this side of the House.

In conclusion, I say that we can do something important to respond to the member for Oshawa. Every time there is a bill or legislation, every time there is an initiative we must ask ourselves the simple question: How will it affect our children.

Mr. Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine): Mr. Speaker, a brief comment and perhaps a couple of questions to my hon. colleague across the way. The annual $40 billion deficit of the government since 1984 has been reduced to approximately $28, $29 or $30 billion per year. That is a remarkable on behalf of the Minister of Finance and the government.

The people who watch our debates in the House of Commons know the cold hard facts are that we have to pay for our social programs. We have to pay to help the people that need the money the most. There are only two ways we can do it. We have implemented both of them. One is taxation and the other is by cutting the

administration of the government, which is not always popular.

I have three questions for my hon. colleague. He can answer a yes or no to the first two and I will give him the open floor for the last one. We want to see how he will balance the budget if he ever gets to be minister of finance, God forbid.

The first question concerns the GST.

Mr. Lee: What about children?

Mr. Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine): We are speaking about children. We are talking about the services because the money must come from the federal government to enhance the programs that we have.

Every Canadian has the responsibility of ensuring that we look after our children. We take that seriously on our side. Assuming that the GST goes through, if there was a new government, would my hon. colleague, as he did with the free trade agreement, tear it up? Will they wipe out GST? Let the Official Opposition party tell Canadians what they stand for today. Let them say what their option is. Will they tear up—

An Hon. Member: What are you going to do?

Mr. Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine): We have said what we are going to do. We want to have fair taxation for the people.

Will my hon. colleague do what his leader has said in the past? Will he tear up the free trade agreement with the United States that was signed on January 1, 1989? Yes or no?

Third, with the reform that we have brought in with unemployment insurance, will you, as a minister responsible in a new government in perhaps the year 2050 or later, change what we have brought in? Yes or no?

Finally, how does he propose as the official opposition party to balance the budget so that we can continue to pay old age pensions, family allowances, so that we can continue to subsidize welfare, and unemployment insurance cheques so that all Canadians can have a decent way of living?

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): I thank the member for his question dealing with children in Canada. The fact that he was totally off target does not mean to say he does not deserve an answer. I will try to give him one.

Let us talk about what we should be doing with the economy of this country. Let us talk about the several hundred million dollars given away by increasing the capital gains tax.

Mr. Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine): Just answer the first two questions.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Does the member want to know the answer or not? Do you want to know how you are going to pay in order to deal with children? You are going to stop giveaways like the huge rip-off in the capital gains tax. That is how you start doing it.

You begin by not giving special privileges to your friends as this government has been doing over the last four or five years. You start doing something about the high interest rates which add several billion dollars to the deficit every year.

It is about time this Parliament started taking control of interest rates and started having a minister of finance that paid attention to that high interest rate rather than simply letting it become part and parcel of the life of this country. That is how you start doing it.

You start dealing with the whole question of tax reform. The fact of the matter is that large corporations in this country today only contribute 11 per cent of the total revenue of the federal government of Canada. It seems to me that that hon. member might ask himself whether that is a fair contribution by the major businesses of this country who get all the benefits from this government.

Maybe he should start asking the same questions of the Minister of Finance as he has asked of me. He wants to know about unemployment insurance. Yes, I would totally rescind those because the kind of legislation brought in by the Minister of Employment and Immigration makes Margaret Thatcher looks like Mother Teresa by comparison. All it does is simply put the squeeze on the people least able to protect themselves. It does not provide incentive for training. It does not provide for the workforce and it discriminates against the poorer regions

of this country. It is going to hit the fish workers, forestry workers and farm workers, the people who work in the resource areas of this country. These are the people who will be affected by your unemployment insurance changes and they are the people whose children are presently living in poverty.

• (1420)

If the member wants an honest answer, yes, there is a Liberal program for economic reform and it bears no comparison whatsoever to what your government has done.

Hon. Alan Redway (Minister of State (Housing)): Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to say a few words in connection with this opposition motion calling upon the House to express concern for the Canadian children currently living in poverty—

An Hon. Member: Express?

Mr. Redway: Yes, to express concern. I thought that was the intent of the motion.

It goes without saying that each and every member of this House is concerned about child poverty. There is no question about that. I do not think, as I look around the opposition benches, that members would deny that they have concern for child poverty. I know throughout the government caucus everyone is concerned. Certainly I am. All of the ministers are and, certainly, I know all the members of this House are. I think it goes without saying as well that Canadians generally, and likely without exception, would agree with the content of this motion which expresses concern and a wish to do something with respect to the state of child poverty in this country.

I think it goes beyond that, because it is a question of concern about poverty itself, not only child poverty. I am sure the hon. member from Winnipeg would agree that there are many other people living in poverty in this country in spite of all of the efforts that have been made over many years to try to stamp out poverty. For example, it is estimated that some 450,000 senior citizens, mainly singles, continue to live in poverty in this country at the present time. As the hon. member knows, we have made a deliberate effort and there are many programs aimed at trying to stamp out poverty for senior citizens.

What can we do with respect to poverty for children? Some of the members in this debate have pointed out a number of the problems in relation to child poverty in this country. One in particular struck me because it was one that I had a good deal of concern about when I was a private member of this House. We see this strange and disturbing, almost obscene phenomenon of food banks and the growth of food banks.

Prior to 1979 there was no such phenomenon as food banks in Canada. Perhaps there had been in the "Dirty Thirties", but certainly not in my experience can I remember food banks in this country until the late 1970s.

Despite the fact that since then, particularly in the middle and late 1980s, we have seen the unemployment rate falling and the number of food banks increasing. That is a most concerning matter. I think it is high time that it was investigated.

You may recall, Mr. Speaker, that as a private member of Parliament I raised this issue many times in the House. I raised this issue before the standing committee of the House on national health and welfare and asked that committee to take the initiative and come to grips with this, investigate the problem and make some recommendations with respect to it.

Unfortunately, to date, that has not occurred. No party on the standing committee, for instance, has taken that initiative, which disturbs me greatly.

Having said all that, and I recognize that food banks are not the only phenomenon of child poverty in this country, I guess the question then is, what have we been doing about it, and what are we going to do about trying to deal with this question?

Other spokesmen for the government have pointed out a number of steps that the government has been taking to address the problem of child poverty. One of these steps is to address the problem of poverty altogether within the context of managing the economy in a way that puts people to work, trying to raise their income, and raise them above the poverty level.

My colleague, the Minister of National Health and Welfare has pointed to things like the child tax credit and the income tax reductions of last year, matters that are in the proposed goods and services tax. Although I know the hon. member from Winnipeg and others are not happy with this, there are measures within that tax system regime that are aimed at trying to assist low income people.

I know the hon. members are well aware of those measures, such as the goods and services tax credit, and, of course, there is a credit with respect to a rebate for new housing. There are many exemptions of basic groceries, medical services, educational services, et cetera; which are aimed, of course, at trying to alleviate the impact of the goods and services tax on low and moderate income people. All of these things have been done within the context of trying to alleviate poverty, put people back to work and improve the standard of living in this country.

I have always felt that one of the essential ingredients in this whole equation, however, is the question of housing. The affordability and cost of housing in this country has added immeasurably, in my view, generally to poverty, whether it is poverty of the working, those who do not have any jobs at all, child poverty, or the poverty of senior citizens. All have been impacted by the rising cost of housing. The impact either on rents or on house prices all have had the effect of reducing the amount of disposable income that people have had in order to try to get themselves out of that poverty cycle.

I do not think it is any news to this House, but somehow or other it apparently is news to at least 75 per cent of Canadians that the federal government has for a long time—and it did not just start with the present government, it has gone on now for 40 years or more—has been involved in housing and has been trying to assist people one way or another to better house themselves. At the present time we have some 600,000 housing units that have been built by various governments over the years which are geared-to-income type of housing unit homes for people who otherwise would not be able to afford it.

It is distressing to me to realize and to learn that 70 per cent of Canadians do not believe that out of their federal taxes the government will pay anything to assist in helping people to be better housed across this country. Each year, as well, the government assists about an additional 45,000 households in this country with housing of one sort or another, whether it be the production of non-profit family housing or housing for the disabled, rural and native housing, urban housing for natives, or assistance under the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program. All of these things are in the works and have been in the works for some time.

The question must be considered in light of the fiscal situation of the government, and I know that all hon. members of this House, regardless of their partisanship, their feelings about what should or should not be done with respect to taxes and income, realize that the government has a problem here. So what can be done within the context of that problem to try to assist and create more housing for people who need it? We have been trying to address that problem by first taking a look at surplus federal government lands to see if there are some innovative ways to utilize them.

• (1430)

We have already announced a couple of projects in the metropolitan Toronto area, at Downsview and at Vaughan, hopefully to be able to help in that respect. We have also been trying to involve the private sector in this process as well to use the private sector in combination with publicly-owned housing to see if we can create more housing units at the same location, some of it private, but more of it public and more of it assisted housing.

We are also looking at the aspect of getting all levels of government, including the private sector, in a co-operative phase. We have set up some 10 tripartite committees of three levels of government across the country to see if we can all come together to try to address these problems as one force rather than going off in different directions. We all know that—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Pronovost): I am sorry to interrupt the minister but his time has expired.

Ms Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry that the minister's remarks were cut off by time limits.

The Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia has found many on income assistance who must use part of their food money to pay for rent, and estimates are that about 60 to 70 per cent of the household income of poor families is spent on shelter. As the minister has acknowledged, this contributes greatly to child poverty.

Under the Co-op Housing Program which is the only separate federal program available directly from the federal government to municipalities, we have only about 100 units available this year in Vancouver. As the minister knows, the cost of housing is escalating and the amount of affordable housing is diminishing greatly. This is really contributing to the stress on families and to poverty generally. I know the minister gave his overview

of government programs. Putting that aside, deal with this problem of the high cost of shelter for poor people?

Mr. Redway: Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate the question from the hon. member, because that, in effect, is what I was trying to outline in the concluding portion of my remarks. These are some of the practical things I have been trying to do to expand, given the limitations on finances that we have, and in trying to use the resources that we have available in a better fashion.

The hon. member spoke of co-op housing. There was a discussion and agreement between the Co-operative Housing Foundation of Canada and the government some four years ago with respect to an experimental program with index-linked mortgages. That is the program that we have been applying over the last four years. It has another year to go under the agreed experimental program. One of the problems with that program was it anticipated that we could have a real interest rate of 4 per cent on ILM mortgages. But we have had a real interest rate of 5 per cent as opposed to 4 per cent. One of the ways to get that real interest rate down is to get more people investing in index-linked mortgages.

I have been going out to pension fund groups as a messenger on behalf of co-op housing and ILM mortgages to try to sell them on interest rate down to the 4 per cent level. For each 1 per cent of interest rate, the interest rate on an ILM mortgage drops, and we could increase the amount of co-op housing we produce by 20 per cent, and I have had some success.

As the hon. member knows, I was in Vancouver about two or three weeks ago and we opened a co-op housing project. This was in conjunction with the city of Vancouver which purchased the Killarney Gardens property comprising 227 units, an existing project which was about to be torn down and a condominium built in its place. In a co-operative effort with the city of Vancouver, the co-op housing movement and the federal government through the use of ILM mortgages, where we backed a $19 million ILM mortgage, we were able to save that property for co-operative housing. Those are the kinds of practical things we should be looking for and that we should be trying to do to assist in helping child poverty and in helping all poverty across this country.

I would like to have the opportunity to go on beyond the co-op housing example. There are many other things that we are trying to do in order to be innovative using the resources that we have available to expand the amount of housing for Canadians, whether it be for first-time home buyers or people spending vast sums of their income on housing who are not able to afford it, so that we can create more homes and put more people in them, still facing the realities of the existing federal fiscal situation.

Mr. Ross Reid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege for me this afternoon to be able to participate in this debate, a debate that was started off this morning in the name of the hon. member for Oshawa. It struck me this morning that not only the motion but the hon. member's speech probably summed up his career in this House and the contribution he has made to conscience in this country and the thought that so many of us must have in addressing problems like this.

There is no place in Canada that sees and suffers from poverty like Newfoundland and Labrador. Like all members but I regret perhaps more than some that in my own constituency I see it every time that I am home. We all must through our efforts, not only in terms of legislation but in terms of our consciousness, move to ensure that poverty is eradicated in this country now and forever. I was particularly taken by the comments made this morning by my colleague, the member for Cape Breton—East Richmond. They reflect so much the perception and reality in Atlantic Canada.

The hon. member for Oshawa reminded us that if there is anything we lack in this country, it is an awareness of the situation. It is an awareness that poverty is everywhere, that poverty is so destructive and so insipid. It is an awareness that we can, each in our own little way, do something about it. It is coming from that awareness that I want to speak this afternoon in the few brief minutes that I have about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Yesterday afternoon I had the privilege of meeting with 21 students from the Upper Gullies Elementary School in Conception Bay South in my constituency. They were a representative group of 70 Grade 6 students who came to me with their principal, Mrs. Peckham, and a teacher, Mrs. Wells, and asked me to come to the House of Commons and say that Canada has co-sponsored and endorsed through the United Nations the

convention that deals with the rights of children and that Canada should be the first country to endorse that in its own legislature. I bring that message to you, Mr. Speaker. They gave me 70 letters. I have them here and I read them this morning. They talk primarily of two things, of ratification and of peace. Ratification is something that I will come back to.

Briefly the students see the lack of peace in this world as one of the greatest crises that children face. We know that children are the victims of political violence. We know that children are the victims of war. We know that children suffer most around the world as they are pawns and as they are left by the side as we carry on in our political differences and in the interests of some great principle that we seem to have. What these kids are saying to me and to all of us is summed up perhaps in a letter from Jennifer Anthony which says: "Why can't everyone just co-operate and work together? Why don't they just try it? The world would be a much better place if people would just try to work everything out without going to war".

• (1440)

I think all Canadians are proud of the role this country has played in the United Nations in having the UN endorse the convention. We co-sponsored it as everyone knows and I am sure that all members will agree that the letters they received from their constituents were encouraging that we move decisively, and we have done that. Now the question is for ratification. But I think it is important to recognize that the convention while we think of it as applying to others has some very important messages for Canada and for Canadians.

Article 6 for example gives recognition to the concept of survival and development. But that is just more than the essentials of life. That includes such things as growth monitoring, oral rehydration, breast feeding, immunization, disease control, and child spacing. Article 24 talks about health and nutrition; Article 26, on the right to benefit from social security; Article 27, on the right to an adequate standard of living including access to material assistance and support programs.

Clearly considering our role in the movement of this resolution through the UN gives us an extra responsibility in terms of ratification and also in terms of compliance. The convention is a very comprehensive and detailed instrument providing for a number of important rights for the child and quite specific obligations for states. Clearly the subject matter in this convention as it applies to Canada falls into provincial as well as shared jurisdiction. Clearly there must be a continued ongoing process of consultation with the provinces and the territories. I need not remind hon. members that the provinces have played a very substantial role in the development of our position on this and our co-sponsorship.

Ratification demands that this country have the legislation in place because once we have ratified it we have accepted it. This country, and I think all members would agree that our responsibility is to ensure that we do have the mechanisms in place, that we have the legislation and regulations in place so that compliance is not something that we cannot do. Compliance is something that we must be willing to do, and do in an active and constructive manner. The provinces again must be a substantial part of that contribution.

There will be a committee on the rights of the child put in place. It will provide constructive criticism in working with states to facilitate implementation and provisions of the convention. In a sense it will be a monitor.

As we all know, and as the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre has indicated, poverty is not just a problem in Canada. Poverty is a tragedy in this country, particularly for our children, there is no question. I cannot help but comment as we see the atrocities in El Salvador, as we look at the violence around the world that leaves children parentless, that leaves children homeless, that leaves children without the basic sustenance of life, that leaves children hopeless. I look at the situation on the horn of Africa, particularly as it pertains to Eritrea where fighting on behalf of Ethiopia there are children carrying weapons. We see it every day in the Middle East. We see it every day around the world.

When I speak to people outside of this place I try to remind them that what happens outside of this country directly pertains to their lives inside of this country, that the welfare of people around the world matters in a material way to the way that we live today and in the

future. I come back to the awareness problem. We must be aware of those needs, those concerns as we as a country play a leadership role not only in serving the needs of those around the world that need our help but also as a facilitator, as a mover toward peace, as a country that can lead this world into the future in a more sane and more humane way.

I am not normally prone to reading letters but there are three that I mentioned. One is very simple from Paul Martin:

> Please pass a law immediately about the law of the child, not to use money to make weapons but to get shelter and clothes.

There is also a poem from a lady by the name of Nancy Carter which is only four lines:

> Why do people fight when it only kills? Why do they kill when it only makes people sad? Why do people have war when it makes no sense? I pray each day no more war will come. God save us from the war.

If we can tell children around the world that they have a future, we in Canada will be able to tell our children as we move to their future that it, too, will be secure and that this country will lead the war in dealing with poverty and world security.

Mrs. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I would like to compliment the member for his very eloquent remarks.

I would like to ask him if he is aware that the Member of Parliament for Mission—Coquitlam has sponsored a private members' bill to establish a children's bill of rights that is designed, as I understand it, to conform to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

I think it really relates to what he was saying and, having studied this question, I agree with him. It is important that Canada not only ratify the UN declaration but that we find a way of implementing it. It seems to me that this is one of the ways that we could.

I wonder, first, if he would consider supporting this private member's bill and perhaps even co-sponsoring it so that we could have it sponsored by people on all sides of the House. Then it would go forward as this motion has today in a non-partisan way so that there is consensus in working for the rights of children in Canada.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, I confess not to being specifically aware of the private member's bill. It is my understanding that the government, as the minister mentioned this morning, supports the concept and is doing some work on it.

I would suggest, though, that because of the timing involved we should move and move quickly with any initiative like this. It is not an accident that the convention was signed this week. It commemorates 30 years of the declaration. As well, 10 years ago was the Year of the Child.

In terms of my co-sponsoring the bill, I have not yet seen it and no politician nor anybody else with any sense would agree to anything until seeing it. However, we recognize that there is some momentum there and a real consciousness. I am sure the hon. member got all sorts of letters supporting this process and Canada's involvement. I think that consciousness is something that we should build on.

Mr. Thompson: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for St. John's East for a very articulate statement of fact and support on behalf of the children of Canada. Really, it was a speech that I was anticipating. The only question that I have for the member is simply what are the numbers of children living in poverty in Canada. Does he have statistics for us?

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, I do not have a figure. Quite clearly, there have been numbers bandied about here today. Poverty is something that is more than money in the pocket. As I see it, poverty is lack of care, lack of shelter and lack of some sense of future. I see people every day who live on nothing, but who provide remarkably loving and secure homes for their children. These children have a future because they are taught that they have one.

• (1450)

The answer to the question may be that if there is one, it is too many. I think all of us, whether on this side of the House or on the other, work to make sure that there are none, because children in this country and children around the world have to be the future. We mark children from very early days. They are affected by their environment from the very beginning. The more secure that environment is, the more stable health care systems are and the more able children are to cope in the world, the better they are to be functional and to contribute to whatever country they live in.

If we have one child who is not getting that anywhere in the world, our work is not finished.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On debate.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Bourgault: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Minister of State (Youth) (Mr. Charest) has just arrived, and since I was going to suggest waiting two minutes, I will yield the floor to the Minister.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Pronovost): The Minister of State (Youth), on a point of order.

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of State (Youth) and Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport and Deputy Leader of the government in the House of Commons)): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to thank the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Health and Welfare who led the debate so eloquently today on the government side. And I may add, we do not often have a chance to be announced by a fellow member before rising in the House. I was going to suggest, considering the exceptional circumstances and the discussions that took place before today's debate, that the House support unanimously the motion before it today, Mr. Speaker.

I would also like to take advantage of this opportunity to say, on behalf of the government, that this decision was also made because the motion was presented by the leader of the New Democratic Party. We appreciated the passion and sincerity with which he presented his motion today in the House, and I suggest that in the spirit of parliamentary co-operation, as happens from time to time, we inform Canadians that the entire House, as represented by all Parties, unanimously supports this motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Pronovost): The House has heard the Minister's suggestion. Is there unanimous consent for this proposal?

Is the House agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

[*English*]

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to thank the minister on behalf of our Leader and the New Democratic Party caucus. We appreciate the government's offer to have this motion passed by the House today and we also appreciate the non-partisan debate we have had by members of all three parties.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Pronovost): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Pronovost): It being three o'clock, it is my duty to inform the House that pursuant to Standing Order 81(17), the proceedings on the motion have expired. This House stands adjourned until Monday next at 11 a.m, pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 2.54 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, November 27, 1989

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, the House will remember that on Thursday during the discussion on business for the week a request was made that the Prime Minister report to the House on the results of his trip to Russia. I agreed to bring that to the Prime Minister's attention. He does very much wish to report to the House as soon as possible. As you can appreciate, he just returned yesterday and he does have his remarks together. They are being typed now.

What we would like to suggest—and there have been discussions among the parties in order to enable this to be done—is the following. I will put it forward in terms of an understanding rather than asking for a House order if I may.

The understanding would be that we go through Routine Proceedings. The first item of government business is a vote on the Ways and Means proceeding No. 8. I understand that there may be a wish to have a recorded division on that. It is also my understanding that there would be a 15-minute division bell agreed upon and that we would then revert to Statements by Ministers in order to allow the Prime Minister to report to the House at that time.

I think that if there is a general understanding in the House to proceed on that basis I would request that the House do so.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I would like to be as co-operative as possible. On the Ways and Means Motion we would just ask for a division rather than a recorded division.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, considering the importance of the Prime Minister's statement and the responses that we will hear from the opposition parties, the New Democratic Party is quite prepared to forgo a recorded division on the Ways and Means motion to allow the Prime Minister to speak at the earliest opportunity.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

FINANCE

SECOND REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Finance in relation to the technical paper on the goods and services tax.

I want to say that presenting this report has been a rather major effort. It was only made possible by some excellent work done by House of Commons staff in the committees branch who worked night and day, as well as those in the printing unit who worked overtime making it possible to have the material available.

The committee is recommending a reduction in the goods and services tax rate and a broadening of the base to make the tax more acceptable, hopefully, to Canadians.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

* * *

PETITIONS

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to present a petition pursuant to Standing Order 36, which has been certified correct by the clerk of petitions.

Actually, there is a long list of petitions, all from western Canadians who point out their concern with the government's intention to proceed with the goods and services tax. This is quite timely in light of the fact that the chairman of the finance committee has just tabled the report.

They point out at some length all the concerns they have regarding the tax and the fact that it is basically a very unfair tax. They request that the government come to its senses, go back to the drawing board and devise a tax that is at least fair to the people of Canada.

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I also have the honour to present a petition on the same subject.

The petitioners who are from British Columbia reject the proposal for a goods and services tax. They ask for a reform of the tax system so that there is an effective minimum tax on wealthy individuals and corporations.

They want to ensure that there is broad public consensus on a sales tax measure and cause the government to cease with the proposal that will shift the tax burden on to ordinary Canadians through a regressive consumption tax instead of through real tax reform.

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour and duty on behalf of a number of constituents of my own and constituents of the Minister of National Defence to present a petition.

They call upon the government to reject the the goods and services tax proposal and to put in place a tax which would be more fair and less regressive for all Canadians.

• (1110)

[*Translation*]

OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX AND REQUEST FOR STRONGER FISHING REGULATIONS

Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Beauséjour): Mr. Speaker, it is also my duty to present you with petitions sent to me by some of my constituents in Sackville, Port Elgin, Bayfield, Shediac, Grande Digue, Buctouche, Sainte Marie and all the communities in my riding which strongly object to the government's plan to impose a new 9 per cent tax. They say that this tax will be very unjust and a very heavy burden for families. This tax will be hidden and very unfair. The petitioners humbly ask Parliament to reject this new tax.

Mr. Speaker, I also have another petition, which is from residents of Saint Louis and concerns another subject, namely fishing. The signers of this petition ask the Government to extend its jurisdiction to the whole continental shelf so that the Canadian Government can control all the kinds of fishing that now go on there and so that the government can also regulate the fishery resources which are so vital for the Atlantic communities.

[*English*]

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Mr. Speaker, I too stand under the provisions of Standing Order 36 to present a petition signed by many people in southwestern Ontario who are totally opposed to the goods and services tax proposed by the government. They call upon the government to withdraw this legislation.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I too rise to present a petition signed by many Canadians who are opposed to the goods and services tax. They join with many other Canadians who have expressed their opposition to this tax in so many ways including petitions.

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, I have the duty and the honour this morning of presenting to the House of Commons six petitions signed by constituents in my riding. There are hundreds of signatures of people who are essentially opposed to the goods and services tax.

They outline in their petition that this is the thirty-first new tax or tax increase since 1984. They feel it will undermine low and middle income Canadians in our riding and indeed across the country, as well as bring harm to small business structures. They ask in the end, like this party, that the government reject the goods and services tax.

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, I have two sets of petitions to present.

The first calls upon Parliament to reject the current proposal for a goods and services tax, to reform the taxation system so that there is an effective minimum tax on wealthy individuals and corporations, and to ensure if and when there is broad public consensus on sales tax measures to replace the manufacturers' sales tax that this reform not be used as an opportunity for the government to impose a massive tax grab.

SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, the second petition notes that the government has proposed to tax back old age security and family allowance benefits in part or in their entirety.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to abandon this proposed measure which singles out old age security and family allowance benefits as a tax source tied to the level of income.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 36 with a number of petitions. The first one is on the subject of the goods and services tax and signed by some 40 residents of Revelstoke, Castlegar, Trail, Rossland, Armstrong, and Kamloops, all within the Province of British Columbia.

The petitioners reject the current proposal for a goods and services tax and call upon Parliament to ensure if and when there is broad public consensus on a sales tax measure to replace the manufacturers' sales tax that this reform not be an opportunity for the government to impose a massive tax grab such as they believe the current purpose of the government's GST to be.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, I have four other petitions in a long list of petitions which I presented earlier on the subject of VIA Rail.

This time they are from the communities of Revelstoke, New Denver, Nakusp, Fokier, Galena Bay, Beaton, Nelson, Kamloops, Golden and Sicamous in British Columbia, and Calgary, Alberta.

Some 130 petitioners call upon the government to maintain The Canadian line of the VIA Rail system and to abandon plans for the sabotaging of rail passenger service across Canada.

RIGHT TO LIFE

Mr. Gus Mitges (Bruce—Grey): Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege to present a petition signed by people from such diverse Ontario communities as Athens, Brockville, Chatham, Cornwall, Dundas, Frankfurt, Hamilton, Massey, Mildmay, North Bay, Prescott, Sault Ste Marie, St. Catharines, Stoney Creek, Sudbury, Temagami, Thunder Bay, Tilbury, Timmins, Toronto, Wallaceburg, Woodstock, as well as others from the provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Quebec.

The petitioners all believe passionately in the sanctity of life. They believe that all human life is precious and should be protected and nurtured from conception. They urge the government to pass legislation that will protect the lives of some 65,000 innocent victims annually.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Alex Kindy (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I have the honour to present 4,413 petitions from people in Calgary northeast and southeast who would like the goods and services tax scrapped because of its inflationary nature and because it is going to create more government.

FORESTRY

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise under Standing Order 36 to present a petition signed by residents of Dome Creek in my riding and other communities in B.C.

They are urging the Government of Canada to renew immediately the forest resource agreement between the federal government and the province. I know they would agree with me that it is important we plant real trees so that we do not have to have the plastic ones we have in the House of Commons today.

ROUGE VALLEY

Mrs. Pauline Browes (Scarborough Centre): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to present a petition to the House of Commons today concerning an issue about which many members of Parliament have been concerned, that is, saving the Rouge Valley. The Rouge Valley is 5,000 acres of precious wilderness property in the northeast part of metro Toronto.

This is of particular importance this week because the metro Toronto council will have before it an agenda item on Wednesday to decide whether the Rouge Valley should be turned into a garbage dump. I would urge members of Parliament, as well as the hundreds of thousands of people across metro Toronto, to tell metro council that this is an unacceptable decision to make. It is outrageous.

This is a beautiful valley. It has endangered wildlife. It is a wilderness spot. It is a beautiful place for hundreds

of children who visit each week. Mr. Speaker, I was so pleased that you visited the Rouge Valley just recently.

The petitioners are calling upon the Government of Canada to work with the province of Ontario. The province of Ontario owns about 80 per cent of the 5,000 acres. The petitioners want the Government of Canada to work with the government of Ontario to establish the Rouge River Valley as Canadian heritage land or a provincial park.

RIGHT TO LIFE

Mr. Geoff Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to present a petition from a number of residents of Frontier, Saskatchewan who humbly pray and call upon Parliament to enact legislation which will effectively protect the life of the unborn child without distinction as to the stage of development.

Mr. David Bjornson (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to present this certified petition on behalf of the minister from Lisgar—Marquette.

It is signed by 52 petitioners who call upon Parliament to enact legislation which will effectively protect the life of the pre-born child without distinction as to stage of development.

BILL 178

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to present a petition signed by 123 constituents and duly certified by the clerk of petitions.

The petitioners express their concern that Bill 178 of the province of Quebec restricts the right of freedom of expression and describes specific recommendations that the Government of Canada might take.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Rex Crawford (Kent): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to rise in the House today to present several petitions pursuant to Standing Order 36.

• (1120)

The first petition I present is on behalf of the Council of Three Fires, Walpole Island First Nation in the riding of Kent. They humbly pray and call upon Parliament to fulfil its responsibilities to hundreds of thousands of Canadians and Americans living along Lake St. Clair and stop the dredging of waters of Seaway Island and the dumping of potentially hazardous sediments into Lake St. Clair, pending the findings of a full and public environmental impact assessment to be ordered by the Minister of the Environment.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Rex Crawford (Kent): Mr. Speaker, the second petition concerns the goods and services tax. The people of Kent County reject this proposal.

RIGHT TO LIFE

Mr. Rex Crawford (Kent): Mr. Speaker, the third petition is from the people of Kent who humbly pray and call upon Parliament to enact legislation which will effectively protect the life of the pre-born child without distinction as to stage of development.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, every weekend when I return to my riding of Parkdale—High Park I am swamped with more and more petitions from people living in Parkdale—High Park who request this Parliament to cancel the goods and services tax, to reject it outright.

We know the finance committee has recommended reducing the rate from 9 per cent to 7 per cent, but that is not what they want. They are calling on this government to reject the proposed goods and services tax outright.

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present this petition, duly certified by the clerk of petitions and signed by many residents of the constituency of Lambton—Middlesex.

They are calling upon Parliament to reject the proposed goods and services tax.

Mr. Jack Whittaker (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure today to present to the House a petition under Standing Order 36 containing 596 signatures from the city of Penticton in my riding.

The petitioners ask the government to reject the current proposal for the goods and services tax and ask that we ensure if and when there is a broad public consensus on a sales tax measure to replace the manufacturers' sales tax that this reform not be an opportunity for the government to impose a massive tax grab.

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 136, 137, and 138.

[*Text*]

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Question No. 136—**Mr. Taylor:**

What percent of first-class mail is posted at each level of the rate structure for first class mail, and within each of these rate levels, what is the percentage by (a) volume (b) revenue generated of (i) individual to individual (ii) individual to corporate or business (iii) corporate or business to individual (iv) corporate or business to corporate or business mailings?

Mr. Benoît Tremblay (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Canada Post Corporation does not collect such data on a regular basis. Rather, the market is defined based on different characteristics which relate each market segment to different types of competition. CPC then establishes its share in each market.

Broad indicators of the sectors generating CPC's revenues show that businesses, governments and other institutions contribute approximately 85 percent of the Corporation's total revenues. Almost half of this revenue is generated by Canada Post's largest 1,000 mailers.

ADVERTISING & PROMOTION CAMPAIGN

Question No. 137—**Mr. Taylor:**

What was the cost of Canada Post's recent advertising and promotion campaign and the corresponding change of logo and colours, broken down into (a) the total cost, including production, purchase and distribution of the mailing Canada Post sent to its employees, including the video, pin, magazine and any other items in that mailing (b) the total cost, for each province and territory, including production and distribution, of the Canada Post leaflet entitled "Better Mail Service: Turning a commitment into reality" (c) the cost per leaflet (d) the cost of redoing Canada Post's (i) letterhead (ii) new fleet (iii) mailboxes (iv) new employee wardrobe (v) postal outlets (vi) offices (vii) franchises (viii) sub-offices (ix) any other postal facilities with the new logo?

Mr. Benoît Tremblay (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Regional Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Due to the highly competitive nature of our business, costs related to Canada Post's recent advertising and promotion campaign and change of logo and colours are deemed as proprietary.

Over the next five years, the Corporation will proceed in an expeditious and cost-effective manner to converting to the new identity, using its own financial resources. As trucks, uniforms, mailboxes, signs and other corporate-owned articles are replaced, the newly-acquired items will bear the new identity.

In the case of the CPC vehicles, for instance, existing decals will be removed and new decals portraying the new look will be added on a schedule basis over several years and will be produced to the new standards.

LAWYERS—GRIEVANCES AND ARBITRATIONS

Question No. 138—**Mr. Taylor:**

For (a) January 1—June 30, 1980 (b) July 1—December 31 1980 (c) January 1—June 30, 1981 (d) July 1—December 31, 1981 (e) January 1—June 30, 1982 (f) July 1—December 31, 1982 (g) January 1—June 30, 1983 (h) July 1—December 31, 1983 (i) January 1—June 30, 1984 (j) July 1—December 31, 1984 (k) January 1—June 30, 1985 (l) July 1—December 31, 1985 (m) January 1—June 30, 1986 (n) July 1—December 31, 1986 (o) January 1—June 30, 1987 (p) July 1—December 31, 1987 (q) January 1—June 30, 1988 (r) July 1—December 31, 1988 (s) January 1—June 30, 1989, what was (i) the total amount spent on lawyers by Canada Post to deal with grievances and arbitrations (ii) the amount spent on lawyers from outside firms (iii) the number of technical objections filed during arbitration hearings by Canada Post (iv) the number of discharge cases referred to arbitration (v) the number of discharge cases relating to medical leave, sick leave or incapacitation referred to arbitration?

Mr. Benoît Tremblay (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Canada Post Corporation's accounting systems are not structured in a manner that would allow it to address the Honourable Member's request.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: The questions as enumerated by the parliamentary secretary have been answered.

Shall the remaining questions be allowed to stand?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Routine Proceedings

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

WAYS AND MEANS

INCOME TAX ACT

Hon. Doug Lewis (for Minister of Finance) moved that a Ways and Means motion to amend the Income Tax Act, laid upon the table on Monday, November 6, be concurred in.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed

Some Hon. Members: On division.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Pursuant to the arrangement made earlier today, not by way of order but by agreement we will revert to Statements by Ministers and call upon the Right Hon. the Prime Minister.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER ON VISIT TO U.S.S.R.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to report to the House on my visit last week to the Soviet Union where I held extensive discussions with President Gorbachev and Prime Minister Ryzhkov. I also had very useful meetings with a number of important leaders, both government and party, in Kiev and Leningrad. The Secretary of State for External Affairs also held lengthy and constructive meetings with Mr. Shevardnadze.

I want to express my personal gratitude to the leadership and the people of the Soviet Union for the warmth and kindness they extended to all members of the Canadian delegation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: This was the first official visit to the Soviet Union by a Canadian Prime Minister in 18 years. In fact this is somewhat misleading because contact between our two nations has in recent years become quite sustained and productive. In 1983, when Mr. Gorbachev was responsible for agriculture, he made his first ever official visit to the west to Canada where he remained for some 10 days on an extensive national tour and of which he speaks with great affection and joy for the people that he met and the personal experiences that he enjoyed.

I visited Moscow less than six months after becoming Prime Minister in March 1985 for the funeral of former General Secretary Chernenko, during which I met with Mr. Gorbachev, then the new Soviet leader.

This high-level contact was followed by the Secretary of State for External Affairs' visit to the U.S.S.R. in April 1985 and Mr. Shevardnadze's return trip to Canada in 1986, and by periodic meetings between the two since, including in New York in September and in Moscow last week.

The minister responsible for the Wheat Board visited the Soviet Union in 1987 to promote the interests of Canadian grains and oilseed producers who have maintained huge sales to the Soviet Union over many years.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture made an important visit to the Soviet Union earlier this year where he attended the third meeting of the Mixed Agricultural Commission since 1985. Former Agriculture Minister John Wise represented Canada at the 1985 and 1987 meetings.

The contacts between the Soviet Union and Canada on an ongoing basis were productive and, as I have indicated, sustained.

My visit to the Soviet Union came at a most critical juncture, at a time of powerful change in that country and of cascading reform throughout eastern Europe. As President Gorbachev said in our meeting: "Our times are changing so fast, are so dynamic that without good personal contacts among leaders it is impossible to build a good relationship". I fully subscribe to that view.

[*Translation*]

The discussions we had were both frank and very far-reaching. We talked about the economic and political

changes now occurring in the Soviet Union and the great significance they have for that country's future.

President Gorbachev was acutely aware of the difficulties he faces in implementing *perestroika* and *glasnost* successfully. He is, above all, a realist.

But I was struck by his determination to succeed and by his confidence that success is possible. He considers the course that he has set for transforming the Soviet Union to be right and irreversible. I believe that he is correct.

I also believe, strongly, that it is in everyone's interests, including our own, that he succeed.

[*English*]

The changes that he is seeking to provoke within the Soviet Union are profound and pervasive. *Perestroika* is not simply about improving the economic performance of the Soviet Union, although that is both urgently wanted and very badly needed. An important new law dealing with economic reform is to be tabled by mid–December. I think Mr. Shevardnadze advised the Secretary of State for External Affairs that it would perhaps be on December 12.

Perestroika is about establishing a new political order based on greater individual freedom and responsibility and on more democratic institutions. *Perestroika* is about establishing a new political order based on greater individual freedom and responsibility and on more democratic institutions. It is about putting into place a whole new economic structure, based on a greater role for the market, on productivity growth, and on individual motivation and individual reward. It is about designing a new social system and instilling a new way of thinking into the Soviet consciousness based on fundamental attitudinal changes, on diminishing dependence on the state and on greater creativity of thought and independence of action by the individual. President Gorbachev told me that "The revolution we have embarked upon is above all a revolution of the mind, of people's mentality".

• (1130)

Resistance to change runs deep in the Soviet Union. In my judgment, there is no viable alternative to Mr. Gorbachev's plan or to Mr. Gorbachev himself. In politics, change often comes suddenly and with little warning. In public life, no one is indispensable. To the extent, however, that anyone is indispensable to the ongoing well–being of his own society, it is probably President Gorbachev because of the overwhelming extent to which the entire agenda of reform is identified personally with him, both at home and around the world.

Our discussions also covered in frank detail domestic developments in the Soviet Union that are of great interest to the Canadian people: human rights, religious freedoms, emigration, the rights of nationalities and the very nature of the Soviet federation. The Soviet Union has made very encouraging progress on all of these matters since Mr. Gorbachev came to office.

The fundamentals of the Soviet system are being questioned, often in publicly televised debates by newly–elected deputies and by ordinary citizens throughout the nation. Prominent dissidents and political prisoners have been released from detention and many have been allowed to leave the Soviet Union. For the first time, unofficial groups not connected with the Communist party are being tolerated and encouraged. Permission to emigrate from the Soviet Union, in particular by citizens of the Jewish faith, has increased greatly in recent years. so much so that there is, today, no backlog of family reunification cases between Canada and the Soviet Union.

A new emigration law is now being considered by the Supreme Soviet. Our hosts assured us that it is consistent with the standards on population movement established by the Conference on Security and Co–Operation in Europe. The Soviet authorities also intend to put into place more relaxed regulations on secrecy restrictions which, as we all know in this House, has been the root of many of the remaining "refusnik" cases. I had the opportunity in the Soviet Union to visit briefly with some Jewish refusniks who seek to emigrate to Canada and to Israel.

New regulations on emigration will soon be followed by a new law on religious rights, expected to be submitted to the Supreme Soviet in the near future. We were assured that it would provide the basis as well for a new relationship between church and state in the process of dealing with many of the concerns raised by the Secretary of State for External Affairs and by myself last week over the treatment of the Pentecostal Church and the Ukrainian Catholic and Ukrainian Orthodox

Churches and of other religious groups in the Soviet Union.

[*Translation*]

It has become very clear that the question of nationalities and of ethnic minorities is fundamental to the nature of the Soviet Federation and, ultimately, fundamental to the future of the Soviet Union itself. Problems elsewhere, in other nations, pale in comparison with the tremendous challenge facing President Gorbachev in governing a country of such enormous diversity and profound divisions. We see evidence of those problems every day on television: in Armenia, in Georgia, in Moldavia and elsewhere. The strains in the fabric of the Soviet Federation are serious and no one appears to be more conscious of them than President Gorbachev himself. He indicated to me that he is determined to respond to those strains positively and with imagination before they degenerate further into greater instability.

[*English*]

His resolve to seek greater equity and fairness for nationalities and minorities is equalled by his determination that this new level of social and political justice be found within the federation, a federation that will allow the various republics greater autonomy, particularly in culture, language and the economy.

In our discussions with President Gorbachev and with Foreign Minister Shevardnadze, we also focused on today's often tumultuous international agenda. In the political declaration President Gorbachev and I signed in Moscow six days ago, which Foreign Minister Shevardnadze has subsequently characterized as a "milestone" and as "an intellectual breakthrough" for both nations, the Soviet Union recognized the benefits of change and endorsed the right of countries to make their own way in the world without outside interference by anybody.

The regional conflicts in Central America, southern Africa, Indochina, the Middle East and Afghanistan were covered quite comprehensively, particularly in extensive meetings between Mr. Shevardnadze and the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

President Gorbachev and I discussed the rapidly evolving situation in eastern and central Europe very frankly. We reviewed these areas not only in terms of developments unfolding in that part of the world but, equally important, in terms of their impact upon the over-all relationship between East and West.

Change has come to eastern Europe rapidly, unevenly and unpredictably. Every day seems to bring more dramatic news and more unforgettable images: former Czech Prime Minister Alexander Dubcek making a triumphal speech before hundreds of thousands of people in Wenceslaus Square; breaches, at last, in the Berlin Wall as millions stream through to satisfy themselves first hand about western values and western institutions; non-communist political parties exercising power in Poland and the Prime Minister of Poland being received two days ago with warmth and encouragement by President Gorbachev in Moscow; the privatization of economic activity on a growing basis in Hungary; and exciting new freedoms of speech and protest and movement for peoples throughout the east which, for 40 years, has known little of freedom and less of its benefits. The pace of change has become torrential, overwhelming in some ways our capacity to assess the transformation that we are in the process of witnessing.

A revealing insight in this regard appeared yesterday, I thought, in *The New York Times* where Harvard professor Michael Sandel commented that "the most appropriate response now is not caution or boldness—we are beyond all that—but attentiveness and appreciation because, when history turns this fast, what we want from statesmen are not vain attempts to control events that have a momentum of their own, but that they be alive to the possibilities that these events will leave in their wake."

I think that is important advice from Professor Sandel, and it is advice that the government and the Parliament of Canada, I suspect, will follow.

[*Translation*]

The world is now clearly departing from a sterile period of East-West confrontation and embarking on one of immensely more fruitful relations, a course that ultimately promises genuine democracy in Eastern Europe, more liberalized trade and investment opportunities across that vast region, more predictable relations with the Soviet Union and profound reductions in the emphasis on defence in all capitals of the world. Eventually, as governments continue to emerge in Eastern

Europe that have the freely given support of their people, European stability will be put on a durable basis.

But the transition period will have to be managed carefully. And, in fact, the people of Eastern Europe and the leadership of the U.S.S.R. are handling the changing situation very prudently.

In these swiftly changing circumstances, NATO retains its great importance because it is the locus for discussion of the Western response to political change in the East and for coordinating positions in the crucial conventional arms reduction discussions in Vienna and on the superpower negotiations on strategic weapons in Geneva.

• (1140)

[*English*]

Distinctions need to be made between intentions and military capacity. It should be remembered that the Soviet Union retains enormous conventional and strategic forces. Everyone's security objective is served by a balance in military capacity at progressively lower levels of arms. Both sides want lower levels of arms.

NATO is a political, as well as military, organization and is an indispensable part of the western diplomatic infrastructure. It was clear from my discussions with President Gorbachev that neither sides thinks it is time to abandon any alliances. In fact, President Gorbachev signalled very clearly that it would be imprudent to change alliances or institutions in a manner that could destabilize east-west relations, as eastern Europe goes through a period of such convulsive change.

I proposed to President Gorbachev that we seek to establish a closer relationship between himself and the leaders of the major industrialized western countries. In response to President Gorbachev's interest in integrating the Soviet economy over time more closely into the world trade and payment system, I told him I would propose to my G-7 colleagues that each year's chairman be mandated to discuss with him the ideas and strategies that emerge from the Economic Summit. This would provide him with a regular opportunity to obtain a first-hand report on the preoccupations and interests of the leaders of the principal western governments whose co-ordinated policy approaches have produced in recent years an era of remarkable economic growth and a series of initiatives that both intrigue and challenge President Gorbachev and about which he asked many questions and some of which he would seek to apply, given the new circumstances he chooses to develop in his own nation.

President Gorbachev warmly welcomed this proposal.

[*Translation*]

Agreement was also reached on developing a closer bilateral consultation process on a range of international issues of mutual concern.

The Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) and Mr. Shevardnadze, as well as their officials, will meet more frequently for that purpose.

In Moscow, I also raised with Mr. Gorbachev the Arctic arms control proposals he had set forth in his Murmansk speech several years ago.

I pointed out to him that Mr. Clark had responded to those proposals on several occasions but that we were quite prepared to discuss with the Soviets any refinements they might have to make to their original ideas.

I pointed out, as well, that I continued to believe that current ongoing arms control negotiations between the two superpowers and the two alliances had proven successful and were the best avenues for making progress on these issues.

He understands fully our position and agreed that further review of this issue should be pursued by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) and Mr. Shevardnadze.

In terms of bilateral co-operation, last week's visit marked a watershed in our relations.

[*English*]

We signed 14 bilateral agreements—more than had been signed in the previous 20 years—on subjects ranging from international affairs to Arctic co-operation to the environment to military and cultural co-operation to investment protection. Foreign Minister Shevardnadze told *Izvestia* at the end of last week that the Soviets attach particular significance to the environment agreement because "Canada—was one of the first to place environmental protection on the international agenda and Canada has achieved remarkable success in this area."

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: The Soviets strongly endorse plans for co-operation in the Arctic and our intention to work with the Soviet Union and other countries to ensure a reduction in environmental pollutants that threaten the Arctic ecosystem, above all those that imperil the food chain of the Arctic peoples.

In addition to the 14 agreements, we each undertook to expand government representation in each other's countries, as a result of which the Government of Canada will open a consulate general in Kiev in the Ukraine.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: The Soviets intend to open a new office in Toronto and discussions will start shortly on our respective plans for those offices. We hope to put our office into operation before long.

I might point out, Mr. Speaker, that the establishment of a new office in Kiev will, I think, go a long way in responding to an increasingly obvious need for Canada to be represented in the capital of the Ukraine.

Nearly one million Canadians trace their roots back to the Ukraine. Many of them still have family there. At present, 35 per cent of the visa applicants at our embassy in Moscow come from the Ukraine. With more relaxed travel restrictions in the Soviet Union, we can expect a substantial increase in human contacts between Canada and the Ukraine.

Moreover, an office of this dimension in Kiev will allow us to tap the commercial and trade potential of the Ukraine, a market of some 52 million people whose economic needs can be responded to by the transfer of Canadian technology, joint venture initiatives and direct equity participation, to say nothing of the transfer of skills, knowledge, and know-how in the area of agriculture where, as the leaders of the Ukraine have pointed out to us, the need and their need is greatest and Canadian expertise is acknowledged to be world class.

The Canadian private sector is also taking an unprecedented interest in the Soviet economy. The Canadian government has been strongly supportive of the private sector as it seeks new economic opportunities in the Soviet Union and new trade and investment niches for Canada.

Our two-way trade has for too long lacked diversification and dynamism and I was delighted to see the enthusiasm and resolve of Canadian business people in Moscow surveying new opportunities and anticipating new challenges, none more enthusiastically than distinguished businessmen like Frank Stronach , Albert Reichmann, representatives from Lavalin, and other leading firms from British Columbia to Newfoundland which was represented by Vic Young of Fishery Products International.

A broad commercial relationship with the Soviet Union will help us not only to diversify our exports, now largely dominated by grain sales, but also to provide the products and services and technology that will help to support the goals of *perestroika* by satisfying some of the rising expectations this policy has triggered among the Soviet people.

That is the greatest challenge, I believe, confronting Mr. Gorbachev today, the problem of the rising expectations generated by the enthusiasm with which his reforms were introduced and received by the people. A lot of progress is expected the next day and yesterday in the Soviet Union and he is incapable of delivering as rapidly as he would like on all of these expectations.

That is why it is so important for countries like Canada to come forward in tangible ways with trade missions that sign deals that create new wealth and new opportunities in order to provide him with the support.

I mention, parenthetically, Mr. Speaker, George Cohon, the chief executive officer of McDonald's who has been working to open the largest McDonald's in the world in the Soviet Union. He placed an ad in the Moscow newspapers for 500 people he wanted to have work in his new restaurant which the Soviet Union believes and hopes can expand to 15 or 20 across the country in short order. However, in the Soviet Union, he put an ad in the newspaper asking for 500 young men and women to seek employment. When we left he had had 14,000 applicants, and they were coming in at the rate of 1,000 a day. I told him that if it did not work out there, he might consider putting it in my riding.

• (1150)

This is the kind of enthusiasm with which the Soviet people are responding to Canadian business people. I think that this kind of attitude is a good, friendly, productive and a very creative one. This is a constructive

and welcome response to the daring and innovative reforms being implemented by the Soviet leadership.

Last Wednesday, in Moscow, I attended with Prime Minister Ryzhkov the inauguration of an organization, the Canada–U.S.S.R. Business Council, that will do much to underpin our new political relationship and to bolster our bilateral commercial ties.

The council includes almost all of the principal Canadian firms with significant current or prospective commercial interests in the Soviet Union and is co–chaired by Albert Reichman, President of Olympia and York, and Alexei Malkevitch, head of the Soviet Chamber of Commerce.

[*Translation*]

The Canadian business delegation that was in the Soviet Union during my visit numbered about 240 people. A good number of them signed agreements for direct investment, joint ventures or equity participation arrangements.

These agreements, worth one billion dollars, plus, are an extremely important part of building a new relationship between Canada and the Soviet Union.

President Gorbachev made very clear that the U.S.S.R. was not looking for direct aid from the West.

What the Soviet Union wished to have with Canada was a cooperative, mutually beneficial, political, economic and technological relationship because of the many similarities between our two countries, and because of the experience we have in coping with many categories of problems that the U.S.S.R. is now dealing with in a serious way.

[*English*]

For our part, Mr. Speaker, we went to the Soviet Union with the objectives of establishing a broadly–based relationship of confidence with President Gorbachev and his colleagues, of seeking on behalf of all Canadians to respond constructively to the historic changes that the Soviet leader is seeking to make and of bringing about a new beginning in Soviet–Canadian relations.

I believe that we have achieved these objectives. I also hope that, together, we have made a contribution to the building of a more durable international peace, which is the most important legacy our generation can pass on to our children.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, what is happening in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe today is the most important and cataclysmic change in human affairs since the last world war and indeed perhaps since the Soviet revolution itself.

Millions upon millions of Poles, Czechs, Hungarians, Russians, East Germans, Bulgarians, Latvians, Estonians, Ukrainians, Lithuanians are demanding freedom, demanding democracy, and they are getting it.

The urge for freedom is unpredictable and finally irresistible. Totalitarian regimes are falling at a staggering rate. They are being shunted aside in the sweep of history. The most remarkable feature about the drama surrounding us that we see every night on television is that so far this popular evolution is being done without violence.

Diplomats are becoming irrelevant, the pundits and experts are at a loss to explain what has happened. Very few of them predicted it. Foreign policy analysts, so used to seeing the world only in terms of the superpowers, have been confounded by what is happening. Leaders and the elites are being toppled. The people are rolling over them all. The tearing down of the Berlin Wall is only the most visible symbol of this demand for freedom.

What this government of ours has failed to grasp so far is that the urge for freedom is exploding; it is bursting out, not only in Berlin, but at almost every level in the East Bloc countries. Yet while the whole of Europe is alive with discussion, as Hungarians and Poles and Czechs are on the streets debating these issues and calling for freedom, we in this Parliament have had no discussion of what our approach should be to these massive, compulsive and unprecedented changes in the world.

The Prime Minister has signed an agreement which he claims will usher in a new era in Canadian–Soviet relations. Yet, it was this Prime Minister whose major foreign policy plank in the last election was to spend billions upon billions of dollars on building a fleet of nuclear powered submarines to protect us from the Soviets.

The Minister of Defence still claims that the White Paper on defence is government policy, and that the submarines were cancelled only for economic reasons.

The Prime Minister has made it clear both in the Soviet Union and here that the view of this government is that the cold war is not yet over. Which is it? Are we into a new relationship, or are we still in the cold war? We cannot have two policies on this issue.

[*Translation*]

Before his official visit, the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) failed to consult Canadians. He did not ask the opinion of the Standing Comittee on External Affairs. He did not consult academics, former diplomats or non-governmental organizations. The government behaved much the same as it did regarding Canada's membership in the Organization of American States. But going off course is dangerous, Mr. Speaker. The government is changing the direction of this country's external policy without first consulting Canadians. And it is not just the absence of debate. The fact is, this government has failed to produce a single official document on external affairs policy since it was sworn in.

The Prime Minister would do well to follow Mr. Gorbachev's example by injecting a little *glasnost*, a little openness into its external affairs policy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear.

[*English*]

Since this is only the second speech of the Prime Minister of our country on foreign policy in the House of Commons in the last five years, he should not be surprised if Canadians are not at all sure what the policy of this government is with regard to the unprecedented changes taking place in eastern Europe.

What are the implications for NATO? What are the implications for Canada's position in this alliance? What direction do we want NATO to take? What are the implications for the movement toward 1992 and the so-called economic union of Europe? What about the possible reunification of the two Germanies? These are questions that need to be addressed. These are questions that need to be discussed in this Parliament, not in the Langevin Block, if they are ever discussed at all.

We are happy to see the Soviets' willingness to allow more autonomy in the Baltic States and the Ukraine, and we welcome the opening of the Canadian consulate in Kiev in the Ukraine. We hope that such a move will facilitate the reunification of families of Ukrainian descent in Canada. We hope also that our government policy will be to continue to encourage more autonomy within the Ukraine and the Baltic States.

Many of the agreements signed by the Prime Minister in Moscow were renewals of agreements signed by previous governments, including the 1984 Arctic Scientific Co-operation Agreement. The difference is that previous governments took a leadership role. Mr. Pearson's visit in 1955 as Secretary of State for External Affairs was the first time a major western political figure visited the Soviet Union since the great war.

• (1200)

A 1971 visit by Mr. Trudeau was followed by major cultural, academic and sports exchange agreements, as well as agreements on trade and scientific co-operation.

[*Translation*]

We welcome the creation of a Canada-U.S.S.R. Business Council and the desire to invest shown by business circles. Businessmen, however, are very realistic. Will they be able to make a profit and bring those profits back to Canada? Will the ruble remain a non-convertible currency? Will the Canadian government provide guarantees for Canadian investments in Soviet Union?

What we find very disturbing, however, is that the government did not offer economic assistance. Because there is a risk. If there is no economic progress, the reform process may abort, not only in the Soviet Union but also in Eastern Europe.

The joint statement by the two governments contains many generalities but no proposals, no initiatives, no studies or any indication of interest in developing Canadian perspectives on arms limitation. Joint approaches to Arctic security shone by their absence. There was no response to Mr. Gorbachev's proposal regarding a peace zone in the Arctic.

In fact, the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) insisted on reminding Canadians that Soviet submarines had navigated in Canadian waters, instead of stressing a statement by Mr. Edward Shevardnadze that

Soviet submarines would respect Canadian sovereignty in the North.

[*English*]

These are issues that should have been addressed. There are more. The Prime Minister should have put forward serious proposals in several areas. First, Arctic security. In February, 1988, I called for the creation of a new international regime in the Arctic, in particular the promotion of arms control alternatives. This government has refused to consider any such initiative.

The second area is Arctic sovereignty. We need a joint declaration with the Soviet Union in which they explicitly recognize our sovereignty over Canadian-claimed Arctic waters. The Soviet foreign minister's statement on Soviet submarines hinted at their willingness to support such a declaration.

The third area is Arctic environment. We are pleased to see that Canada will be hosting an Arctic environment conference next year. We are concerned that we do not have in this a clearly developed and co-ordinated policy approach to Arctic issues. Therefore, I call on the government to implement a recent recommendation that an ambassador for circumpolar affairs be named to co-ordinate Canada's Arctic policy.

We need to increase Canada's diplomatic presence in eastern Europe. We have no diplomatic presence in eastern Germany or in Bulgaria at the moment. We should, particularly now in eastern Germany.

Every effort should be made to involve Canadians more frequently and systematically in government policy discussions on important international issues with significant ramifications for them. The government needs to be more open, and that openness should begin right here in the Parliament of Canada where we have had no foreign policy debates. None of the recent initiatives of this government have been taken to the Standing Committee on External Affairs.

Another area is economic assistance to eastern Europe. Most western leaders have recognized the critical importance of a successful reform process in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe. They have given generously of their funds to help Poland and Hungary, and it will be forthcoming, no doubt, for other eastern European states undergoing economic and political reform. An unfortunate exception has been Canada, where a paltry $42 million was offered to Poland and Hungary while other countries were offering hundreds of millions of dollars. Why are we Canadians satisfied to give, as Lech Walesa put it, "a beautiful tie to a corpse"?

When I had the honour with my colleague from Parkdale—High Park to meet Lech Walesa in Toronto, Mr. Walesa said to us that it was important that Canada invest in eastern Europe and in Poland because we had to give the people of Poland—and he was speaking for them at this instance—a clear message of hope. We have to give some sign that Canadians have confidence in the future of the democratic movement in Poland, that there are signs of Canadian enterprise, visible signs of Canadian business, because they want to see their economies reconstructed on the basis of democracy. But time runs out and they need an urgent Canadian and western response to their problems. We must show them that as Canadians we are willing to participate with the Polish, Hungarian, Soviet and East German peoples in their reconstruction and we have to do it in a concrete way.

We did not anticipate or require that the Prime Minister's visit would solve or even address all of the major problems of the world. However, what does stand out in his public declaration so far, including his statement this morning, is that in the hours of discussions and visits not one word was spoken about the events in the world's most populace nation, the other communist superpower, the People's Republic of China. Surely this was a public opportunity for the Prime Minister to elicit support from the Soviets for the movement towards democracy in China.

I would hope that the Prime Minister impressed upon President Gorbachev that the movement toward greater freedom and democracy is not reversible. There can be no return to totalitarian methods either in the Soviet Union or in eastern Europe. I do hope that when he sees President Bush this week he will also impress upon him that the convulsions and transformations in the world demand that the United States encourage economic development and reform in the eastern bloc countries.

Both President Gorbachev and President Bush must understand that when they meet at Malta it must not be merely a replay of Yalta. It is not their world to divide again as they wish. Europeans are determining their own future. People in every part of the globe are demanding a reversal of the arms race and a commitment toward co-operation and peace. I believe that as in the move

toward democracy in eastern Europe, the demands of the people will not be denied.

These are tremendously exciting changes occurring in the world. As a middle power with immense goodwill and respect around the globe, Canada has a single opportunity to push for even more freedom, more democracy and more peace throughout the globe. I urge our government not to let us miss that opportunity. We should be leaders in this movement and not merely followers as we have been to date.

All the men, women and children alive on the face of the globe today have spent their entire lives living in the shadow of the threat of war and the spectre of the arms race. We have poverty and suffering because for generations we have spent trillions of dollars on armaments instead of on promoting freedom. We have spent countless decades fighting one another rather than working together. There is no guarantee that this fantastic push for freedom will succeed. But Canadians expect our government to do absolutely everything possible to encourage it and to join in the movement in a very constructive way.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I begin by thanking the Prime Minister for making this report to the House on his historic visit. It is something we would like to see more often.

I think the comments of the Leader of the Official Opposition about the need to involve Parliament more in making foreign policy in Canada is a suggestion that the Prime Minister should listen to, not only with respect to foreign policy but also with respect to other areas as well. There has been a trailing away, if you like, in prime ministerial interest in the House of Commons and we hope that this is the beginning of a new interest in the Chamber.

I would like also to say in the same vein that many of us were distressed at the way in which the decision to join the Organization of American States was arrived at without consultation with the external affairs committee of this House, or with the non-governmental organizations, churches and other groups that have an interest in Central and Latin America.

We hope that with respect to east-west relations, the Prime Minister will take Parliament into its confidence and involve the whole of the Canadian people through Parliament and other organizations in the making of foreign policy. If he did, and if he had done that earlier, I think he would have found that there was a lot of support for the kinds of things that the Prime Minister himself now seems to be considering. In that sense I think the Prime Minister is not only playing catch-up in terms of international relations with other countries but also playing catch-up with the Canadian people who have been ready for a more enlightened approach to east-west relations for some time now.

• (1210)

As was said this morning in a newspaper column regarding the visit, better late than never, and we are happy that the Prime Minister has now grasped what is going on in the world and particularly what is going on in the Soviet Union.

I want to compliment him on elements of the statement. What I have in mind is the relative lack of gloating in the statement, of ideological gloating. I believe it very important for those of us in the west not to be seen to be gloating over what has happened in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. This was a point made not so long ago by none other than Zbigniew Brezcinski and many others. I say this because I have noticed in speeches made by the Secretary of State for External Affairs a certain amount of what I would call unwarranted ideological gloating.

I think it is important that in this new east-west relationship that the west retain a certain amount of humility. We should keep in mind that our system, whatever its merits, has also been responsible for incredible poverty within our own midst and in the Third World, thanks to a relationship in which wealth is still being transferred in a net way from the poorest countries to the wealthiest countries. We must remember that we too have severe environmental problems and that our society is besieged with meaninglessness and drugs and many of the other things with which other societies are also plagued. We ought to remain humble, if you like, in

our approach while, at the same time, welcoming what is going on in other parts of the world.

I also welcome the Prime Minister's proposal with respect to developing a relationship between Mr. Gorbachev and the G–7 group. I think anything which increases personal contact between Mr. Gorbachev and the leaders of the western countries is a good thing and I hope that the Prime Minister can be instrumental in setting up more of those kinds of contacts.

I welcome the fact that when the Prime Minister was there he brought up the issue of the Ukrainian Catholic Church which is of great concern to many people in my riding, in Winnipeg, and in the country in general. I hope that the new consulate which is being set up in Kiev will be instrumental in bringing new opportunities for Canadians of Ukrainian origin to visit the Ukraine, to do business in the Ukraine, and vice versa, and that the new law upcoming in the Soviet Union with respect to relationships between church and state will see a legalization of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, something which many people have hoped for for a long time.

With respect to the Murmansk proposal, I notice in the statement that the Prime Minister says, with respect to the proposal of Mr. Gorbachev for a zone of peace in the Arctic: "Mr. Clark responded to these proposals on several occasions, but the Canadian government is quite prepared to discuss any refinements the Soviet might have to make to their original ideas".

Many people who have paid attention to the Murmansk proposal and to the period thereafter are not aware that this government has made any response except to make what constitutes no response at all.

We do not just want to know what the refinements are that the Soviets might have to their own ideas, we want to know what the Canadian ideas are with respect to peace in the Arctic. We do not have that yet. The statement says that progress on these issues is best left to negotiations between the two superpowers. This is the Yalta mentality that we are trying to overcome, that the world is trying to overcome with respect to seeking international peace and stability.

It is a profound mistake on the part of the government to leave matters pertaining to the Arctic to the context of superpower negotiations or inter–alliance negotiations because there are many things that Canada has a unique responsibility to concern itself with given our unique geo–political situation between the superpowers in the Arctic. This is something that the government does not yet seem to have appreciated in its full measure. So what are the government's views?

I hope that perhaps today we might hear from the government as to what the Prime Minister thinks of many of the good suggestions that have been made in recent years and, most recently, at a conference sponsored by the Canadian Centre for Arms Control and Disarmament on peace and security in the Arctic. There is the whole question of naval arms control and the proliferation of submarine–launched cruise missiles. There was not a mention of it in the statement by the Prime Minister. This area of growing proliferation of nuclear weapons is of increasing concern.

The Prime Minister and the government still seem locked into the view that the only things that are significant in terms of arms control are happening in Europe. What is happening in the Arctic and what is happening in the northern Pacific are things that ought to concern the Canadian government every bit as much as what is happening in Europe.

What is the response of the government to the proposal that there be an Arctic open skies policy? What is the response of the government to the suggestion that we seek—and this is a suggestion that has been made not only by the Soviet Union, but by various Canadian groups and political parties—a demilitarized zone in the Arctic or a nuclear free zone in the Arctic? Has the government got an argument why this would be a bad thing or why this is not something that the Canadian government could be showing some initiative on?

There is the proposal for an Arctic ambassador, or a circumpolar ambassador, as the hon. Leader of the Opposition called it, someone who would concern him or herself directly with Arctic matters. As well, there is the proposal for a conference on security and co–operation in the Arctic, similar to the Conference on Security and Co–operation in Europe.

I noticed in one of the press reports of the Prime Minister's visit that the language "common search for security" was used in a statement put out by the Prime Minister and Mr. Gorbachev. What is needed now is a bridge from the language of "common search for security" to the language of "common security". It is the concept of common security, which goes back to the Palme Commission report in 1982, that we find the conceptual framework that I think is most appropriate to Canada's situation in the Arctic, sitting as we do between the two superpowers. I would recommend a reading of

that document and many others which have followed it, to the Prime Minister.

As I said before, we have a unique responsibility, being between the superpowers, to pursue a common security regime in the Arctic. It is not enough to leave it up to the superpowers, because it is in the context of the relationship between the superpowers that the greatest threat to our sovereignty comes. I think our sovereignty in the Arctic is not any more respected by the United States, perhaps even less so, than is by the Soviet Union. If we are concerned about sovereignty in the Arctic, we have to also be concerned about what the United States might be doing in our north and not just the Soviet Union.

The Prime Minister has made much of the fact that Mr. Gorbachev indicated to him that he would like to see the alliances continue. That may well be the case. That may well may be the view of Mr. Gorbachev. We know it is the view of the Prime Minister. I am sure that Mr. Gorbachev also believes, as we do, that there are a range of issues outside the NATO–Warsaw Pact negotiations with which Canada and the U.S.S.R. should be concerning themselves. Those are the issues which pertain to the Arctic.

As we have said many times before, it is in this context that we urge the Prime Minister and the government to seek a replacement for our relationship with the United States now constituted in NORAD which would give us more independence and more ability to respond to initiatives that are made by the Soviet Union with respect to peace and security in the Arctic.

Within the context of NATO, it seems to me that the Prime Minister should have said something this morning about his statement that the White Paper is outdated. We asked the question of the Minister of National Defence in the House the other day when the Prime Minister was away. Now is the opportunity for the Prime Minister to say what he meant when he said that the White Paper was outdated. What is going to be the follow-up of the government to that fact, a fact which I might say was perceived by many long before the Prime Minister said it was so. But the fact of the matter is the Prime Minister has said the White Paper is outdated. What will happen now? What will be the process for reviewing Canadian defence and security policy in the follow-up to the Prime Minister's statement?

The Prime Minister is going to Brussels soon. I would recommend to him, on behalf of our party, that in view of the changing world circumstances, in view of the outdatedness of the White Paper, that a couple of things be done now.

• (1220)

We recommend that the Prime Minister commit himself and his government to trying to eliminate the first use policy of nuclear weapons within NATO; that the Prime Minister and his government commit itself to putting at least a moratorium on Canada's participation in the FOFA strategy of NATO, the one which has caused so much trouble for Canadians, and in particular, the Innu people in Labrador; and that the Prime Minister indicate to Canadians that Canada will put an end to cruise testing in Canada and take a different position than it did with respect to the modernization of nuclear weapons in Europe.

Finally, we recommend that Canada should seek, within the context of the mutual balance force reduction negotiations to bring Canadian troops home from Europe, something which I see the Prime Minister has already talked about. Certainly if that can be done in the context of negotiated reductions, that is the way to do it.

If NATO is to become an agent of the transition to a new relationship between east and western Europe, as many believe it can now become, given the changes in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, then I think Canada should become vigorously involved in that change.

We are looking at an entirely new situation in Europe. We are looking at a Europe which is no longer post-war Europe, not only in economic and political terms but also psychologically. I had an opportunity to be there recently and it is clear that there is an entirely new collective self-consciousness in Europe. This is something that I do not think has been fully appreciated in Canada. It means

that the United States will have less influence in Europe, not more.

It means there will be an opening for real Canadian participation of the kind that we have not seen before in shaping the future of Europe. Whether it turns out to be still an east-west relationship with a common security arrangement or whether it turns out to be a larger western Europe with the border between east and west pushed further east, or whether it turns out to be Mr. Gorbachev's common European home from the Atlantic to the Urals, whatever the case may be, it will be an entirely new Europe. The opportunity exists now for Canada to be involved in that in a way that we previously have not. Too often up until now we have simply taken the American view, whatever that happens to be, in NATO.

In the larger context, still, we would like to see Canada be much more active and principled in pushing for a comprehensive ban on all testing of all nuclear weapons and on all chemical weapons. We live in a different world in which many of the things for which there have been arguably reasons for pursuing, various courses of action have disappeared. It seems to me that the Canadian government must now take a different and bolder course.

I notice that the Prime Minister used a quote in which boldness was downplayed and attentiveness and appreciation were regarded positively. I think that is a good quote. I think there are many cases in foreign policy where attentiveness and appreciation is an appropriate first course of action. But there does come a time when boldness is required. Boldness is required in the international scene on the whole question of nuclear arms control. Boldness is also required when the Prime Minister goes to see Mr. Bush in the days ahead, to tell Mr. Bush that it is about time that the United States of America showed the same tolerance in its backyard as the Soviets are now showing in eastern Europe, and to tell Mr. Bush to change American policy in El Salvador and Central America. That seems to be an opportunity for the Prime Minister to be bold and appropriate, all at the same time.

With respect to what is happening in eastern Europe, I think the time has come for bold action to make sure that the democratic experiments which are happening in eastern Europe now succeed. This is our time to show that the west was not simply crying crocodile tears for the last 40 years, that our statements about the suffering and the oppression of people in Poland and East Germany, Hungary and Czechoslovakia were not just strategic statements but that they were sincere statements. When the time comes for us to put our money where our mouth is, we must show that we will put our money where our mouth is, that there will be Canadian action on eastern Europe to make sure that those new governments succeed. That is not something that the Canadian government has done so far to the satisfaction of anyone. I might add, in that respect, that what is important in all of this is that the principle of additionality be respected, i.e. that whatever aid that we may give to eastern Europe not come at the expense of the traditional aid that we have given to Third World countries. There is a very real danger that the south will be left out of this new era in the north vis-à-vis east-west relations.

Finally, because I realize that my time has run out, I think again where boldness is required is on the question of the environment. The time has come to be bold on the environment. I think it is on the environment that finally the differences between east and west, between the Soviet Union and the U.S., and between Canada and the U.S.S.R., will be trivialized in what will come to be the need for planetary solidarity, not alliances, NATO and the Warsaw Pact, but planetary solidarity.

In order to survive and in order for there to be a truly human future, all these differences will have to be trivialized. It is in our common concern about the environment that we get glimpses of what we ought to really mean when we talk about security. What is security, after all, if you cannot breathe the air, drink the water or grow food? The navies, the armies and the air forces of the world are paltry in comparison to the danger which the environmental crisis provides and I hope that soon we will see real boldness and not just attentiveness on the part of the Prime Minister to the environmental crisis.

Mr. Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the ministerial statement, Government Orders will be extended by 61 minutes beginning at one o'clock p.m.

Speaker's Ruling

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

ADVANCE PAYMENTS FOR CROPS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-36, an act to amend the Advance payments for Crops Act and the Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act, as reported (with an amendment) from a legislative committee.

Mr. Speaker: I have certain motions which I must rule on.

[*Translation*]

There are eleven motions in amendment standing on the Notice Paper for the report stage of Bill C-36, An Act to amend the Advance Payments Acts.

[*English*]

SPEAKER'S RULING—MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Motions Nos. 1, 2, 8, 9 and 11, in the name of the hon. member for Mackenzie, cause the Chair considerable procedural difficulty. These motions are attempting to remove the notion of the producer organization paying interest on money that is attributable to advance payments. It would appear that one of the principles of this present bill is to change the law related to the payment of interest. As hon. members are aware, it is not within our established practices to permit amendments that are contrary to the principle of a bill as agreed to by the House of Commons at second reading.

Consequently, in accordance with Beauchesne's fifth Edition, subsection 1 of CITATION 773, I must rule Motions Nos. 1, 2, 8, 9 and 11 out of order.

[*Translation*]

Motion numbered 5 standing in the name of the Hon. the Minister of agriculture (Mr. Mazankowski)is in a situation that is basically similar to those motions I have just ruled upon. However, motion numbered 5 is rendered acceptable by the fact that it is accompagnied by a recommandation of Her Excellency, the Governor General. Thus, motion numbered 5 will be debated and voted on separately.

[*English*]

Motion No. 6, standing in the name of the hon. Minister of Agriculture, is attempting to amend the original act. Hon. members know that it is not procedurally acceptable to amend sections of the original act that are not included in an amending bill. Therefore, in accordance with Beauchesne, paragraph 8(b), citation 773, I must rule this motion out of order.

Motions Nos. 7 and 10 are in order and will be debated together, with a vote on Motion No. 7 applying to Motion No. 10.

• (1230)

[*Translation*]

I shall now put motion numbered 5 to the House.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I obtained a copy of your decision. I think that Motions Nos. 3 and 4 standing in the names of the Hon. Member for MacKenzie (Mr. Althouse) and the Hon. Member for Algoma (Mr. Foster) respectively are also, in the opinion of the Chair, out of order, for lack of the royal recommendation. So, since you did not say so, I thought that you did not intend to allow debate on Motions Nos. 3 and 4.

Mr. Speaker: I am very sorry for the mistake. The Hon. Member is right. Therefore I want to add to the decision.

[*English*]

Motions Nos. 3 and 4, standing in the name of the hon. members for Mackenzie and Algoma respectively, are identical to Motion No. 5 and will not be selected as, without the royal recommendation, they would be out of order.

[*Translation*]

I thank the Hon. Member.

[*English*]

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if you would perhaps consider the argument that Motions Nos. 3, 4 and 5, rather than requiring the Royal Recommendation in this particular piece of legislation, are simply correcting this legislation to make it the same as Section 9 of the existing act which has the effect, as I read it, of telling producer organizations that have made such advances that the government will stand behind them for any overages exceeding 2 per cent which, I believe, is another way of saying the same thing as do the proposed motions that are before us. I think that the royal recommendation is perhaps unnecessary because there was a section in the existing legislation, namely,

Section 9, which does the same thing, in my view, and is, I think, in part the reason that the Minister of Agriculture proposed Motion No. 6 because that section of the act becomes unnecessary if the change to 2 per cent, which is proposed in Motions Nos. 3, 4 and 5, is acted upon.

I understand the usual argument that we cannot reduce the amounts of money but, in this case, the act had already effectively, I believe, reduced that amount of liability to 2 per cent in Section 9 of the existing legislation. So while I am quite prepared to debate the motion under the name of the Minister of Agriculture, I would just simply point out that it seems to me that Section 9 of the existing legislation had already limited the amount of liability that the producer organizations would have had to 2 per cent. The said motions, therefore, are simply trying for consistency in the legislation rather than a reduction of any liability the government may have.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Mackenzie raises an interesting procedural matter. I should make it very clear to him, to other hon. members and to the public that I understand exactly the point which the hon. member is making and he has made it well.

However, the Chair, as I am sure hon. members will know, is bound by the procedural rules and, as the hon. member for Mackenzie has generously stated, Motion No. 5 in the name of the Minister of Agriculture will deal with the same issue. I think that under the circumstances it would not be appropriate for the Chair to change the ruling. However, I understand the point and I thank the hon. member for raising it.

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Masse (for the Minister of Agriculture) moved:

Motion No. 5

That Bill C-36 be amended in Clause 4 by striking out line 21 at page 4 and substituting the following therefor:

"to 2 per cent of the producer's liability".

Mr. Murray Cardiff (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, before we start debate on this clause, I would like to indicate to members of the House that it was understood by all members of the House that the Minister of Agriculture would be here in the House for this debate. Unfortunately, the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries from New Zealand is visiting and the Minister is hosting him at the present time but intends to be in the House after Question Period and available to take part in this debate. I just wanted to assure members that he will be here to do that. I am sure they all realize that duties makes these things impossible at certain times.

Mr. Speaker: I am sure that your colleagues will not object to the fact that you have made reference to the absence of a minister in debate.

Mr. Cardiff: It depends on how you want to put it, Mr. Speaker.

We believe that with this amendment we are changing and improving the bill. The Advance Payments for Crops Act has always been a shared risk program with the producer organizations and historically producer organizations have been responsible for 10 per cent of each advance that has been defaulted to a total of 2 per cent of the total amount advanced.

This amendment will leave producer organizations responsible for only 2 per cent of any advance defaulted, and that is covering both the principal and interest.

Proposed changes to the Bank Act alter reserve requirements for banks and this will make federal guaranteed loans less expensive. In order to be in a position for producer organizations to take full advantage of this provision the guaranteed level will be increased to 98 per cent. The reduced risk to producer organizations from the lower liability limit will allow producers to reduce administration costs.

Smaller producer organizations that do not have financial ability to assume the risk of granting high value advances will now be able to participate on the same basis as the larger and more financially strong producer organizations. This will be particularly important to the horticulture sector where the producer organizations tend to be small and newly formed organizations dealing in specialty crops such as forage seed are also small. We believe that this amendment would greatly increase the benefits to producers.

For producer organizations that withhold an amount of the advance to cover their liability, this amendment will increase significantly the amount of cash received by the individual producers.

I would just like to share with the House the names of some of the organizations that this legislation change will help. They include the B.C. Okanagan Fruit Producers' and Shippers Association, the Interior Vegetable Marketing Agency, Vancouver Island Produce Limited, the Alberta Beekeepers' Association, the Alberta Fresh Vegetable Marketing Board, the Peace River Seed Co-op Limited, the Saskatchewan Beekeepers' Association, the Saskatchewan Vegetable Growers' Association, the Keystone Vegetable Producers, the Manitoba Corn Growers' Association, the St. Lawrence Valley Fruit Growers, Blue Water Storage Limited, Georgian Triangle Apples, the Ontario Beekeepers' Association, Temiskaming Grain Growers, the *Association des jardiniers maraichers*, the *Co-op Federee de Quebec*, the Valley Grain Pool, the New Brunswick Fruit Growers Association, the New Brunswick Potato Agency, the Nova Scotia Potato Marketing Board, the Nova Scotia Fruit Growers Association, the Nova Scotia Grain Marketing Board, the P.E.I. Vegetable Growers' Co-Operative Association and the P.E.I. Grain Growers' Co-operative.

As you can see, this change will improve the operation and viability of many of these producers of crops that are not as large as some of our producers of major commodities of grain and corn but it also assists the producers of those commodities greatly and gives those people much less exposure to the sponsoring organization and allows for a greater amount of advance to be made to individual producers. Going to 2 per cent from 10 per cent and withholding 10 per cent for default of the principal makes quite a difference, but when you reduce that to 2 per cent it is considerable and that is a great benefit to the producer. I know we can count on all members of the House to support this amendment.

• (1240)

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak at report stage of Bill C-36. I must say this has been one of most cobbled up bills I have ever seen the government introduce. I recall that originally it introduced this bill under Bill C-32 in which it forgot to provide for the loan guarantee to cover the interest owing to producers under the act. When the government brought the bill back under its present numbering, Bill C-36, it had corrected that mistake but obviously did not make provision for raising the loan guarantee from 90 per cent to 98 per cent so we have before us today a new royal recommendation because it is increasing the obligation of the Government of Canada. We have that amendment before the House and again, under Motion No. 6, we have the government trying to further amend the bill and that, of course, has been ruled out of order by yourself so we really have a cobbling together of a lot of amendments which were not foreseen in the original bill.

We could put it down to the usual screw-ups in which the government is involved, but in this case I think it just boils down to the fact that the government has not thought through what it is doing. Obviously this whole legislation came out of the government's cost-cutting exercise in which it was chopping everything in sight to the extent of some $500 million. This bill, we are told, will save the government some $54 million but it is going to cost the producers a lot more than that. It will cost some producers in this country their farms, their livelihood, their whole situation in Canadian agriculture.

We are not talking about just $27 million of interest available to farmers. We are probably talking about $400 or $500 million worth of cash flow. This provides farmers with cash flow where the interest is paid by the government, so there is no question about the lending institutions providing that to cash flow, especially at market time. We are, however, talking about the losses of hundreds of millions of dollars in the price of commodities because this legislation has the impact of reducing the value of commodities.

For instance, the Ontario Corn Growers' Association estimates that the value to Ontario corn producers is on the ratio of 15 to 1. In other words, if the government provides $1 million worth of loan guarantee or interest free loans, the benefit to producers in being able to market that corn in the winter or spring months actually turns a benefit some 15 times over.

So if there is a million dollars worth of interest-free loan money provided under the crop advance payment system, that results in $15 million worth of benefit. That is just from one little sector, the corn sector.

If we look at fruit and vegetables, if we look at soybeans, if we look at the honey producers and the major advantages to the major crops of wheat and barley in the west, then you are talking about hundreds of millions of dollars in improved price of crops.

We are extremely disappointed that the government refused to hear from farm groups right across the country which wanted to come before the agriculture committee. We are sure that they will have their hearing before the Senate Committee. The number of farm groups that are opposing this bill is outlined very clearly in an urgent message that was sent to the Prime Minister on October 2 from some 19 or 20 farm organizations including the soybean producers, *la Fédération des producteurs agricoles du Québec*, the Western Canadian Wheat Growers' Association, the Keystone Agriculture Producers, the United Grain Growers, the Flax Council of Canada, the Corn Producers, the Western Canadian Pulse Growers and a whole list of other farm groups.

It has been an incredible mix-up all the way along for these producers. The government effectively is killing the program by charging interest. Most groups, like the corn producers, estimate that the amount of saving for those with good credit ratings probably amounts to nothing. So who is going to put themselves through all the red tape of this program if they can borrow the money at 1 or 2 per cent above prime on a regular basis?

This amendment provides some improvement to the legislation. It means that a corn producer who was getting $30,000 before and had to put up security of $3,000, 10 percent, will have to put up security of only $600 under this amendment. So it improves the bill. I wonder why the government did not put it in the original bill. Clearly, this amendment is a minor improvement to a bill that in general destroys the whole advance payment program because the farmer has to pay the interest. The losses are not only in cash flow at cropping time, the losses, in fact, occur to the value of the crop. The value of crops will be reduced because many producers will have to sell immediately.

We think that the disadvantages to these producer groups are very seriously affected and we wonder why the government is unilaterally cutting programs. We have entered into a free trade deal with the United States. The government said that over the seven years it would negotiate a reduction in subsidies on an equal, equitable and balanced basis. Here we have a major program that provides $400 million or $500 million in assistance to farmers that is being chopped unilaterally. The Americans are not chopping their similar program. Here we have a government destroying a program that, if it were to be reduced at some stage, surely should have been reduced in a negotiation under the subsidy code program that is provided for in the free trade deal in order to have the Americans scale down their support programs.

It is not only in the prairie grain advance payments or the crops advance payments program that the government is unilaterally chopping programs, it is chopping a whole raft of programs, some $500 million dollars this year. If you count the Western Grain Stabilization payments not being made, if you count the special grains program payments not being made this year, you are looking at $2.5 billion in the budget and in the estimates that are cut from previous years.

What the government is doing, essentially, is kind of a scorched earth program, reducing and destroying programs. It does not come right out and say it in this program but that is the end result of this bill. This amendment that is being proposed today will help in some ways, but the over all program is going to be drastically cut because farmers now have to pay the interest on these advance payments whereas in the past they have not had to pay it. Therefore, there was no question about them getting the support. Under this program there is a big question whether they will be able to qualify for this support because they will have to be personally responsible for repaying that loan.

This amendment will help, but the over all program is being destroyed by this bill.

• (1250)

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Mr. Speaker, I want to speak for a few moments on Motion No. 5, the change to the percentage required by the producer groups.

The resentment on this particular change in the advance payments by the government would have been much less if the government did not seem to be deliberately moving in a direction which is being felt negatively in rural Canada. The government has deliberately made

a decision to abandon some traditional support programs without replacing them with effective alternatives.

This particular bill just happens to be one of the dozens of attacks that rural Canada is feeling from the government and from the situation in which the government has placed rural Canada in the last few years. The elimination of interest-free cash advances is just one of the items upon which the government is moving that is being felt by the rural communities particularly, and in this case the farmers.

The program was in place for a specific purpose and in the case of the Wheat Board grains it was there to allow the orderly marketing of those grains and to assist in the movement of the grain from the farm through the system. In the case of the other alternate crops, the cash advances were an attempt on the part of the farm groups, with the assistance of the government, to take advantage of the best possible price when putting the product on the market. It worked particularly well in the second case.

But now we are asking the farmer to pay interest on this advance loan and in the process of doing that we have almost eliminated that second reason for the advance payments being in place. Whether they become responsible for 2 per cent or not does not make much difference because many farmers are telling me right now that there is no way that they can pay the prime rate plus 2 per cent or prime rate plus 1 per cent, or whatever the government ends up charging for these particular loans. They cannot afford to get a 10 per cent loan in the hope that maybe the price of corn or soybeans, or whatever product they are putting on the market, is going to go up by that amount or by a great amount.

If you are getting $6 for your canola right now and you borrow so that you do not have to ship it and it only goes up to $6.50, you are going to be losing money on getting a loan.

As I said before, the government is just adding this to a number of other methods that it is using to attack rural Canada. It has done it by the quota-breaking in the free trade agreement whereby it has allowed more of the products to be imported into Canada, consequently pushing down the price of the product and the ability of the farmer to compete.

Second, the government has put in place a reduction of the industrial milk prices, again an attack on the farmer and his ability to survive.

We have had the commercialization of the Farm Credit Corporation. It does not matter whether you leave 2 per cent liability for the producer in this particular case if you are eliminating the total reason for having the loan at all. So the commercialization of the Farm Credit Corporation is also an attack on rural Canada and the farm group.

The GATT is being used by the United States to attack the development of trade in farm products. There is a great concern out there that by putting the free trade agreement in place we gave the United States another method of attacking the trade in farm products with the United States.

There is a great concern out there as well that the GATT negotiations are going in the wrong direction, that our government is giving in to the definition of subsidies which is going to further harm the production of farm products in Canada.

We have a continuing situation of high interest rates in Canada and those high interest rates are harming the farm community considerably.

The crop insurance program is supposedly being reformed but what is actually happening is that the federal government is withdrawing from crop insurance and is going to make, over a period of time, the farmer himself, the producer himself, responsible for crop insurance, another attack on rural Canada and the farm community.

Over the last four years we have had a number of what the government likes to call user-pay changes in the inspection of meats, grains and other products where the cost of inspection has gone onto the farmer, indirectly in some cases, but in many cases directly, so that the farmer is picking up a larger portion of the cost of getting those products on the market.

In the last few days we had the White Paper presented by the Minister of Agriculture. This White Paper calls into question the very basis of the support programs which have been put in place over the years to make sure that we have orderly marketing and that the farmers can survive in particular parts of the agricultural industry.

We have other attacks which are indirect but are just as badly felt. We have the closing of 1,500 rural post offices. Many farmers are now finding themselves driving many more miles, sometimes 30, 40 or even 50 miles to pick up their mail.

We have the shutting down of VIA Rail, also an attack on the farmers of rural Canada. We have an increase in freight rates and we have a definite bias in regional development toward industrialization and against development of farm products and farm processing.

We have, finally, but maybe not least, an attack on the survival of farms because of the goods and services tax. The goods and services tax is going to increase input costs by 9 per cent and that 9 per cent is quite often the margin of profitability in producing a particular crop.

We have all of these attacks, so it does not make much difference whether or not you leave the producers' liability at 2 per cent. If you do all these other things, you are attacking the survival of the farmer and the survival of the farm community.

• (1300)

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, I am rising to speak very briefly on this amendment. As members of the House can see, the amendment put forward by the Minister of Agriculture is virtually the same as amendments put forward by the member for Algoma and myself. I want to explain to the farm organizations, which noted that there was a discrepancy between the two acts that this bill amends and a certain amount of discrimination, why there is still a 2 per cent form of discrimination against certain commodity groups and certain users of the Advance Payments for Crops Act.

On our part, it is not because we did not think that they should be treated equally. In fact, we think that the Advance Payments for Crops Act should have the same coverage against liabilities as the Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act. For your information, Mr. Speaker, the Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act, which is the elder of the two, sets out that the Government of Canada will back the lender, in this case the Canadian Wheat Board, to 100 per cent of its losses. But under the Advance Payments for Crops Act the Government of Canada will stand behind the producer organizations for 90 per cent of the losses.

The reason we had introduced amendments to make it 2 per cent was that we read Section 9 of the existing act, which now seems to limit that loss to 2 per cent due to an amendment in 1985. Because we had no way as an opposition, or as it turns out did the government, of opening up Section 9 of the existing act because it was not in these particular amendments proposed in Bill C–36, our only option was to propose a limit down to 2 per cent, a liability of 2 per cent, because that is what is now in existence in Section 9, and we thought we would make it at least consistent throughout the piece.

What we would have preferred would have been the same treatment in the Advance Payments for Crops Act as exists in the Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act; that is, government being responsible for 100 per cent of the liabilities on those advances not paid back. Because of the legislative constrictions in being unable to open up Section 9 which would have still been there if we had been able to get the number down to zero, we proposed this. The government apparently copied our amendment, hoping for unanimous consent, and I presume it will probably get it. But that explains to all those organizations that wrote in to point out the discrepancy between the treatment of their groups, made up of producers of commodities other than wheat and barley in the western Wheat Board region as opposed to those producers who are getting loans in the Wheat Board district under the Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act.

There will still be some discrimination, it will be reduced to the 2 per cent, only because of Section 9 in the existing legislation which does not permit that to go any lower.

We have had discussions across the floor. Because of the absence of the minister which was alluded to by the Parliamentary Secretary and because there had been agreement by all parties to discuss this bill today on the understanding that the minister would be in attendance, our understanding now is that the minister can be back from his meetings at three o'clock. Since all sides of the House, according to my discussions, have indicated they want to hear the minister at report stage, I think you will find unanimous consent to call it two o'clock and we can continue after Question Period with the minister before us.

Mr. Foster: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member, the representative for the NDP, has indicated the direction in which we have discussed, that we might call it two o'clock and continue with the report stage Motions Nos. 7 and 10 at three o'clock when the minister is here. We understand why the minister has to be away but I think it

is necessary because of the importance of this bill that we do have the minister here to speak on it. So I think that we would agree to this proposal that we call it two o'clock and continue with the report stage of Bill C-36 at 3 p.m. after Question Period.

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Speaker, we also would agree to that proposal. I want to indicate that we are prepared to discuss Motions Nos. 7 and 10 if the other parties wish but we would be willing to call it two o'clock now if that is what everyone wants to do. We would give consent to to do that.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Robitaille): Is the House agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I think we should make this very clear. There seems to be a provision to postpone continuing the debate on Amendment No. 5, moved by the Minister of Agriculture, until around three o'clock this afternoon, after question period, and then we would deal with Motions 7 and 10, which have been grouped together for debate.

The idea is to allow the Minister of Agriculture to be here for the debate on these two motions, and we agree with this proposal.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Robitaille): I do now leave the Chair until two o'clock this afternoon.

The House took recess at 1.07 p.m.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

LOCAL IMPROVEMENTS

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, November 24, I had the honour to attend the opening of the Bayview Memorial Hospital in Advocate, Nova Scotia, a village far removed from the mainstream of Nova Scotian activity.

This beautiful new hospital is the result of a massive fund raising effort which saw $350,000 raised by this tiny community of 800 people. Most people predicted that it just could not be done, but they did not realize the determination and perseverance of the residents, especially that of Mr. Victor Corbin, the fund raising chairman.

Despite economic disappointments the community of Advocate and in fact the entire Parrsboro Shore have fought for their hospitals, fought for their schools, fought for their wharfs, and fought for their communities in a way which reflects their rich heritage of overcoming hardships related to the forests and the sea.

I take my hat off to these special people, and I pledge to support them in any way I can to protect and expand their wonderful communities.

* * *

1989 GREY CUP

Mr. Geoff Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, the long drought is over. After 23 dry years the Grey Cup has returned to Saskatchewan.

It is with pride, Rider pride, that I join my colleagues from Saskatchewan in exercising the bragging rights that go with the last second victory over Hamilton.

The Roughriders last night were infused with that indomitable prairie spirit. They displayed the determination, dedication, tenacity, and hard work that are characteristic of Saskatchewan people.

Congratulations go to the players, especially Roger Aldag, the veteran from Gull Lake, the coaches, management, and, most important of all, the fans from all over Saskatchewan and Canada who supported the Riders through thick and thin and who now have a much deserved source of Rider pride for years to come—a win in the 1989 Grey Cup, the most exciting Grey Cup game ever played.

CANADIAN DAIRY COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, the feature centrefold of the 1989 annual report of the Canadian Dairy Commission shows a pastoral scene of dairy cows grazing beneath a majestic mountainous backdrop.

The caption reads: "The Rockies provide a dramatic setting for this dairy farm in Agassiz, British Columbia". It is indeed a dramatic setting, one I think the residents of Agassiz would find truly astounding.

The government has made many incredible claims, but I did not know that moving mountains was one of of them. Effortlessly, the government has relocated the Rocky Mountains by moving them some 950 kilometres from the B.C.-Alberta border to the Fraser Valley in southwestern B.C.

How can you blame British Columbians for believing that this government does not understand western Canada when it cannot even get its geography straight?

Most governments are content with simply rewriting history, but this government has truly outdone itself by redrawing our geographical as well as our political landscape.

* * *

NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, recently it was learned that the National Capital Council would be charging fees for groups wishing to use its parks and parkways. While I understand that the NCC is trying to make up for the $5 million it had to cut from its annual budget, and while I favour fees as a means of maintaining these same parks and parkways, I strongly feel that exceptions to the rule must take place.

Every consideration should be given to local groups and charities so that they can continue to hold events and fund raisers which are essential to the quality of life in the National Capital Region.

Furthermore, I object to the manner in which the public became aware that the NCC had implemented a user fee program. Again, we see the secrecy and closed door decisions that seem to epitomise the National Capital Commission. While the decision to charge the fees was made secretly in September, unfortunately groups only recently learned of the new fees when they inquired about using the parks and parkways.

The NCC should be made to understand that decisions such as these should be reached in consultation with the public and, if and when a decision is finally reached, the NCC should make known the decision as soon as possible. Waiting two months before doing so is simply irresponsible.

The NCC's motto appears to be: "When the going gets tough, do it secretly and behind closed doors and try to implement the decision as quietly as possible".

* * *

1989 GREY CUP

Mr. Larry Schneider (Regina—Wascana): Mr. Speaker, they said THAT a bumblebee is incapable of flight. They also said that Saskatchewan could not support a professional football team. They said THAT Saskatchewan would likely never again win the Grey Cup.

Well they are all wrong. The Grey Cup is back in Saskatchewan and Regina after a tremendous team effort and the most exciting football game in North America.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, "Regina the Queen" continues to be green.

* * *

MULTICULTURALISM

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, last week the House learned that a Montreal firm distributed a yellow page directory which contained an advertisement that replaced the word "Italian" with the word "Mafia".

The Canadian Italian community, which is an integral and proud member of our Canadian family, does not merit that offensive and shameful slap for it undermines its place in Canada and its contributions to this country.

[*Translation*]

If it were some sort of joke played by some individual before the directory was published, we might sympathize with the regrets expressed by the company. But not to take exception to this directory, which will be found in

millions of Canadian homes, will be as great an error as the one just made, if not greater.

[*English*]

This affront, which has dogged our community for far too long and which undermines our value of citizenship and multiculturalism, must not be tolerated whatsoever.

Only when there is a strong result to right this wrong will we see an eventual stop to this regrettable behaviour. Otherwise it will go on and on and on. In regard to this repugnant five letter word, the Canadian Italian community has just had about enough of it.

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CHARITABLE DONATIONS

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Emmerick Sashegyi. a constituent from Thunder Bay—Nipigon, recently brought to my attention his concerns about the impact of the government's changes to income tax policy on charitable donations in Canada. I want to share them with you, Mr. Speaker, because he puts it very succinctly: The newly introduced system of allowing only 17 per cent tax credit on the first $250 of donations and only 29 per cent on the balance of one's donation is "a blow below the belt" to all charitable organizations in Canada.

He carries on: "I have always been a willing donor to charitable causes" but because of this "government's relentless drive towards tightening the tax screws, I am being forced now to set priorities—this will inevitably disappoint some of the usual recipients of my cheques who will have to do without my financial support in future".

Surely the government will allow all Canadians who make charitable donations the opportunity of a proper tax credit. Why should these worth-while charities in Canada have to suffer because of the government's ruling on this matter?

[*Translation*]

RACISM

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, in the *Journal de Montréal* of November 25, journalist Serge Vleminckx comments on the deplorable incidents in university hockey this way: "Québecers victims of racism."

On Sunday, November 12, 1989, in a game involving the Patriotes of the *Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières* and Waterloo, Tony Crisp, son of Terry Crisp, coach of the Calgary Flames, insulted his opponents and showed disrespect for all Quebecers by a racist act in which he got down on his knees and elbows on the ice to imitate a frog leaping. He did this several times during the game. The Patriots were revolted by this act, but won the game 4-3.

Mr. Speaker, the least we can say is that it is unacceptable for leaders and referees of the Ontario university hockey league to encourage such a contemptuous attitude by their silence.

* * *

[*English*]

SEXUAL ABUSE

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, last week a County Court judge in British Columbia gave a suspended sentence to a man who admitted to the sexual abuse of a three year old. The judge's reasoning was that the man was intoxicated at the time and the three year old victim was sexually aggressive.

One in four girls in this country will be sexually abused by the time they reach 18 years. As many as 40 per cent of victims are under the age of six. There can be no excuse for a judge to be so ignorant of the implications of sexual abuse that he would rule in this outrageous manner. More important, blaming the child victim for the actions of a man in a position of power over her is unconscionable.

I intend to call on the Canadian Judicial Council to conduct a full inquiry into this matter. I call on the

government to take immediate steps to ensure that members of the judiciary are made aware of the horrific effects of child sexual abuse and ask that the Minister of Justice clearly advise Canadians that the government will not condone such ignorance on the reality of child sexual abuse on the bench.

* * *

FINANCE

Mr. Ken Hughes (Macleod): Mr. Speaker, as I travel around my riding of Macleod each week, in public meetings and in private conversations I hear one theme repeated time and again. And that is, if government does its share by cutting expenditures, we as Canadians will do our share to help pay down the deficit. All Canadians must share in this responsibility.

• (1410)

It is always easy for members opposite to jump on the bandwagon of the day to save some outdated program that is on the chopping block. But members of the Opposition should recognize that it is also their children who will bear these onerous future costs if we do not deal with today's deficit and the accumulated Liberal party inspired debt.

* * *

FEDERAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BANK

Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas): Mr. Speaker, last Thursday the hon. Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion was asked by my colleague, the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, if he could give the House a list of how many strip clubs were financed by his department. The minister responded, and I quote:

> I would gladly tell the hon. member about one called the Hideout in Cornwall, Ontario, the constituency of Ed Lumley which in March of 1983, when Ed Lumley was the minister responsible for FBDB, became a strip joint.

The minister did not have the courtesy to inform my colleague in the House of all the facts. Two FBDB loans were granted to the Hideout, one in 1976 and the other in 1978. At both times the Hideout was a country and western club. It changed to a strip club in 1983.

The hon. Ed Lumley became responsible for the FBDB in 1982, which was after these loans were made. It is regretful that the current minister responsible for FBDB tries to portray an image of propriety but fails to present all the facts in this particular case and attempts to tarnish the reputation of a previous minister of the Crown.

* * *

CANADA POST CORPORATION

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, Canada Post has announced that it plans to shut down the McKernan postal outlet in the Maurice Pharmacy on December 1, one month before Christmas. This postal outlet has served my constituents for over 10 years.

The pharmacy changed ownership November 1 and Canada Post offered the new owner, Mr. Eugene Barabash, a post office franchise for the price of $40,000.

As you can appreciate, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Barabash has taken on considerable debt and cannot afford to take on more right now. He will be in a position to buy a franchise two years from now.

Canada Post is bullying him by threatening to sell the franchise to another business although there are no takers. Some 1,000 residents have signed letters and petitions protesting this malicious action by Canada Post.

I call upon Canada Post to renew the existing contract for a period of two years and not to improve service by shutting down a post office one month before Christmas, affecting thousands of residents of Edmonton Strathcona.

* * *

1989 GREY CUP

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, as the member for Hamilton Mountain I rise today in the House to congratulate the Saskatchewan Roughriders on their 43–40 victory of the Hamilton Tiger Cats.

The 1989 Grey Cup left Canadians on the edge of their seats until the last seconds of the game when the foot of Saskatchewan field goal kicker, Dave Ridgeway, secured the win for Saskatchewan with seven seconds on the clock.

It was football at its finest, and it was played in the true spirit of Canadian sportsmanship. Being from Hamilton my loyalty and support naturally lie with the Tiger Cats, yet the Saskatchewan Roughriders have not won a Grey Cut since 1966.

The people of Hamilton, in fact all people of Canada, congratulate the Roughriders on their 1989 Grey Cup victory.

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AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Ross Belsher (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, on Thursday last, I had the pleasure of accompanying the Minister of Transport in Vancouver when he announced the awarding of contracts for the Canadian Automatic Air Traffic System better known as CAATS.

This project brings to Canada two very important commodities, investment dollars and high technology.

The lead contract of $380 million went to Hughes Aircraft of Canada Limited. Hughes will provide the technical foundation upon which the $660 million CAATS project will be built. The CAATS technology will be tailor-made for Canada. Emphasis will be placed on versatility of design and of use.

Judy Lindsay summed it up nicely in Saturday's *Vancouver Sun* when she wrote:

> We could have spent years trying to develop this expertise on our own: Technology transfer is a heck of a lot faster.

Hughes plans to develop this high technology and export it to the world from its base in western Canada. Hughes anticipates the creation of an initial 300 jobs. This should grow to 2,000 Canadian jobs by the mid-1990s as a result of expected international sales in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

Yet again this government is showing its commitment to western Canada. The development of high technology in the west helps to diversify and strengthen the regional and national economies.

This is another example of the government's commitment to foster foreign investment, international trade, and economic development.

* * *

1989 GREY CUP

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, I want to join my colleagues in congratulating the Saskatchewan Roughriders on their tremendous win in the Grey Cup yesterday.

It is only the second time the history of the team that Saskatchewan has won the Grey Cup. The first time was back in 1966.

What I want to do today is congratulate most of all the fans in the province. The Roughriders are a community owned team, and the fans have supported the team for many, many long years without the reward of the Grey Cup.

I also want to congratulate the coach of the team, Mr. John Gregory, for the tremendous job he has done. I congratulate the quarterback, Mr. Kent Austin Ridgeway, for his field goal and all the players for a tremendous effort.

I can assure Your Honour that today there is tremendous Rider pride in every small town, city, village and farm in the Province of Saskatchewan for a cup that was well deserved and a cup that was well won.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

With Eastern Europe at a crossroads today in history Canadians must do everything we can to assist the reform movement, to assist the tens of millions of people pushing for freedom in a number of countries. In order to make that urge for freedom realistic we have to ensure that there is some opportunity for economic success.

Our government has promised only $42 million to Poland and Hungary, which pales by comparison with commitments made by other western nations to these countries.

Why has Canada so far failed to provide our proportionate share of aid to Poland and Hungary? Where are the serious offers of economic help and a commitment to serious investment in Poland, the Soviet Union, Hungary, East Germany, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia?

When, incidentally, will Canada have a diplomatic presence in East Germany and in Bulgaria?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my friend, the Leader of the Opposition, referred this morning to our contribution to Poland, and he referred to an earlier comment by Mr. Walesa.

He forgot the comment that Mr. Walesa made at his press conference as he left Ottawa, saying that he was deeply impressed by the commitment of this government to the well-being of the people of Poland and that he was very, very grateful for the leadership and the strong support that the government and the people of Canada provided the people of Poland.

He said that but of course the facts just provided to the House by the Leader of the Opposition are, to understate the case, very incomplete.

In point of fact the $42 million is a one-year commitment which compares very favourably on a per capita basis with amounts now being considered by the Senate and the Congress of the United States.

Moreover, it does not take into consideration the fact that Canada is the fourth largest creditor of Poland, the debt being $2.6 billion, and in the process of rescheduling Canada will probably save over the next 18 months the people of Poland some hundreds of millions of dollars in hard currency. That is very appreciated by the Prime Minister of Poland and by Mr. Walesa and all others who believe that we have an obligation to provide this kind of assistance.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, most Canadians will remember what Lech Walesa said, that our efforts so far to Poland are like placing a beautiful tie on a corpse.

The government's White Paper on defence, still defended by the minister of defence, was misguided when it was introduced and is now completely out of date.

Will the Prime Minister acknowledge that the political declaration he signed in Moscow with President Gorbachev now represents a complete contradiction of the whole message behind the government's White Paper on defence?

When will he give a more up to date view of his government's policy both by way of a policy paper on defence and a policy paper on whatever is his current foreign policy?

• (1420)

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, I do not know why the Leader of the Opposition would come back and refer to the statement of Mr. Walesa about the Canadian contributions "placing a tie on a corpse" which he made in the morning to a parliamentary committee and which in the afternoon at a press conference across the street he very substantially modified and corrected. He paid a great compliment to the government of the people of Canada for its generosity and he expressed profound gratitude. I do not know why the Leader of the Opposition continues to denigrate the efforts of the people of Canada to help the people of Poland.

With regard to the political declaration that was signed, I refer to a statement by Minister Shevardnadze in an interview that he granted *Isvestia* last Friday where he said and I quote:

> The political declaration signed by the leaders of our states is an intellectual and political breakthrough into the new, interdependent world which has left the obstructions of the "cold war" behind and is confidently looking into the future. A document of this calibre and significance could emerge only in conditions of *perestroika* in the Soviet Union and in fundamental changes in the surrounding world.

That is exactly the position of the Government of Canada. That is why we were able to conclude this historic document and that is why I count on my right hon. friend for further support as we try to proceed with confidence-building initiatives such as the open-skies conference that will be held in Canada on February 12 next, due to the insistence and the hard work of the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, I think what Canadians recognize is that in appreciating what is happening in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, they are miles ahead of their government and they want their government to get up to date.

Perhaps the Prime Minister might be good enough to forward a copy of the declaration which he has recited to the Minister of National Defence so that he can have his colleague up to date on the current posture of his government.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, in the political statement the Prime Minister signed with the Soviet Union, and earlier in his speech this morning, the Prime Minister did not say a word about security in the Arctic. He made no definite proposal about demilitarizing this region. In this morning's speech, the Prime Minister failed to make a serious proposal on behalf of this country, in response to a

proposal for creating a peace zone made two years ago by President Gorbachev. After talking about co-operation in the Arctic with the Soviet Union, why was the Prime Minister unable to advance any new ideas for disarmament in the Arctic?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, here again, the Leader of the Opposition was not—and by the way, since he insists on raising these issues, I will read this quote from *The Globe and Mail* of November 14, which should put an end to further arguments. It says:

[*English*]

> Yesterday afternoon, however, after lunching with Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, Mr. Walesa said he was "taken aback by the courage" and substantial assistance Canada had offered. "The Prime Minister has given us a very strong political commitment".

When the Leader of the Opposition quotes, he should quote completely and not selectively.

[*Translation*]

His allegations were inaccurate. And it was just this morning, when I said that in Moscow, I also discussed with Mr. Gorbachev the proposals he had made in his speech in Murmansk several years ago, about arms control in the Arctic. I pointed out that Mr. Clark had responded to his proposals on several occasions, but that we were entirely prepared to discuss with the Soviets a number of refinements they might wish to add to their original proposals. I also told Mr. Gorbachev that I continued to think that the present permanent talks on arms control between the two superpowers and the two alliances had been productive and would remain the best way to make any progress in this area. This completely rebutes the statement made by the Leader of the Opposition. We are talking about a situation where the Canadian government, through the Secretary of State for External Affairs, has reacted firmly and quickly, and as a result—

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Not at all!

Mr. Mulroney: He says: "Not at all". Mr. Gorbachev instructed Mr. Shevardnadze, in our presence, to start discussions with the Secretary of State for External Affairs, an event that the Leader of the Opposition should welcome today with enthusiasm, instead of denigrating Canada's efforts.

* * *

[*English*]

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Douglas Young (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance must have some idea today what Canadians felt like when they were hit with his goods and services tax proposal. He has been blindsided today by Blenkarn. I would like to ask him a question.

The House committee on finance has now brought in its recommendations.the Conservative majority is recommending that we reduce the tax on $1 million homes and increase the tax on $100,000 homes. Will the Minister of Finance tell us today whether he can support a 5 per cent tax on subsidized housing, low income housing and senior citizen housing, or is he prepared to clear up the chaos and confusion that has been created in this country as a result of this report and tell us that he is going to reject this proposal to impose a 5 per cent tax on every roof on every house and on every other residence in this country.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I am not going to comment on any specific element of the finance committee majority proposals. They are, I think, a very useful piece of work in terms of looking at the broad range of things which can or cannot be done as far as the GST proposal is concerned. I am grateful to them for the range of recommendations that they have made and I think it is a productive part of the whole tax reform proposal.

What did disappoint me, quite frankly, was the total cop-out on the part of the Liberal minority report which was full of criticisms but had no alternatives, no productive suggestions as to how to move forward with the GST proposal.

What puzzles me is that in the last Parliament when they had finance critics that spoke out in a responsible way, they stated: "The Liberal Party acknowledges that the existing sales tax must be reformed. A broader based sales tax would stimulate economic growth. The Liberal Party is not opposed to the introduction of a new sales tax". Raymond Garneau said: "Proceeding immediately with the sales tax reform is important. We would manage to make our tax system more progressive and still maintain lower tax rates".

The current Whip of the House, I hasten to remind him, said: "A multi-stage type of sales tax sounds to me like an idea which the government should have proposed when it brought in fiscal reform. In addition to proposing it, it should have implemented it".

We are going to implement this tax. We are appreciative of those who are giving us positive proposals for reform, not the reactionary work that is being done by the Liberal party in its response to the sales tax system.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, I think the minority report reflects the views of Canadians and sooner or later the Minister of Finance will recognize that or he will go the way of his predecessor in New Zealand and become the minister of police.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, Conservative Members sitting on the Finance Committee have recommended that the government impose a reduced goods and services tax on homes worth 1 million dollars and at the same time increase the tax on homes worth $100,000.

My question to the Minister of Finance is this: Will the Minister of Finance today advise Canadians that at least as far as proposing a tax on all homes, all residences in Canada is concerned, he is going to reject that? Or does he intend to support the Tory Members on the Finance Committee who want this tax to apply to all residences across the country?

• (1430)

[*English*]

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, I believe there are some 86 separate recommendations by the Conservative majority on the finance committee. The hon. member is asking me to identify and comment specifically on one. I think that he understands the fact that the GST proposal is a proposal for a sales tax system. It is not just one tax or one rebate. It is a broad proposal to make the sales tax system fair, more effective and more productive in terms of creating new jobs.

I am not going to respond to a question on one specific proposal. I will review the whole of the finance committee report. Once that is done, I will make a specific response on the whole report.

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister can at least respond to some basic mathematics. Will the minister confirm that the chairman of the finance committee is really starting a full-scale war on the first-time home buyer in this country by suggesting that there be an increase in taxes in comparison to the technical paper by $5,000 on a $100,000 home, by $8,000 on a $160,000 home, but a cut of $40,000 on a $1 million mansion. Will the Minister of Finance confirm that, and will he agree that the chairman of the finance committee is even more regressive, more conservative and more repugnant than the minister himself.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to my hon. friend that he should not tempt me in that way.

I have listened to the critics of both opposition parties. I appreciate the support that they are giving to the government's proposal on sales tax reform. I hope that support will continue as we move into the legislative process.

Mr. Nystrom: I have another question for the minister of evasion, Mr. Speaker. I will give him one more chance.

The chairman of the finance committee and the Conservative majority are saying that the number of dollars for the tax credit for low-income people in this country should be cut by one half, from $2.4 billion a year to $1.2 billion. Like the minister, the chairman does not want the index to be a credit for the poor.

Will the minister agree that in terms of treating the poor in this country, the chairman of the finance committee is even more mean-spirited, even more greedy than the minister himself by cutting back or suggesting we cut back on the tax credit for the poor by some 50 per cent, making the poor in this country even poorer and will he reject that recommendation as well?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member should be reviewing the arithmetic on this. I have not gone through this carefully, but my understanding is that the logic behind this is as the rate has dropped from 9 per cent to 7 per cent so has the need to offset the impacts of sales tax reform in the hands of low-income Canadians so that there is a balance here. I believe that that is the rationale for what the Conservative majority in the finance committee proposed.

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, the chairman of the finance committee has also copped out in guaranteeing that the existing manufacturers' sales tax be passed on to the consumer.

I know the minister was not able to guarantee us that the existing MST would be passed on to the consumer. I want to know whether the minister will stand in his place and assure us that there will be some guarantee, some mechanism, that if he proceeds with this bill that the existing manufacturers' sales tax will indeed be passed on to the consumer. If he cannot do that, will he do the sensible thing and listen to 87 per cent of the people out there who say "no tax, no GST" and withdraw the proposition.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I have listened carefully to what the polls have said. The polls are really reflecting a simple question: "Do you support a 9 per cent GST?" Obviously, if it is not put in any context, the answer to that question is as you would expect.

What if I put the question to Canadians: "Would you support a tax that is currently a hidden tax on exports? Would you support a tax which penalizes Canadian production, one that imposes one-third less tax on imports? Would you support a hidden tax that is deeply hidden in the manufacturing process? Would you support a tax that is complex, that requires 22,000 separate deals for the 75,000 taxpayers to make it work? Would you support a tax that is subject to a large amount of tax avoidance which is what the existing federal sales tax is?" I think we would get a very different response because the goods and services tax is designed to address each of those five separate problems with the existing system. That is why the majority members on the finance committee have supported a change to the goods and services tax. That is why this government is committed to proceeding with that proposal.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the Prime Minister going back to his statement this morning on his visit to the Soviet Union.

I think the Prime Minister will agree that one of the most important ways in which this country and others can support the liberalization taking place in the Soviet Union is to have it become a member of a world trading community, particularly the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

Can the Prime Minister tell us if during his discussions with Mr. Gorbachev he offered that Canada would support the involvement of the Soviet Union in the GATT, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, either as an observer or as a full participant? Perhaps more important, when he visits the United States this week, will he press the United States administration to drop its present opposition to Soviet Union involvement in the GATT as a way of welcoming the Soviet Union as part of the world trading community?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, yes, indeed, we put forward the view that the Soviet Union might be interested in observer status at the GATT as a step toward a greater degree of participation in the international economy.

We put forward the view that the outgoing chairman of the industrialized summit should meet every year with President Gorbachev to exchange views and policy prescriptions as to how this integration might best come about.

I am not aware of any hostility by the United States whatsoever to this suggestion. The general view, I believe, is quite supportive. It is certainly a matter that I will raise with President Bush as we explore all possible avenues that would liberalize and improve the relationships between the east and west, but in the process to provide some real tangible assistance from the west to the east as the Soviet Union proceeds with its program of historic reform.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, there may not be hostility, but there is opposition. The stated position of the United States has been to oppose the membership or involvement of the Soviet Union in the GATT. I simply ask the Prime Minister if he intends to press his colleague, the United States President to drop that opposition, as he said, as a gesture of the new kind of economic regime we are in.

The question I would like to pose to him is more directly related to the interests of Canada. As you know, the agricultural trade between our two countries is perhaps the most essential link between the two.

This year there has not been any indication of major Soviet grain purchases from this country, causing widespread speculation or inquietude among the grain farmers and the shipping industry. Did the Prime Minister discuss the ongoing relationship of Canada and the Soviet Union on the grain trade? Can he tell us whether the Soviet Union will be making an announcement of a major grain purchase from Canada this year? Did the Prime Minister discuss the necessity of having another long-term grain agreement signed and ratified with the Soviet Union after the present one expires in a year's time?

• (1440)

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, I had extensive discussions with President Gorbachev and Prime Minister Ryzhkov with respect to the agricultural situation generally and the desirability of maintaining the grain sales from Canada to the Soviet Union. We have agreed to work very closely on a process that, hopefully, will ensure that that continues.

They were very grateful for the visit of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Agriculture. They asked us to consider some innovative thoughts as to how the Government of Canada and the Canadian agricultural producers could participate more actively in the process of expanding economic opportunities for us in the Soviet Union while at the same time bringing about beneficial results for Soviet Union consumers.

I suppose the best answer to my hon. friend is to tell him that the priority outside of East-West relations that was given by the Soviet Union and responded to by the Secretary of State for External Affairs and myself was the field of agriculture and how this could be developed and expanded. I responded on behalf of the Government of Canada and on behalf of the agricultural producers of Canada with great enthusiasm. I gave them the assurance that we are going to work with them very closely to improve our market share.

ARCTIC POLICY

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Right Hon. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister announced with great fanfare a new series of Arctic-related initiatives during his visit to the U.S.S.R. We all remember the last time a similar attempt was made by the Secretary of State back in 1985. Many of the initiatives announced then by the Secretary of State have either been stalled indefinitely or have never been implemented.

Will the Prime Minister assure this House that these latest initiatives will be fully implemented, and to that end will he accept the recommendation that my leader made this morning to appoint an ambassador of circumpolar affairs to co-ordinate Canada's arctic policy?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I take it that the references by the hon. member to undertakings that were given in 1985 have to do with actions that this government would take to establish Canada's sovereignty in the north, actions that we have taken, actions that had not been taken by previous Liberal governments United States that would guarantee our sovereignty with respect to the transit through northern waters of U.S. vessels. That also has been done. We have signed a number of agreements with the Soviet Union on which we look forward to acting.

In addition to that, the House may be interested in what I think is one of the significant developments of the discussions in Moscow. When the Prime Minister asked Mr. Gorbachev to be more forthcoming, to be more detailed in his suggestions in the Murmansk speech, which was a fairly general speech at the time, Mr. Gorbachev replied by indicating that he would want the matter to be under more regular review between myself as Canadian foreign minister and Mr. Shevardnadze.

We agreed to that immediately because we think that will provide us with the opportunity to make proposals and provide the Soviets with the opportunity to make proposals, and as well provide an occasion for them to be looked at on a very high level.

I have one last comment quickly in response to the question. To give credit where it is due with respect to the proposal for an ambassador I think that came from a

the proposal for an ambassador I think that came from a recent conference sponsored by the Centre for Arms Control here in Ottawa. I have arranged for a meeting sometime in the next few weeks with the chairman of that centre, and I look forward to discussing the proposals of that conference, including the question of an ambassador who might be involved particularly in circumpolar affairs.

* * *

BALTIC STATES

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is for the Right Hon. Prime Minister and again pertains to his visit to the Soviet Union.

Canada has never recognized the annexation of the Baltic States by the Soviet Union. Prior to his visit with President Gorbachev, the Prime Minister indicated that the matter would be brought up in the normal course of his visit.

Did the Prime Minister raise the future of the Baltic States with the President of the Soviet Union, and did he receive any assurance that the Soviet Union will allow Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia to hold free elections without any outside interference from Moscow?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, during my meetings with Mr. Shevardnadze, I raised that question very directly. I indicated the position that successive Canadian governments have taken with regard to our refusal to accept the *de jure* status of the Baltic States in the Soviet Union.

I also made it clear that we were watching very closely, both governments were, Parliament was and Canadians of origin in the Baltic States, the attitude of the Soviet government toward developments in those regions, and that we would be particularly concerned if there were to be anything resembling a "crackdown" was the word I used. Mr. Shevardnadze replied categorically saying there would be no crackdown. I found it interesting that not only did he say that the foreign ministry was intending none but he was specific to say that the police were intending none, the army was intending none. I think that is a significant statement and a very helpful development in response to the issue being raised directly by Canada at those meetings in Moscow.

PRESENCE IN THE GALLERY

Mr. Speaker: I wish to draw to the members' attention the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Eric Gullage, Minister responsible for the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: I also wish to draw to the members' attention the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Collin J. Moyle, New Zealand Minister of Agriculture.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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EL SALVADOR

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Right Hon. Prime Minister. The Prime Minister will know that one of the things all of us share about events happening in eastern Europe is that the Soviet Union has decided to allow people who live in its geographical backyard to determine their own futures, politically and economically.

The Prime Minister will be soon visiting President Bush of the United States. I wonder whether the Prime Minister would be prepared to say today to the House that he intends to suggest to Mr. Bush that it is about time the Americans took the same view toward their backyard in central America and stopped the military aid to El Salvador, to the people who are actually running that country, the military, so that peace could finally be negotiated and the violence come to an end in El Salvador.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that there is great concern in this House and across the country about the situation in El Salvador which is now, in effect, a civil war. It also goes without saying that Canada has to explore every avenue open to us, and there are better things that we can do than simply give advice to other countries as to what their policy would be doing.

I had the opportunity since coming back on the weekend to consult with my colleague, the Minister for External Relations, and senior officials of the department. We have begun close consultations with the OAS.

I will be in touch with the foreign ministers of both Venezuela and Costa Rica later today because they are involved in an effort right now to try to bring some resolution to the situation.

I intend to call in for a meeting, I hope this week, some of the Canadians who have been on the ground in El Salvador in recent days, some of whom the Government of Canada has helped to secure freedom so they could come back. We think that their advice will be valuable to us.

We intend also to make representations to a number of governments and organizations in the region, including obviously the Government of El Salvador, the Government of Cuba, and we intend to be speaking to representatives of the FMLN on a senior public servant level.

When the Prime Minister meets President Bush later this week, he is naturally going to draw attention to three elements that are of particular concern to Canada. One, the lives that are being lost. Second, the very grave threat to human rights in the region. Third, the grave threat that has now been created to the possibility of success of the peace plan, including the United Nations ONUCA activities. The Prime Minister will be raising that with President Bush, and we will be working with Americans and other members of the Organization of American States to try to bring peace to El Salvador.

Mr. Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, the Canadian government gives advice to all kinds of countries. The Canadian government has given advice for 40 years to the Soviet Union with respect to eastern Europe. Fortunately, it has now heeded that advice.

Why is there this exemption for the United States? Why is it that we cannot entertain the notion of giving advice to the United States of America, of stating the Canadian position on American aid to the military in El Salvador?

• (1450)

I ask this question of the Prime Minister, with all due respect to the Secretary of State for External Affairs who will not be meeting with Mr. Bush, what does he, the Prime Minister, intend to say about continuing military aid to El Salvador and the destruction that it involves?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I plan to tell the President of the United States what the Secretary of State for External Affairs very eloquently stated, which is exactly the position of the Government of Canada.

I will also draw to his attention a story in *The Toronto Star* for November 24, where it states "The Nicaraguan Envoy lauds Canadian Peace Efforts". The quote from the ambassador—

Mr. Tobin: We are talking about El Salvador.

Mr. Mulroney: Yes, it deals with El Salvador.

"Canada has the will to be helpful in Central America and, most important, it has publicly stated that it sees a political solution and not a military solution".

Here is the Nicaraguan envoy lauding Canadian peace efforts. I know that my hon. friend will celebrate this good news and will want me to convey that to the President of the United States, which I will be happy to do.

* * *

FINANCE

Mr. Ken Hughes (Macleod): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the chairman of the standing committee on finance. Today, the finance committee submitted its report supporting in principle a GST. While its recommendation to cut the proposed GST from 9 per cent to 7 per cent is encouraging and it is in the right direction, the people of Macleod want to know when the finance committee will start listening to Canadians on cutting government spending. In short—

Some Hon. Members: Order!

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member may be trying to work a substantive question into a procedural one, but I do not think he has quite succeeded in doing so.

The hon. member for Eglinton—Lawrence.

* * *

ARMS REDUCTION

Mr. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Right Hon. Prime Minister. Earlier in the day, the Prime Minister noted the need to distinguish between good intentions and military capacity in the face of foreign policy changes coming from the USSR.

The Soviet Union has already provided a positive response to three recommendations of the panel on Arctic arms control made before a public forum, the Canada–USSR conference on Arctic co-operation four weeks ago regarding security and sovereignty in the Arctic.

Will the Prime Minister make a commitment to this House that Canada too will give a similar response and that in the spirit of building, as he calls it, a new and durable peace Canada will push for the adoption of other panel recommendations that include the establishment of a central Arctic demilitarized zone and promotion of verification procedures to ensure superpower compliance in the area?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I indicated a few moments ago that I have asked my office to arrange a meeting between myself and the chairman of the agency which organized that panel. We intend to take a very careful look at all of its recommendations.

But let me make a point very clear. We believe that the world has found in the INF negotiations the great advantage, if we are serious about getting levels of arms down, of respecting and working within an alliance to alliance framework. That is also a view that has now been recognized by the Soviet Union, by Mr. Shevardnadze in our discussions, a view indeed reinforced by Mr. Gorbachev's observations to the Prime Minister that this would not be the time, this would be precisely the wrong time to undermine alliances.

Having those questions negotiated on an alliance to alliance basis obviously does not preclude them being discussed between countries that have a particular interest, as Canada and the Soviet Union do. That is why Canada responded quickly to the suggestion by Mr. Gorbachev that it would be useful to have very high level continuing meetings between Mr. Shevardnadze and myself to look at any proposals respecting the Arctic that might come from the Soviet side or that might come from the Canadian side, always on the understanding that any negotiations would occur on an alliance basis because that is the way that negotiations lead to real reduction in weapons.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Volpe: Mr. Speaker, I realize it is better late than never, but Canada has already demonstrated its ability to act without being prompted by its allies when it rejected the nuclear submarine option, as a number of experts have observed. Furthermore, the Prime Minister acknowledged that his government's policy on national defence and external affairs is no longer up to date and that a thorough reassessment is necessary. Will the Prime Minister give the House the assurance that in the course of this process, he will consult the committees of the House, the various groups concerned and the experts in the field, and could he indicate the timeframe within which this reassessment will take place?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I made no statements of the kind my hon. friend mentioned in his preamble. He is assuming that a number of newspaper articles are a faithful reflection of my statements, while the opposite is true.

I clearly mentioned the position of the Canadian government and referred to the political statement signed by Mr. Gorbachev and myself. The 14 agreements indicate our intention, on behalf of all Canadians, to give bilateral relations between Canada and the Soviet Union a new start. However, the Minister has already said, and I have as well, that NATO solidarity is a component that is absolutely essential to the future of arms reduction talks, both in the conventional and strategic sphere. We have no intention of ignoring our alliances and neither does Mr. Gorbachev.

* * *

[*English*]

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Jerry Pickard (Essex—Kent): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative majority GST report has suggested that a 5 per cent tax be levied on all housing sales in Canada. In Canada, five million resale homes are financed every year.

We have been told that the GST is a one-shot cost. Yet, over five million families annually will face higher mortgage costs. Every month higher payments will be their problem.

Will the minister commit today to reject this proposal of taxing resale housing which would leave Canada the

only country in the western world with a tax on resale housing. In fact, will the minister agree this tax is so flawed that it should—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member has put his question. The hon. minister.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated I am not going to comment piecemeal on specific recommendations of the report.

What I would say is that the cost of mortgage financing is related very much to the level of interest rates and the level of inflation. We have an inflationary problem in this country. We are dealing with it both through monetary policy and fiscal policy, and we must continue to deal with it in that way.

I do want to take the opportunity to point out that the whole of the economy has a role to play here in terms of demanding less from the economy either through price or through wage settlements, and it is only as we work together and get these inflationary pressures under a greater degree of control will we be able to able to bring down the cost of financing over-all, and particularly the cost of financing for homes.

Mrs. Diane Marleau (Sudbury): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative majority of the House of Commons Finance Committee has also recommended that we abolish the rebates on the construction of subsidized housing and rental units by non-profit organizations.

I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Housing. Is he prepared to stand up and assume his responsibilities as the Minister responsible for Housing and reject this particular proposal out of hand? Better still, is he prepared to assume his responsibilities in the housing sector and tell the Minister of Finance to scrap the tax because of the adverse reactions that this tax will have on the housing sector.

• (1500)

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Privatization and Regulatory Affairs)): Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister of Finance made it very clear today that we would not be commenting on specific proposals until we had a chance to analyse the entire report.

The biggest disappointment I had was the Liberal presentation which did not have one original idea as to what we should do with the tax. Not one. What a cop-out.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister will know that in recent weeks serious questions have been raised with respect to the independence and integrity of the administration of justice and, in particular, the absolute requirement that there be no political interference in the operations of the RCMP.

I would like to ask the Prime Minister to take this opportunity to clarify to the House precisely what role was played by his former principal secretary, Bernard Roy, with respect to the RCMP investigation in the Michel Gravel corruption case? As well, could the Prime Minister clarify precisely the nature of representations made by his former principal secretary, Peter White, with respect to the Richard Grisé matter, particularly in view of the concerns raised about the letter that was apparently written on November 8 to the RCMP. What role was played by the principal secretaries of the Prime Minister in both of these very sensitive RCMP investigations?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, those matters have been answered in the House before. I want to quote for my hon. friend from the comments of Mr. Inkster at the committee when he said:

> The investigations, I am advised, have been carried out thoroughly and completely, all without any political interference.

He then goes on to say:

> I am advised, Mr. Kaplan, that we received no such call from Bernard Roy.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is to the Prime Minister. In view of the fact that Michel Gravel was charged in 1986 and pleaded guilty in February, 1989 to 15 charges of corruption, I would like the Prime Minister to tell the people of Canada precisely how much money from the Conservative Party of Canada went to his legal fees—

Mr. Speaker: If the hon. member has evidence of anything like that, he can make it by way of a charge, but not by way of a preamble.

* * *

POINT OF ORDER

COMMENTS ARISING FROM QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, my point of order arises from the member for Macleod attempting to rise to ask a question of the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Finance.

I would like to ask the Chair to advise the House why the hon. member was asked to return to his seat? It appears to us that his preamble certainly was no longer than any preambles we have heard on any number of occasions from experienced members on that side of the House; preambles which include, multiple questions, charges and innuendo. Here we have a member getting up to ask a single question and he is asked to return to his seat. We would like some clarification.

Mr. Speaker: First of all, I should say to the parliamentary secretary that since the member for Macleod attempted to ask his question, I have discussed the matter with him.

Second, I have suggested to him that with some judicious adjustments, the question might well be in order. The hon. member was not cut off because of the length of the preamble, which I must say to his very great credit, was very succinct and was short. It serves as an example to all of the members in this House.

The hon. member was cut off by the Chair because in asking a question to the chairperson of a committee, that question has to involve the procedures in the committee, either past, present or anticipated. I may have misheard the question. The fault may well lie with the Chair.

Some Hon. Members: No, no!

Mr. Speaker: Modesty forbids me from asking for a vote on this.

In any event, the intervention of the Chair was on that procedural ground. Rightly or wrongly, I did not see the question as moving to a procedural matter and I would hope that perhaps the hon. member could come back and—which I think no doubt is a very important question—rephrase it in such a way that the Chair would have no difficulty in accepting it.

I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary and I thank the hon. member for Macleod for his very great understanding. I apologize if there has been any embarrassment.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

ADVANCE PAYMENTS FOR CROPS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-36, an act to amend the Advanced Payments for Crops Act and the Prairie Grain Advanced Payments Act, as reported (with an amendment) from a legislative committee; and Motion No. 5.

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, I had the floor when the House suspended and I do not wish to hold it unduly. I understand that we have a tacit agreement in the House, since the minister is now here, to move very quickly to a minister for the short period that he will be available to the House. I do not want to take away time from other members.

Perhaps we could get right to it, if that is the understanding, and begin by asking the minister to briefly justify the move to take away the interest free cash advances which have been part of the scene in western Canada since John Diefenbaker was Prime Minister. The rest of the country received them some time later but they have been a part of the agricultural scene for a very long time. They are also a fact of life in our competing countries, particularly in the United States, and we have great difficulty understanding the rationale for cancelling them.

A couple of years ago there was a move by the government, by regulation, to deem the loans received through the Cash Advance Act as a loan for tax purposes, rather than as income. That opened the ground work for a possible charge that people were taking advances, turning them into investments and using interest free money to gain income. That was not possible when the advance was considered to be income on the year it was taken. As long as advances were considered income as well, there was no abuse of the

program because people only borrowed enough money to pay their bills and to keep current, because to do otherwise would have changed their tax position for that year.

I wonder if the minister would explain why they have made this change, in light of his own government causing the problem that his parliamentary secretary described as being one of the reasons for the change. We heard from witnesses that the amount saved, some $27 million, would very likely be offset by increased payments to the Agricultural Stabilization Act and other programs. In fact, the very day that the bill was reported back from committee, the government brought in the Supplementary Estimates, asking for another $25 million to augment the Agricultural Stabilization Act. This gives more credence to the argument that was made by producers of fruits and vegetables from across the country, but most particularly from groups in Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia.

I will stop with those two basic questions. Why is the government doing this? If it was having a problem, why did it not simply go back to deeming the advances to be income, as had been the case through the long period of practical use of the program?

Second, since the program does not seem to be really saving the government any money anyway, why did it bring it in? There seems to be an offsetting amount of agricultural stabilization money required because of the depressing effect that removal of this program will have on the markets.

• (1510)

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speakėr, when reasoning, one would draw the conclusion that this is not going to have an impact on the financial well-being of the farmers because what he is suggesting is what we take away on the one hand will be given on the other. So I am not sure what his point is.

Mr. Althouse: You should have listened.

Mr. Mazankowski: I did listen very carefully and perhaps you might want to listen to your comments, or reread them, because they do not really make sense in that regard. When you are talking about the financial impact upon the producer, you are saying because—

Mr. Althouse: Once you depress the price, the price is depressed.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, he said what we are taking away in terms of support for the interest-free cash advances the ASA which will in reality not have an over-all bearing on the producer.

I do not share that view and I want the hon. member to know even though he was trying to make a convincing argument I do not believe that rationale.

Mr. Althouse: Its not my argument, its the argument of the farmers who wrote in.

Mr. Mazankowski: Now the hon. member is blaming it on the farmers—

Mr. Althouse: But I believe it.

Mr. Mazankowski: And now he believes it. Well, okay. Now we know where he stands.

What we have here is a budgetary item. It was included in the budget on April 27 which was approved by this House. As a result of that, the legislation that flows from the approval of the budget has to be implemented.

At that time the Minister of Finance outlined the very serious financial situation that Canadians face, the large and growing public debt for which all of us has to bear some responsibility. I know that the members opposite would like to shift the burden and blame on to this particular government which inherited a $200 billion national debt, $200 billion in fiscal year 1984-1985. It has been growing ever since because of the tremendous cost in servicing the debt.

Lest there be any doubt as to how this debt was accumulated let me point out that I came to this House 21 years ago. The last time we had a balanced budget was, I believe, in 1969. There were successive Liberal governments in office at that particular time. We got into office in 1979 and tried to reverse that trend. The NDP and the Liberals kicked us out and since that time, from 1980 to 1984, the debt rose by about $100 billion. That is the legacy we have had to deal with, that is what we are trying to deal with.

We have been more than balancing the budget on government programs. That is for sure. We have a surplus. The hon. member would not understand that. After listening to his rationale for opposing this, I am not sure he would understand it.

As the Minister of Finance pointed out, the debt is accumulating at the rate of $80 million a day or half a billion dollars a week. All Canadians, including agricultural producers, who are taxpayers as well, view this with grave concern. We as members of a government and members of Parliament have to deal with this issue. Everyone is being asked to share in that particular burden.

The other reason that this proposal is being advanced at this time is the fact that the interest-free advances as they are presently in place have had the effect of distorting markets and subsequently have had the effect of lost sales. The impact of that has had the effect of scaling down or even closing oilseed processing facilities and it is to some extent having an impact upon our ability to be a reliable supplier of grains and oilseeds.

You know what happens when Canada's reputation as a reliable supplier of grain and oilseeds becomes tarnished. It takes many years to build up that image of reliability and anything that is done that tampers with that has a tremendous cost not only on markets today but markets in the future.

The result of this had the effect of holding back product for an unreasonable period of time and thereby the loss of sales and markets. As a matter of fact, the 1988-89 crop year was an example where farmers literally held canola off the market for the entire year. The result was lost sales, the closing down of canola processing plants and the scaling back of canola processing plants.

I have a letter—

An Hon. Member: Put it under the Wheat Board.

Mr. Mazankowski: I do not know what that has to do with the Wheat Board. Just because there are some organizations and producers that want the freedom to market their product in the way they desire, certainly the NDP should not take offence at that. In eastern Europe they are making great progress in developing their own freedoms and liberties. These guys would like to go back to the dark ages. That should be a lesson to them. The United Oil Seeds Products, for example, said in a letter to me on October 30, and I quote:

> It is our view that the interest-free advances have distorted markets by allowing farmers the financial strength to hold product off the market for unreasonable periods of time. The 1988-89 crop year was a good example where farmers held canola off the market for the entire year.

This particular canola processing plant has been closed down for eight months. Jobs have been lost, delivery opportunities have been lost for those farmers who want to deliver. These people across the way have the luxury of criticizing everything that we try to do that is constructive. They would rather play politics with this issue. By their stalling and filibustering on this particular bill, they have denied farmers the opportunity to take advantage of the facility of advance payments.

An Hon. Member: Why didn't you answer the question?

Mr. Mazankowski: The hon. member asked me why we are doing this and I am in the process of answering. I know that it disturbs him very much.

The Manitoba Wheat Pool wrote a similar letter to me in February, 1989. They said:

> The Advance Payments for Crops Act has been a major benefit to the producers in the past when the delivery system was taxed to the limit to allow marketable grains into commercial positions.
>
> The delivery opportunities have changed during the past few years and there are generally fairly high opening quotas on oilseeds and within a reasonably short time there has been space to accept deliveries into the system. The crushing industry in western Canada is in a position now to accommodate a sizeable delivery shortly following harvest. The original reasons to have advance payments for the oilseeds has, to some extent, disappeared.
>
> The ability of the producer to get some financing without delivering the product (even though there is space and opportunity to do so) is creating some difficulties for the crushing industry and for the export marketers. Producers, with an advance payment, are holding stocks at the farm hoping to achieve a higher price later in the year. As you may well appreciate, this is shorting both the crushing industry and the export market. In many cases, markets are being missed or lost, never to be recovered.

Those are the reasons. Quite clearly, only 2 per cent of all canola produced in western Canada was covered by an advance. This is too small an amount to substantiate the point. The producer organization is considering changing the marketing system to rectify this problem. The pools have since backed off. That is what I hear.

So, here we are again. The situation, since it has become an issue, is one of to and fro, but the fact of the matter still remains that there has been distortion and dislocation in the market-place. That, together with the fact that this was a budgetary item, is clearly a reason for

this particular initiative to be advanced at this particular time.

I should say as well that the issue of safety nets, stabilization programs and the kinds of support systems we need to support agriculture is something that is going to be considered in a very comprehensive way during the course of the policy review. I would hope that things such as this could be considered at that particular time.

• (1520)

In the final analysis, the idea is to improve the mechanisms in our programs to ensure that producers have the opportunity to rely upon support systems and safety nets while at the same time reading the market signals and making their decisions on that basis; and making their decisions based upon the knowledge that they will have some shield of protection which is really the bottom line in advancing the policy review, particularly in the field of safety nets.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the House ready for the question?

Mr. Althouse: My understanding was that we would handle this section like we do committee of the whole House, since the minister was unable to attend the committee stage, and that a series of questions would, therefore, be permitted.

Mr. Foster: A point of order, Mr. Speaker. I assume that we are on Motion No. 5. I would like to comment on it in light of the minister's remarks.

I was very interested in the Minister of Agriculture's comments in regard to Bill C-36. He talked about agriculture producers being very concerned about debt because the provisions of this bill provide very little financial support, especially at cropping time, and this is being taken away.

My concern is that support is not only being taken away, but the government is taking it away unilaterally. There was an understanding with our trading partners in the United States, with whom the government signed an agreement a year ago, that the support programs and subsidies outlined in that free trade agreement would be reduced and there would be a negotiated reduction.

Clearly, there has been no negotiating in that regard. This is just a straight removal of a major program which is of major benefit to Canadian producers. It provided some $27 million a year, which provided $300 million or $400 million in cash flow for those producers. They are very concerned about their own debt and how they will be able to cope with it with this program removed.

The minister quoted a couple of groups which he thought were supporting his position. If we look at the letter sent to the Prime Minister on October 2, we see that some 20 farm groups across the country are opposing the government's position. The government majority in the legislative committee on Bill C-36 refused to allow them all to make their presentations. Keystone Agricultural Producers, the United Grain Growers, the Flax Council of Canada, the Ontario Corn Producers, the Ontario Soybean Producers, the Manitoba Pulse Producers, oppose this proposed legislation by the government.

When the minister is quoting who supports it, he selectively forgets who is opposing it. He mentioned the canola producers in the prairies. I would just like, for his information, to quote a letter from Max Pond, President of the Manitoba Canola Producers, dated October 20, when this bill was being debated, in which he says: "We would like to encourage your continued support for the reinstatement of interest-free provisions on the cash advance program. Without reinstatement of the said provision, the program holds little benefit for Canadian farmers. With respect to oilseeds, the interest-free cash advance has contributed to orderly marketing".

This directly opposes what the minister said just a few minutes ago.

The letter goes on: "It contributes to orderly delivery by moving the pressure on producers to sell at harvest at a time when prices tend to turn downwards.

Further, one of our board members happens to be the person responsible for administering the Canola Cash Advance Program offered under the Prairie Canola Growers' Council. His calculations show that with the fee which must be charged to cover the cost of administering the program, the true cost of the advance would be prime plus at least 1 per cent to 2 per cent because the administration fee is a fixed amount no matter the size of the loan".

The shorter the period for which the loan is held and the smaller the amount borrowed, the higher the actual interest rate becomes, making it more economical for farmers under those circumstances to borrow directly from a lending institution. As a result, the cash advance will lose all usefulness.

Clearly, the Canola Producers from Manitoba and other areas are opposed to this, as are practically every other group.

One area that the minister has not dealt with, and I do not know whether he has really focused on it, is the importance of improving the value of the crop harvested. The Ontario Corn Producers have calculated that the cost-benefit ratio is 15 to one. For instance, in 1987-88 they estimate that for the cost of the program, a little over $1 million, the benefit to producers was some $16 million.

Obviously, this is a good program that the government should not be cutting out at this time and I would hope that the minister will still change his mind. It is a program that has great advantage to it. Our American friends have not indicated that they are going to do away with their similar program. Surely, if this is going to be negotiated away, it should not be at a time when net farm incomes are dropping anywhere from 20 to 38 per cent as they are in various parts of the country this year.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I have to bring to the attention of members, that some members have spoken already. We are on report stage. Each member has 10 minutes to speak. The hon. member for Algoma has spoken twice now. I can recognize the hon. member for Mission—Coquitlam and then we should go on to the next grouping of motions for all those who wish to speak. We will then put the question and then go into third reading. Every member will then be able to make a speech again.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, while it was not a House order, I understand that there was an understanding among House leaders that hon. members would be allowed to put questions similar to a committee of the whole process and that I would respond to them. I am certainly prepared to do that but I am at your beck and call, Sir.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I must have unanimous consent. If I have unanimous consent then I will go along with the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, in response to the hon. member, I would submit that these amendments will improve the orderly marketing of agriculture commodities in Canada. Farmers will still have the ability to have advance payments.

As a matter of fact, the amounts will be increased. They will be able to make those arrangements to carry crops from harvest time to delivery. In fact, the improvements with regard to this flexibility and the security would provide greater opportunity to merchandise their product in such a way that they could use this facility in a proper fashion.

I think it is important that the decisions are made on market signals and sound business principles rather than simply on the basis of managing a financial portfolio. They will still be able to use the provision to help smooth out the seasonal price fluctuations. They will still be able to use this facility for those farmers who want to prepay their fertilizer bills before the end of the year. They will still have the guarantee. The guarantee level is being increased to 98 per cent from 90 per cent, including the interest.

• (1530)

My sense is, quite frankly, that the system will be improved and there will be a built in discipline. Interest rates will be negotiated at anywhere from one to three percentage points below prime. Producers now want this facility to be used so that they can get on with the business of running their farms.

Let us talk about support for the agriculture industry. In 1984-85 this federal government committed $2.8 billion to Canadian agriculture. In 1985-86 it was $3 billion. In 1986-87 it was $4.4 billion. In 1987-88 it was $6 billion and in 1988-89 it was $4.5 billion, for a total of roughly $20.8 billion provided by the federal government to support agriculture; for drought, crop insurance, dairy subsidy, Canadian Wheat Board losses, advance payments and the agricultural stabilization program.

When we look at what has been done to the grain and oilseeds sector for that same period of time, 1984-85 to

1988–89, a total of $11.777 billion, almost $12 billion, was provided to the grain and oilseeds sector.

With regard to supporting agriculture, I just looked at the editorial page of the Ontario Farm Women's Network News Letter of June, 1989, where it was pointed out that it was rather unbelievable that the money spent by the provincial government of Ontario on agriculture was no more than 1.25 per cent of the total budget. Of the total budget, Mr. Speaker, 1.25 per cent. The hon. member will agree that agriculture is pretty important to the province of Ontario. It is, but it certainly is not a priority with that provincial government.

In the last year, 1987–88, the federal government poured $2.1 billion into the province of Saskatchewan. The Saskatchewan government put in $166 million. Federal government support was 93 per cent while Saskatchewan's was 7 per cent.

In 1987–88 the Manitoba government put in $72 million while the federal government put in almost $800 million. The ratio was 92 per cent federal, 8 per cent provincial.

Alberta put in $445 million while the federal government put in $1.3 billion for a ratio of 25 per cent versus 75 per cent in favour of the federal government.

Those are not small picayune figures. Here we are talking about a measure that is less than $20 million compared to billions and billions of dollars that we have poured into agriculture to support the family farm, the rural communities and everything associated with agriculture. It showed up in the 1988 realized net income which reached an all–time high in spite of all the difficulties.

Alberta, for example, exceeded $1 billion for the first time in history. Saskatchewan was the highest at over $1 billion since 1981. Quebec averaged over $900 million in realized net income between the period 1985 to 1988. Ontario achieved a realized net income in agriculture of $1.4 billion, the highest record ever achieved by the agricultural industry of Ontario.

To suggest that this government is drawing back and withholding support for agriculture is absolute nonsense because the facts and figures belie that. I will challenge anyone to argue with these figures because the facts are clearly there. We have supported agriculture in an unprecedented fashion and the farmers of Canada know it. But there comes a time when there has to be a little bit of pulling back, a little bit of belt–tightening and, like all other good citizens, we are asking the farmers to share in that process. Now what could be more fair than that?

What the farmers are asking today is for us to get on with the business of governing and get this piece of legislation passed so that they can get on and make the cash advances, hopefully before Christmas. The opposition have seized upon this opportunity to try to make political hay. They have not hurt us, they are only hurting themselves and the farmers of Canada. I would ask that they cease and desist and get on with the business of passing this legislation.

Ms. Langan: Mr. Speaker, I will try to be very explicit in my question to the minister. Hopefully it can be answered with a simple yes or no. I have before me a letter from the B.C. Vegetable Marketing Commission. In that letter the commission says that the APFC program is very useful. However, the elimination of interest–free advance payments will more than likely render the entire program inadequate to meet the producers' requirements.

Can the minister advise the B.C. Vegetable Marketing Commission, which has expressed this grave concern, if he is planning to eliminate the interest–free advance payment plan which would be devastating to that industry?

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member can answer that question herself. It would be provided for in this legislation.

Mr. Hovdebo: Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the farmers will be glad to know they are doing so well. I found it very difficult to believe that the Minister of Agriculture is suggesting that this advance payments program, if there is interest charged on it, can take the place of an interest–free program.

I am going to use canola as an example because it is something I know is a major crop in the minister's home area. In the canola industry right now there is enough canola in place, backed up, unpriced, to last well into January or February.

The farmers in my area and in the minister's area are delivering canola at the present price of $5. There is no guarantee that within the next three months there is going to be any increase in canola. Even if the advance had been in place, those farmers could not afford to pay the interest, prime plus one or two or whatever the government decides to put on that, over a period of time on the hope that maybe the price will go up enough in the next couple of months. Only if canola was under the Wheat Board, where the price would level off for the

year, would it be possible to do that at that particular time. It cannot be done under this present system.

While we are talking about money, two years ago the government backed off of the two-price wheat system at the rate of $270 million a year, about one-tenth of what it costs to keep the advance payments interest free. Why is some of that money not being used? Why is a portion of that money not used to allow this, at least for this year?

We have legislation that is in place that could be used. The government is withholding that money now under legislation that is in place and could be used. I know the minister tries to blame the opposition for this not being through, but he does have the instrument by which the money could be sent out. Why not use some of this money and let it go?

If the minister wants to talk about changing the legislation, next year is a good enough time to do it. Pass it now but let them have their money when they need it under the circumstances which they have planned for.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, in response to the hon. member, I think that one of the reasons that the back-up in canola deliveries is as he described is the fact that this legislation has not been available and has not been able to be utilized by the producers. He said the legislation could be used. Yes, it could be used if the members opposite had got on with the business of allowing the bill to go through.

Mr. Hovdebo: Interest free right now.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, I know they do not support the bill, but that is no reason to hold the farmers to ransom and to hijack the farmers. The fact of the matter is that this provision was passed when the budget was passed and it has to be implemented. The back-up is caused—and I know my hon. friend will take issue with this—I am sure, in large part by virtue of the fact that they saw fit, and it is their right to do so, to withhold passage of this legislation, to delay it. I think that is regrettable, particularly because after the budget had been passed, it became a *fait accompli* and it was going to become a fact of life.

• (1540)

They should not have misled farmers into believing that there would have been some deviation from that. Notice was served in April that this provision was going to be withdrawn. We had hoped that through the co-operation of members opposite we would be able to get this bill through, hopefully before the end of June, and if not the end of June at least by the end of September. They chose not to and so we have this kind of chaotic condition.

The hon. member never listens. He talked about the fact that farmers could not afford prime plus 1, 2 or 3 per cent. I said just the opposite. I said it would be prime less 1 to 3 per cent. That is what we are really talking about.

He wants to talk about canola being under the Canadian Wheat Board. That is another issue. It is an issue for another day. I know what the hon. member's position on that would be. I am not sure what the position of the producers is. It varies from area to area and from year to year.

I know that hon. members opposite are opposed to this legislation and they certainly have every right to oppose it, but I would plead with them to allow us to get on with the job so that the facility that is enshrined in here can be used and the farmers will be able to take advantage of it.

Mr. Ferguson: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the minister a question. In view of the fact that he has said that the opposition parties have held up this bill, I think we should follow this through in sequence. The original bill was tabled, I believe, on June 26 or 27. The budget was brought in in late April. The bill had to be withdrawn, as he is well aware. This particular bill, Bill C-36, was re-introduced in the House on October 3 and that is when the debate commenced.

Mr. Robichaud: So it couldn't be passed in September, could it?

Mr. Ferguson: There is no way it could have been passed in September. As a matter of fact, five months after the budget he saw fit to introduce the bill in a form that they felt could be accepted by the House. Consequently, the delay was not caused by the opposition

parties. We are within a period of less than two months and we are going to vote on final reading this afternoon. He certainly cannot suggest to us that it was held up in committee either because it went through committee very expeditiously in view of the content of the bill.

The soybean harvest in Ontario was well under way before the bill was even introduced on October 3. The corn harvest was well under way and the prices dropped because the bill was not there to even out the flow of grain to market. Soybean producers had to sell their crop in order to get cash in hand. Will the minister consider compensating those farmers for the loss they took when they had to harvest the beans at that low price? I think the price has recovered by about 40 cents a bushel since October 3.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, I always enjoy the hon. member because he has had a lot of experience in this House. I would not want him to leave the impression that there has not been a willingness to negotiate and facilitate the passage of this bill. He will know and his Whip will know that we have made several attempts.

The reason there were delays is because there were some improvements made to the bill. There were several attempts made, all of which were aborted because the members opposite wanted to have a little fun with this thing. This bill could have been passed a month ago. It is not a complex bill, it is fairly straightforward. It was introduced on September 27, I am told. Had there been a willingness and a desire to assist the producers about whom he is now so concerned, I am sure his generosity would have prevailed and we would have been able to do something.

Unfortunately, we are at the stage now where it is too late to consider that. I hope that we can get this bill passed as quickly as possible. I hope that he will have some influence on his friends in the other place and that they will not foot drag so we can get this legislation in place. It is my sense that while a lot of producers would rather have interest free cash advances, they are now interested in getting this legislation in place so that they can use it to full advantage and it will be used to fuller advantage because of the flexibility and improvements that we have put in it.

Mr. Althouse: Mr. Speaker, during his earlier comments the Minister of Agriculture made an excellent case for his use of this particular legislation as a means to keep farm prices down so that processing plants could remain open. He quoted a couple of processing operators who he indicated were in favour of the removal of the interest-free cash advances prior to it being done, which was proposed in the budget of last April.

Could he tell us, in the spirit of consultation which is supposed to be the spirit in which this government entered office, whether in fact he had any meetings in this regard with the farm organizations? Could he report what they told him? In the letters that we have received during the course of this legislation being before committee, we have not found any farm organization that has approved of doing away with the interest-free cash advance. We were only able to call three before us because of the time constraints imposed on us by the Conservative majority in the committee, but we did not hear from any groups that were in favour of the proposal.

Who did he consult with prior to the budget proposition and what farm groups, if any, were behind it? We know that the processors appear to like it because they are hoping it will keep farm prices down to the point where they can have a margin to stay in business and show a good profit processing. What farmers liked it?

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member attempts to mislead again. He said that the only people whom I quoted or referred to were a couple of processors. I referred to one processor; it was United Oilseeds in Lloydminster, and that happens to be owned by the United Grain Growers which is a co-operative, I think. The other one was from the Manitoba Pool. That is a co-operative too, is it not?

Mr. Gustafson: As far as I know.

Mr. Mazankowski: Where does he get off with this nonsense of me listening only to the processors. I thought that the Manitoba Wheat Pool was a co-operative organization composed of farmers and I thought the United Grain Growers was a farmer co-operative organization. I am not sure how the hon. member gets off trying to suggest that all I am listening to are processors.

Mr. Althouse: You're making processor arguments, not farmer arguments.

Mr. Mazankowski: Oh, now, Mr. Speaker, they are making processor arguments, not farmer arguments.

Mr. Althouse: The processing arm was the people you were listening to, right?

Mr. Mazankowski: Oh, I see.

Mr. Althouse: Well, read the letter again.

Mr. Mazankowski: I guess he is now suggesting that farmers, because they do not haul to canola crushers, are not interested in processors. Is that right? Is that what the hon. member is saying? Is that the new NDP farm policy?

Mr. Althouse: The question was: "What farmers?" It's lowering farm prices. You have admitted it's lowering farm prices.

Mr. Mazankowski: Okay, now we are getting into the second part of the question. I will respond to that.

The hon. member asked what farmers we consulted with before we brought this budgetary proposal down. When you bring down a budgetary proposal, you do not consult. I think that has been a tradition and part and parcel of our parliamentary democracy.

Mr. Althouse: That was not what you said when you came into power.

Mr. Mazankowski: The budget was presented; the budget has been ratified. This is legislation that is flowing from the budget.

The hon. member said there are no farmers who want to pay interest. I agree, that is probably correct. But I will tell you what farmers want. They want to see interest rates come down, they want to see the deficit come down and they want to see us tackle the national debt.

The hon. member opposite has been around here a long time but, boy, when it comes to exercising responsibility, they are here hollering in the House every day: "spend, spend, spend". Today we are at the stage where we cannot spend, spend, spend any more and even farmers are now being asked to bear a portion of the burden. That is what we are doing in a very modest way here. In addition, we hope that through this we may remove some of the distortions and dislocations that take place in the market-place.

What farmers are wanting and expecting of a government is sound and proper fiscal management to get the Canadian books of account into shape. That is what we are trying to do and we are asking everyone to co-operate and to assist in this process by sharing that burden. I am sure the hon. member would agree with that.

• (1550)

Mr. Foster: Mr. Speaker, I was interested in the comments of the Minister of Agriculture. There is one concern which he can perhaps clear up just by being Deputy Prime Minister.

A lot of farm groups suggest, as did the letter I read this afternoon from the Manitoba Canola Producers and the letter which we received from the Ontario Corn Producers, that the interest rates well may be 2 per cent above prime. The minister has talked about them being 1 or 2 per cent below prime. I wonder if he could give the House a guarantee that the Department of Finance and the Department of Agriculture will ensure that the resulting loan guarantee will result in rates below prime by 1 or 2 per cent.

That clearly would be a significant step because it would provide to farmers using the program some significant advantage, using the power and the financial resources of the Government of Canada, whereas if it is 2 per cent above prime, if the person is in a reasonably good financial position he can probably borrow at the bank at that rate. He is certainly not going to have to put up $2 in security by way of crop in the bin in order to get $1 loan through a producer organization. If the minister could clarify that it would be very helpful.

He talked about the canola plant, I believe it was owned by the United Grain Growers in Saskatchewan, that was supporting the bill. In fact, the United Grain Growers were one of the organizations which wrote the Prime Minister an urgent letter in early October demanding that the government abandon the bill and let the funds which had already been approved by Parliament go forward. I would be very surprised if that canola plant was really that concerned.

I note as well that the minister's colleague and counterpart in the province of Manitoba, Mr. Findlay, wrote the minister a letter dated September 19 urging that the advance payment be provided to farmers, and

stating that the cash flow problems currently felt by Manitoba producers could be alleviated by this bill.

The last point I want to put to the minister is the one made by Cliff Leach, the president of the Ontario Corn Producers, in a letter to the Minister of Grains and Oilseeds just after he spoke in the House on October 4 in which, besides refuting most of the points that the minister had made in the House when he intervened in the debate, he puts the question about which I think all members are concerned.

He said:

> Finally we must repeat our underlying criticism that Bill C-36 represents a reduction in federal support for Canadian farmers when no commitment has been made to reduce comparable assistance elsewhere—and specifically in U.S. Farm Bill loan provisions available to American farmers.

I think that is the concern of a lot of producers, not just the advance payments bill, Bill C-36, but the whole list of items—I believe there were six—that were in the budget on which action has been taken by the government that were listed as subsidies in the FTA.

The Americans have not made any reduction in their agricultural support programs whereas on the Canadian side we have about six, everything from reduction in crop insurance to doing away with the two-price wheat system, a significant number of which we have moved on. This one is quite important because the Americans have a loan program whereby they provide interest for farm stored wheat and major crops. We seem to be doing away with these unilaterally rather than negotiating them bilaterally under the subsidy code provisions of the FTA. Since this question was put by the president of the Ontario Corn Producers, I wonder if the Minister might respond to that question put in the letter to the Minister of Grains and Oilseeds.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the hon. member because it does provide me with an opportunity to correct an impression that I left with my friend in the NDP when I may have said 1 to 3 per cent below prime. That is not correct. It is probably 3 per cent below the current going rates.

For example, the Canadian Wheat Board does borrow at a rate below prime. We think that we will be able to get an almost similar rate although there may be some small charge for administration handling. I apologize and regret that very much. We are basically looking at 2 to 3 percentage points below the going rate of interest which would be roughly in the area of prime or slightly above.

The hon. member raises a point about what support programs from the agriculture industry are the best. It is obvious that our grain stabilization program and our crop insurance program and some of our agricultural stabilization programs have been insufficient to meet the tumultuous period of time we have just gone through. That is precisely why we are looking at a new crop insurance program. That is why we are looking at the issue of safety nets to see whether we can design safety nets that will be more permanent, more reliable and more predictable and that will be in place on a permanent basis rather than on the basis of having to design them on an ad hoc basis.

I think the farmers want to make their plans with some degree of confidence. They want to plant their crops knowing that they can make the decisions reading market signals, weather patterns and trends. At the same time they want to make sure there is some kind of safety net, some kind of shield that will be there so that they can make those kinds of decisions.

That is our ultimate goal and objective. That work is proceeding and we hope very much that during the course of the comprehensive agriculture review that we are currently undertaking we will be able to come up with some programs that will be more appropriately and more fittingly designed to meet the 1990s and the 21st century based upon some of the experiences that we have encountered over the last four or five years.

I do not think there is any secret in the fact that the last four or five years, in terms of drought conditions for example, were probably equal to or worse than the 1930s. I think it really speaks very well of the producers of this country who have been able to survive. I think it demonstrates a tremendous degree of resilience that they have been able to survive this very difficult period with, of course, the aid of governments.

Ad hoc programs are very difficult to design and very difficult to administer. Usually you end up not pleasing everybody. You end up with inequities from one region to the other, from one township to the other, from one county to the other. We are trying to overcome that if we possibly can.

We hope that in the course of the review we will be able to deal with this issue with everybody around the table trying to sort this out in order that we can come up with programs that will be properly cost-shared and will be fiscally sound but permanent, reliable and effective.

The hon. member says that this is part of the free trade agreement. I am not sure how long we are going to have to be around here to get off that kick. There is nothing in this that is being directed by the free trade agreement whatsoever. We are our own sovereign country. We do what we have to do to meet the challenges and the conditions of the agricultural community.

• (1600)

One would ask whether the $20.7 billion or $20.8 billion that we have poured into agriculture as a federal government over the last four or five years was dictated to by the free trade agreement or not.

I suppose the hon. member is now trying to say that if we reduce that by $100 he is going to blame it on the free trade agreement. We did it because we had to respond to a need. Farmers know that we have responded to the need. Farmers also know, if you really sit down and talk about it, that this government has been pretty generous to them.

The hon. member reads figures just as well as I do, so he will know that in 1988, in terms of realized net income, it was the best year that farmers ever had. I know that there are difficulties and there are areas that are hurting. I know that.

I serve a rural constituency just like the hon. members opposite, but figures do not lie. The fact of the matter is that there are pockets where the hurt is substantive, while there are other areas in which things are going a little better. That is not to say that everything is well.

I am not trying to paint a rosy picture for agriculture. What I am saying is that we are trying to deal with this with the limited resources we have available. We are trying to respond effectively and we are trying to respond with some degree of sincerity. The last thing that farmers want is a return to the 22 per cent, 23 per cent and 24 per cent interest rates that were the hallmark of the party and the government that member was a part of.

Mr. Milliken: You are not serious.

Mr. Mazankowski: I am serious. I will tell you—

Mr. Gauthier: And they are serious.

Mr. Mazankowski: I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, that when it comes to difficulties on the farm 97 per cent of all the farmers who are in difficulty today are in difficulty because of the 23 per cent and 24 per cent interest rates which that government brought about and inflation that heads up to 15 per cent. The inflationary psychology was on a treadmill.

Mr. Milliken: Absolute nonsense.

Mr. Mazankowski: These guys say it is absolute nonsense. That goes to show you how much they know about farming. We are trying to avoid a repetition of the disasters inflicted upon the farm community by the Liberal government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Althouse: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to hear that the Minister of Agriculture and the Deputy Prime Minister are attempting to head off a disaster with high interest rates as we saw in the early 1980s. I note that we are now a full four percentage points above United States interest rates, something that even in those terrible days we did not achieve for very long.

Consistent with his arguments about attempting to keep down inflation, would he advise the House what his government's intention is with regard to the amendment for each of the two acts that are being dealt with and put forward by myself to limit the amount of loans to just $50,000 from the current $30,000?

That way they would go up from $30,000 to $50,000, as a means of combating this inflationary psychology. It would also be a means of limiting the amount of liability the Government of Canada will have basically to the banks in this country. Given the opportunity of turning a quarter of a million dollars of their own liability on to the Government of Canada, lending institutions will encourage some of their customers whose accounts are getting a bit shaky to go and take out the maximum cash advance for grain. That way, if they should happen to fall into bankruptcy or receivership, the government will be held responsible and not the bank.

Can the minister tell us whether members on the government side will be supporting a more modest kind

of approach to move from maximum loans of $30,000 up to only $50,000 instead of the $250,000 million that was originally in the bill?

In keeping with his espoused attempts at abating the inflation psychology, certainly it seems to me that one of the more inflationary things a government could do would be to move this ceiling on loans from $30,000 up to $250,000 all in one step.

We do not know from the witnesses we were able to call just how many loans hit the ceiling, but from the witnesses that we were able to hear it appeared that very few people actually applied for the maximum loan.

We were unable to get the Canadian Wheat Board or the Canadian Wheat Board Advisory Committee to come because government members refused to allow us to hear from those witnesses. Therefore we do not know what proportion of the population using cash advances went to the maximum. We were told by the witnesses we heard that a very small percentage indeed took the maximum of $30,000.

I repeat my question to the minister: If he is so interested in abating the inflationary psychology, why is the government proposing to move from a maximum of $30,000 to a maximum of $250,000 for these loans?

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, I thought the hon. member's whole purpose of engaging in this debate was to point out the fact that farmers needed money to pay off their bills and to smooth out the markets of their commodities when prices were low. In that way they could take an advance based upon the market signals and on basic sound business principles.

Now I hear him saying that they do not need too much money; they just need about as much as he would prescribe. I do not share that same philosophical view.

I do not believe that farmers are irresponsible. I believe that farmers are good business managers. I think that they can best make the decision whether they should borrow $30,000, $60,000 or $100,000. I would leave it in the hands of the producer.

I have watched in my lifetime a dramatic change occur in the agricultural industry. As one born and raised on a farm, I have witnessed the transition from horsepower to mechanical power. If there is one thing that stands out in my mind about the agricultural industry in Canada it is its ability to adapt to change.

The reason we are successful in agriculture today and have been able to survive as one of the leading agricultural countries in the world is that our farmers have been able to adapt to change. When farmers adapt to change it means, at least to me, that they are sound business managers.

They are good business managers and they can make the best decisions. I would rather leave it in their hands so that they can diversify and use this for a multiple series of crops. They will make the decisions. We will provide the tools with which they can make those decisions, and I will rely upon their good sense and sound judgment.

Mr. Hovdebo: Mr. Speaker, I want to get back to the need for money by farmers right now.

The minister makes the point that the decision was passed in the budget, but that does not etch it in stone. It is not necessary for the government to take that position, continue with it, and run with it.

The government has changed its mind before on issues that have been in the budget and passed in the budget. I point to one particular example, that is, the deindexing of the seniors' pensions which was brought forward in *The Budget Papers* and was changed when the government shifted its position. This was not too long ago.

Why not pass this bill on to the Senate but use the old bill to get the money out to farmers now? Let it go to the Senate, and you will have your bill for next year which is a logical time to get it. I ask the minister: Why not use this approach, get the money out to farmers now on the old bill, and use the new bill next year?

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, we have been through that argument before. I have tried to lay out the reasons for the need to pass this bill at this particular time. It is a budgetary provision.

The member says that governments have changed their minds before. I am sure that opposition parties would have wished they had changed their minds.

• (1610)

I remember in the budget of 1979 when we were in government that we proposed a modest 18–cent a gallon increase in the price of gasoline. The NDP and the

Liberals voted together to defeat that particular measure and the price of gasoline went up.

An Hon. Member: You raised it $1.

Mr. Mazankowski: Gasoline went up over $1 a gallon and we accumulated an additional burden of debt to the tune of about $100 billion plus during that period of time. The only reason we are accumulating it now is that we are paying the interest on your debt, which we cannot afford. That is what is wrong. We are still paying for the litany of mismanagement caused by that government and supported by that gang over there.

An Hon. Member: From $68 million to $200 billion.

Mr. Mazankowski: I know the hon. member for Prince Albert is genuine and sincere when he makes his plea. I am sorry to disappoint him. We have to move with this legislation at this particular time. I will go to the extent of telling his constituency that he fought a good and lofty fight in the process.

Mr. Foster: Mr. Speaker, I listened with great care to the genial Minister of Agriculture. It occurred to me that he is having great pressure from groups in Saskatchewan and across the prairies. Groups like the Canadian Wheat Board Advisory Committee have been pointing out that a lot of crop this year is of low quality due to wet periods during harvesting. A lot of it cannot be delivered because of the demand for the lower quality wheats, barley and so on. That is a very important argument.

The other group in Saskatchewan is the Saskatchewan Municipal Association that has been doing studies which show a very deteriorating situation with regard to loss of farms, farm foreclosures, and debts that cannot be serviced. This was pointed out dramatically in the annual meeting of the Saskatchewan Pool in which it said that at least $500 million will be required before spring planting next year. That has been reinforced by a letter from the premier of the province saying that additional funds would be required.

It seems to me the advance payment money would be one way to put funds into the hands of producers on an interim basis. I do understand that there has be some kind of emergency funding arrangement for this purpose.

Assuming that no permanent arrangement with regard to additional funding is made, I am wondering if the minister has considered responding to those requests from Garf Stevenson, President of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool or Premier Grant Devine as these advance payments would provide several hundred millions of dollars of cash flow at harvest time.

Mr. Mazankowski: I hope I understand the purport of the hon. member's question correctly. Is he saying that if we were to bring forth interest–free farm cash advances that that would satisfy the premier of the province of Saskatchewan and Mr. Stevenson, the president of the Wheat Pool? I sort of gathered that that is what he was trying to say. He may want to clarify that a little later.

He also said that farmers have grain of poor quality, and there is not much market demand for it at this particular time. That is all the more reason why this legislation should be moved forward quickly, because they will have the opportunity to take advantage of this instrument to take out advances and in the process improve their cash flow.

He also left the impression that this instrument was a tool to finance long–term debt. It was never intended to be that. It is intended to be a marketing tool, to use the facility of a cash advance, to improve your cash flow, and to arrange your marketing so that you can maximize your returns. That is what this issue is for.

It is not to finance long–term debt or intermediate term debt. It is a marketing tool. It is there to facilitate orderly marketing and to ensure that the producer gets the best market return possible. I regret the hon. member is leaving the impression that if this particular piece of legislation were to be withdrawn all would be well.

We know that there are still problems in western Canada and in other parts of Canada in the agricultural community. The premier of the province of Saskatchewan represents his farmers very well and makes representations to us on a regular basis when he considers there is a need. Of course, we will be responding to his request. We will be analysing and assessing the magnitude of the difficulties, whether they be drought or other conditions, as we have in the past.

I want to assure my hon. friend that our record speaks louder than words. In the process we will examine the extent. I know that last year about this time everyone was screaming and hollering about the need for drought payments.

We will not get statistics in from the crop insurance people until the end of January, February or March. It is very difficult to try to make guestimates of the extent of any losses because when you do you sometimes miss the mark.

Obviously, we will be monitoring the situation very closely and responding to the premier in some detail indicating how we intend to monitor the situation. We will seek his co-operation as he will ours. Once again, no one in the province of Saskatchewan speaks louder and clearer and with a more articulate voice than the premier of the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Foster: Mr. Speaker, I think everyone in the House is aware that this is not long-term financing of farm debt. It only exacerbates the situation if the government responds in a positive way to the Sask Pool and to the premier in providing assistance later this winter or early next spring.

This $400 million or $500 million worth of interest-free loans is not available, and that is why the whole situation is being exacerbated this fall. Clearly, we have heard the cries from the Canadian Wheat Board, from the municipal leaders, and from the pools. I suppose that if the minister continues to press this legislation through it only puts that much more pressure on him from the premier of Saskatchewan. He has already outlined that and of course we are very familiar with it from the 1986 provincial election when the demand came in at 6 a.m.

I just think that it does worsen the situation for these producers, especially at harvest time when we have not, apparently from what the Prime Minister said today, been able to conclude new shipments and agreements for the sale of wheat to Russia. The situation is aggravated by the loss of this provision.

• (1620)

The minister would agree that in the negotiations over the subsidy code there was a list of subsidies which was not subject to the countervail. Most producers, including farm producers, soybean producers and the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, only three groups allowed to speak before the committee, could not understand why we were destroying this unilaterally when it would lend itself in the negotiation of a subsidy code with the United States to giving away certain support programs through agriculture well before negotiations had started to take place.

It is my understanding that they are not going to take place until 1991. I would say to the minister that removing this is a very unfortunate thing at this time. It is his decision and his difficulty, perhaps with his good friend the premier of Saskatchewan, because it will only exacerbate pressure for special interim payments at a much earlier time than might have been necessary because of the level and quality of crops in the prairies this summer.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Does the hon. Minister of Agriculture have a reply?

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, I will reply because the hon. member made reference to the first special Canadian Grains Program and to a telephone call that occurred in the middle of the night. I want to say this to you and to other members of the House who may not have been here at that time: there was no one who was more disappointed about the federal government coming up with a special Canadian Grains Program than members of the Liberal party. It pulled the rug right from under them. They tried to distort the program by suggesting it was a loan. They wanted to know whether it was new money or old money or whether it was phoney money. It was hilarious to watch them.

Mr. Gustafson: Their old leader told them to sell their own grain. They were used to that.

Mr. Mazankowski: That's right. They were used to that because they did have a leader who told farmers what to do with their wheat.

This has nothing to do with the subsidy code. The hon. member keeps insisting that he has to drag the trade agreement into this issue. He has absolutely no basis upon which to make that statement at all. This has absolutely nothing to do with it whatsoever.

We have a gentleman across here who purports to speak for agriculture. He fails to realize that the agricultural community is very heavily reliant upon the export industry. Some 50 per cent of our agricultural market receipts are achieved through the export market. We are a world player in the export market. We have been

caught in the crossfire of a price war between the European Community and the United States.

It was the Prime Minister of this country who brought the issue of agriculture to the top of the agenda in the GATT proceedings to deal with this debilitating situation that was destroying the export oriented industry of agriculture in Canada. What we see now is the attention of all agriculture producing nations directed toward dealing with the gradual reduction of trade distorting subsidies, which incidentally in world terms total somewhere between $250 billion and $275 billion.

Quite frankly, if we are going to be asked as a trading nation to pay our share of those dues, we cannot stay in that business. It is incumbent upon us to work together with other agriculture producing nations to bring about a gradual reduction of the trade distorting subsidies that have played havoc on a very important segment of the Canadian agricultural industry.

The hon. member speaks out of both sides of his mouth. The fact of the matter is we have to ensure that our export oriented industry and our domestic oriented industry are fairly treated. That is the kind of balance we are trying to achieve.

It is worthy to discuss this issue on an intellectually honest basis, but when he keeps throwing red herrings are being thrust across the floor, bringing the subsidy code into this particular issue, it does not speak well of the hon. member. He and I came to this House at the same time. We have enjoyed each other's company, but there are times when he lectures me and I have to lecture him. Today it is my turn to lecture him.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

The next motions are Motions Nos. 7 and 10.

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie) moved:

Motion No. 7

That Bill C–36 be amended in Clause 7 by striking out lines 33 and 34 at page 5 and substituting the following therefor:

"(a) not exceed the lesser of $50,000 if there is one shareholder, partner or member, as the case may be, and such amount as the Minister may determine;

(b) not exceed the lesser of $100,000 if there are two or more shareholders, partners or members, as the case may be, and such amount as the Minister may determine;

(c) not exceed the lesser of $150,000 if there are three shareholders, partners or members, as the case may be, and such amount as the Minister may determine."

Motion No. 10

That Bill C–36 be amended in Clause 16 by striking out line 30 at page 9 and substituting the following therefor:

"shall not exceed

(a) $50,000 if there is one shareholder, partner or member, as the case may be;

(b) $100,000 if there are two or more shareholders, partners or members, as the case may be;

(c) $150,000 if there are three shareholders, partners or members, as the case may be."

He said: Mr. Speaker, I have proposed these amendments. They occur in two places, but I think it is suitable that we debate them both at the same time since we are amending two separate bills and the two different motions in effect put the same amendment to each part of the acts that we are amending.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Motions Nos. 7 and 10 are in order and will be debated together, with a vote on Motion No. 7 applying to Motion No. 10.

Mr. Althouse: Mr. Speaker, my reason for putting this motion forward stems in part from what we heard in committee. We were only able to hear from three farm witnesses, but we found that from the experiences of those witnesses very few users of the cash advance system when it was interest–free ever took the maximum loan which under the old act was $30,000 in each case.

My colleagues and I in this party believe there is no need to send out signals that induce inflationary psychology. We think that the $30,000 has been in place for a number of years and, if there is to be an increase, we think $50,000 will be adequate for almost every user of the program at this date.

I submit that if $30,000 was adequate for virtually all of the users when $30,000 was available interest–free, surely virtually no one will ever ask for a loan above the $50,000 that we propose here. We think this is a consistent and responsible kind of motion to put. If the

government were serious about its fight against inflationary psychology which it cites over and over again, it will be supportive of this motion. I heartily accept their approval and await their "yeas" when the vote is called.

Mr. Foster: Mr. Speaker, I think our main concern with this bill is the removal of the interest support provided with it. We have outlined to the government the tremendous losses that will occur to the industry, not only in cash flow for producers but in income to farmers. If the experience of the corn producers is indicative of the entire industry, in many cases you get as high as 15 times effective cash cost benefit from the money invested. There is a big mistake being made there.

• (1630)

I do not know how the Minister of Agriculture can do anything but look at the Canada–U.S. Free Trade Agreement, see advance payments in that and similar advance payments interest–support programs in the U.S., and say it has nothing to do with the free trade deal. It will have nothing to do with the negotiations for the removal of subsidies because we will have removed our subsidy. We will have removed the cash advance program. So, if we are trying to negotiate a subsidy code with the Americans, and we have already removed it back in 1989 and the negotiation will probably take place in 1991, then they will say, "We are not interested in negotiating that because you have already taken it away from your farmers".

The two–price wheat, the support for the At and East rate, and at least a half dozen other things, were either removed in the removed by unilateral action of the government, such as the two–price wheat system was back in August, 1988. The farm groups are concerned about the loss of the support programs, such as advance payments, crop insurance, and At and East support program, but they cannot imagine that any government would be so naive as to give these things away except in the course of a negotiation. If support programs are going to be cut, there must be some way to do it without giving it away unilaterally before the negotiations even begin.

The NDP member has outlined a division of the support that the government has set down increasing the amount. We have no complaint about support. We think we should have larger support. The $250,000 is a very high limit. On the other hand, it is hard to know because legislation tends not to get amended and $50,000 might seem to be adequate at this time but may not be adequate in future years if higher prices prevail for crops such as corn and soybeans. We think the amendment proposed will cause a certain amount of restriction, perhaps not very great at this stage but it might at some time in the future. We do not like to see government programs limited but our main objection to the bill is the removal of the interest–free portion of the advance payments as is proposed by the government.

My colleague from Lambton—Middlesex has looked at the whole question of why the bill is not passed or why the bill has taken so long. I would like before we arrive at the time allocated by the House for the vote, to allow him to outline those provisions that seem to have taken place and why this bill has taken so long to get before the House.

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member keeps referring to the Canada–U.S Free Trade Agreement and we are talking about a program that was an advance of $27 million to a very small number of producers. Not that many producers used the program. It is a budget cutting measure, as the minister pointed out earlier. I think everyone in this House agreement between Canada and the United States.

He also refers to At and East. This is an old program that needs to be looked at. If the hon. member has read it, he will realize that transportation issues are being addressed. It is time that they were addressed. There again, tying all this to the free trade agreement is not the case at all and not fair.

As far as the motion goes in respect to the limit, we have given a lot of thought and researched this area. We feel $250,000 is fair. We know it is difficult after a figure has been set to change it. Under the previous legislation the $30,000 limit did not allow many producers to access the program because of the multiple number of crops they grew. With this new limit it will allow the producers to put all of the crops they grow together and access the program to a greater extent.

Mr. Althouse: Mr. Speaker, could the parliamentary secretary, who has just told us that not too many people were able to access the program when $30,000 was the limit, inform the House what proportion of the loans were at the $30,000 limit last year or the year before, or

the year before that. Could he give us the data because we have not been able to get it to this point?

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Speaker, I am not able to provide that information but I know that some commodities access the total value of the product. I believe tobacco was one of the commodities in this country that used the advance to the full amount. We will see if we can provide that information for the hon. member but I do not have those figures today. We know there was a very small number of producers who did use the program. I do not have the figures with me as to the amount of utilization.

Mr. Ferguson: Mr. Speaker, it only stands to reason that if producers were not utilizing the program to the extent they normally would do so in the crop years 1987 and 1988, it is primarily because we had a very serious drought in both of those years, not only across the prairies, but also across Ontario where both the soybean and corn producers were hit extremely hard.

I just want to emphasize again the point I was speaking to a little earlier, when the government suggested that the opposition parties were holding up this bill. The bill received second reading, as I indicated earlier, on October 26. It was passed clause by clause in committee on November 8. Now, almost three weeks later, it is brought into the House where it will pass third reading this afternoon.

Clearly, after the government has delayed for five months after the budget was passed before bringing this legislation into the House, the government itself has to accept the responsibility for that five-month delay and then the three-week delay between the time it was passed and today when we have it in the House.

I think the point that has been missed today is the fact that this is just another step in dismantling the farm programs in Canada by this government that claims it is responding to market pressures. This afternoon, we heard quite a bit about those market pressures, "We are responding to market pressures". These are the same market pressures it said led to the demise of the two-price wheat system which served the producers of this country very well. I am sure the parliamentary secretary will realize it will cost him about $1 bushel in his next year's crop when that crop is harvested.

The same market pressures relate to the removal of oats from Canadian Wheat Board. Of course, we know that the producers in western Canada, the prairie pools and the advisory committee of the Canadian Wheat Board are very upset about this move. We know they were not producer moves but moves and pressures brought about by some of the marketing institutions.

Harmonization of regulations was again because of market pressures. Now these same market pressures have led to the United States appealing to GATT on our ice cream and yogurt even though the United States does not allow ice cream into their country.

• (1640)

The market pressures are a result of the United States countervail against our pork. These have forced several small packing plants in Ontario to close this last summer. More recently, those same market pressures were the ones that caused the closing of the St. Lawrence Starch Company at Mississauga. The removal of the At and East again is due to market pressures.

I just want to ask this government when is it going to apply some market pressures and bring these pressures to bear that will support our programs and support our plants which are being forced into extinction? The government responds obviously to pressures, but only pressures of big business and United States interests.

I ask the government again today, as this debate on the crop cash advances winds down, to consider what it is doing as it dismantles these programs piece by piece, the very infrastructure that has served the producers of this nation so well for so many years.

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raises quite a number of issues. He stated that we are dismantling the market programs. I do not believe we are dismantling market programs at all. We have always been very forceful in indicating our support for the supply managed sector in this country. If there is any group of producers that wishes to collectively market its produce we will provide the enabling legislation. That has been very clear.

We have also said, and this is well known at GATT, that Article 11 of GATT has to be clarified and strengthened. That should be sending a strong signal. I believe we have the support of the Canadian Dairy Commission and the dairy farmers of Canada in the strengthening and clarifying of Article 11 of GATT. They know that that has to happen. But we are working together with the producers to do these things. That is where the success is going to come from, by working with the producers of these various crops.

The hon. member talked about oats being removed from the Canadian Wheat Board. It is my understanding that the Canadian Wheat Board did not market an awful lot of those oats.

He talked about the two-price wheat. Many of us in this country have forgotten why the two-price wheat system was brought in in the first place. It is my understanding that it was brought in for the protection of Canadian consumers because the price of wheat was much higher on the domestic market.

The hon. member mentioned St. Lawrence Starch. From newspaper articles, the company claims that the corn countervail was the reason that they were taking a look at their operation and the decisions they had made. None of us probably know the real reasons why St. Lawrence Starch is moving, but we could all speculate and this is not the place to speculate. We would certainly not want to do that.

We also, as a government, are supporting the pork and the red meat industries with assistance in countervail actions that have been brought forward by the United States. We will continue to stand behind the producers of our various commodities in any action that is taken. We are not going to stand back idly and see our producers hindered or tramped on by actions taken by the U.S.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member for Bonaventure—Iles-de-la-Madeleine on a very short question.

Mr. Gray (Bonaventure—Iles-de-la-Madeleine): Mr. Speaker, I will address my questions to the parliamentary secretary. We sometimes have problems across Canada with people understanding what happens with the west, central Canada and the maritimes.

I would like to ask the parliamentary secretary for figures in terms of farmers per capita on the amount of federal government subsidies that go to the west, to Ontario, to Quebec, and to the maritimes. If he could perhaps address that, it would clarify a lot of things for Canadians across this country.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The parliamentary secretary on a very short answer.

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Speaker, I realize that we are basically out of time. I do not have it broken down as to regions across Canada, but we could certainly provide that to the hon. member.

The minister earlier today, while we were discussing this bill, indicated the total payments that have gone out to all agriculture right across Canada. I am sure the hon. member will find it extremely interesting. A look at *Hansard* tomorrow would provide us with much of that information but we will get the hon. member a breakdown on those figures.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It being 4.45 p.m., pursuant to Order made Thursday, November 23, 1989, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of all the stages of the bill now before the House.

The question is on Motions Nos. 7 and 10. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the nays have it.

Some Hon. Members: On division.

Motions Nos. 7 and 10 negatived.

Hon. Mary Collins (for the Minister of Agriculture) moved that the Bill C-36, an act to amend the Advance Payments for Crops Act and the Prairie Grains Advance Payments Act, as reported (with an amendment) from a legislative committee be concurred in.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Call in the members.

The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:

(*Division No. 131*)

YEAS

Members

Anderson
Andre
Atkinson
Attewell
Beatty
Belsher
Bernier
Bertrand
Bjornson
Blais
Bosley
Bouchard (Roberval)
Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Bourgault
Boyer
Brightwell
Browes
Cadieux
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Cardiff
Casey
Chadwick
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cole
Collins
Cook
Cooper
Corbeil
Côté
Couture
Crosbie (St. John's West)
Crosby (Halifax West)
Darling
DeBlois
de Cotret
Della Noce
Desjardins
Dick
Dobbie
Domm
Dorin
Duplessis
Epp
Fee
Feltham
Ferland
Fontaine
Fretz
Friesen
Gérin
Gibeau
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Greene
Guilbault
Gustafson
Halliday
Hawkes
Hogue
Holtmann
Horner
Horning
Hughes
Jacques
James
Jelinek
Johnson
Kempling
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kindy
Koury
Landry
Langlois
Larrivée
Layton
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lewis
Littlechild
Lopez
MacKay
Malone
Marin
Martin (Lincoln)
Mazankowski
McDermid
McKnight
McLean
Merrithew
Mitges
Monteith
Moore
Nowlan
Oberle
O'Kurley
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Ricard
Robitaille
Roy-Arcelin
St-Julien
Schneider
Siddon
Sobeski
Sparrow
Stevenson
Tardif
Têtreault
Thacker
Thompson
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van de Walle
Vien
Vincent
White
Wilbee
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Winegard
Worthy—121

NAYS

Members

Althouse
Anawak
Angus
Arseneault
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bélair
Bellemare
Berger
Black
Blackburn (Brant)
Boudria
Brewin
Caccia
Callbeck
Catterall
Clancy
Crawford
Dingwall
Dionne
Duhamel
Ferguson
Fisher
Flis
Fontana
Foster
Fulton
Gaffney
Gardiner
Gauthier
Harb
Harvard
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hopkins
Hovdebo
Hunter
Jordan
Karpoff
Keyes
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Kristiansen
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)
Laporte
Lee
MacAulay
MacWilliam
Manley
Marchi
Marleau
McGuire
McLaughlin
Milliken
Mills
Mitchell
Nault
Nunziata
Nystrom
Pagtakhan
Parker
Peterson
Phinney
Pickard
Proud
Riis
Robichaud
Robinson
Rocheleau
Rodriguez
Simmons
Stewart
Taylor
Volpe
Walker
Wappel
Whittaker
Young (Gloucester)
Young (Beaches —Woodbine)—76

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I declare the motion carried.

When shall the bill be read a third time?

Some Hon. Members: Now.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to order made Thursday, November 23, 1989, now.

Mr. Mazankowski moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the yeas have it.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, just before you utter the words "Call in the members", I think you would find a unanimous disposition in the House to apply the vote taken on report stage of the bill to the third reading stage of the bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it so agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:

(Division No. 132)

YEAS

Members

Anderson	Andre
Atkinson	Attewell
Beatty	Belsher
Bernier	Bertrand
Bjornson	Blais
Bosley	Bouchard (Roberval)
Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)	Bourgault
Boyer	Brightwell
Browes	Cadieux
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)	Cardiff
Casey	Chadwick
Champagne (Champlain)	Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cole	Collins
Cook	Cooper
Corbeil	Côté
Couture	Crosbie (St. John's West)
Crosby (Halifax West)	Darling
DeBlois	de Cotret
Della Noce	Desjardins
Dick	Dobbie
Domm	Dorin
Duplessis	Epp
Fee	Feltham
Ferland	Fontaine
Fretz	Friesen
Gérin	Gibeau
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	Greene
Guilbault	Gustafson
Halliday	Hawkes
Hogue	Holtmann
Horner	Horning
Hughes	Jacques
James	Jelinek
Johnson	Kempling
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Kindy
Koury	Landry
Langlois	Larrivée
Layton	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lewis	Littlechild
Lopez	MacKay
Malone	Marin
Martin (Lincoln)	Mazankowski
McDermid	McKnight
McLean	Merrithew
Mitges	Monteith
Moore	Nowlan
Oberle	O'Kurley
Porter	Redway
Reimer	Ricard
Robitaille	Roy-Arcelin
St-Julien	Schneider
Siddon	Sobeski
Sparrow	Stevenson
Tardif	Tétreault
Thacker	Thompson
Thorkelson	Tremblay (Rosemont)
Turner (Halton—Peel)	Van de Walle
Vien	Vincent
White	Wilbee
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)	
Winegard	Worthy—121

NAYS

Members

Althouse	Anawak
Angus	Arseneault
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	Bélair
Bellemare	Berger
Black	Blackburn (Brant)
Boudria	Brewin
Caccia	Callbeck
Catterall	Clancy
Crawford	Dingwall
Dionne	Duhamel
Ferguson	Fisher
Flis	Fontana
Foster	Fulton
Gaffney	Gardiner
Gauthier	Harb
Harvard	Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hopkins	Hovdebo
Hunter	Jordan
Karpoff	Keyes
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)	Kristiansen
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)	Laporte
Lee	MacAulay
MacWilliam	Manley
Marchi	Marleau
McGuire	McLaughlin
Milliken	Mills
Mitchell	Nault
Nunziata	Nystrom
Pagtakhan	Parker
Peterson	Phinney
Pickard	Proud
Riis	Robichaud
Robinson	Rocheleau
Rodriguez	Simmons
Stewart	Taylor
Volpe	Walker
Wappel	Whittaker
Young (Gloucester)	Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—76

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I declare the motion carried.

It being 5.17 p.m., pursuant to order made Thursday, November 23, the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS—MOTIONS

[*English*]

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

NEEDS OF YOUTH

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiaq) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider developing special initiatives, in consultation with Aboriginal peoples, to response to the serious employment, education and health needs of aboriginal youth.

He said: I think there is an interpreter when I start speaking Inuktitut, Mr. Speaker.

[*Translation from Inuktitut*]

I am pleased to have this opportunity today to speak to the concerns of aboriginal youth. I submitted this motion as a subject for debate out of a deep concern for both the present circumstances and future prospects of the young Inuit, Indian and Metis men and women in this country. I hope my remarks today will do justice to their concerns, their hopes and their dreams.

• (1720)

[*English*]

To the members of the Private Members' Business committee I would like to express my appreciation for having designated this motion a votable one. I am pleased that they view this issue as seriously as I do.

What does it mean to be young and aboriginal and living in Canada today? Last year, the annual report of the Canadian Human Rights Commission made newspaper headlines with this grim statement: "An Indian youngster in Canada has a better chance of being sent to prison than of completing university."

Many parliamentarians and Canadians were shocked at the time, and rightly so. But the alarming headlines disappeared after a day or so. How many of us bothered to wonder why the situation exists, or asked what could be done to help change the situation? Headlines come and go, but the problems faced by aboriginal youths remain.

[*Translation from Inuktitut*]

I would like to quote from a letter I received from Mikkel Panaktalok, the secretary of the Tuktoyaktuk Youth Committee on the issue of law and prison.

> If we knew what the law meant, we would not break it because our community and families are much too important to us, to hurt them in any way. We also don't want to go to jail because we don't want to get sent away from our parents. Sometimes though we feel that the only way we can get help and counselling is to be sent away, because we don't know how to get this help in our community, because of the lack of education programs. We cannot make choices unless we have the information we need.
>
> In order to bring out a problem to get help, we get into trouble. Youth do not want to do this anymore. We never did want to do it intentionally.
>
> We think that the RCMP, health services and social services are only there only when you are in trouble. No one tells us about prevention programs. We need help in using these agencies. We want to work together, but these agencies isolate us. All they do is react instead of prevent.

[*English*]

What are some of the stark realities of being young, aboriginal and living in Canada today? Statistics tell us that a young aboriginal person has fewer economic and employment prospects than a non-aboriginal person. They tell us that the young aboriginal person will not achieve as high an education and will earn less income than a non-aboriginal youth.

The health of the young aboriginal person is poorer than the non-aboriginal youth. The aboriginal youth will live about 10 years less than his or her non-aboriginal counterpart and is more likely to die a violent death.

Study after study has documented the continuing social and economic discrepancies between aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples in this country. Although there have been improvements over the past few years in life expectancy, housing, sanitation and post-secondary education the disparities remain unacceptable.

An article which appeared in the *The Canadian Family Physician* in July of 1988 assessed the health of the Indian and Inuit in Canada in the 1980s and the 1990s. It revealed that Indian infant morality rates are more than

twice the Canadian rate. Inuit infant mortality rates are more than three times the Canadian rate.

There remains a 10-year discrepancy in the life expectancy between aboriginal people and non-aboriginal people in Canada.

[*Translation from Inuktitut*]

The rate of tuberculosis among aboriginal people is still 7 to 10 times higher than the national average. In some communities in the Northwest Territories, where epidemics have broken out in the past couple of years, the rates are over 100 per cent higher than the national rate.

Violent deaths are still a significant cause of mortality among aboriginal people. In 1933, 31 per cent of all Indian deaths and 34 per cent of all Inuit deaths were violent deaths. Of these violent deaths, suicide is the most important cause of death in young adults.

The aboriginal youth of Canada are killing themselves at a shocking rate. The statistics are horrifying and demand the attention of all of us.

The Inuit of the Northwest Territories are committing suicide at a rate four times the national average. More than half of the 172 suicide victims in the Northwest Territories since 1978 have been in the 15 to 24 age group, and the vast majority are males.

[*English*]

Between 1978 and 1988 the rate of suicide amongst Inuit in the Northwest Territories averaged 53.4 per 100,000. The suicide rate was 22.3 per 100,000 for Indians, and 20 per 100,000 for others.

The average Canadian suicide rate over the decade was about 14 per 100,000.

Factors contributing to the high rate of suicide among aboriginal youth include poverty, alcohol and drug abuse, erosion of traditional values and stress associated with cultural transition. The cultural turmoil in many aboriginal communities especially affects the young people and many feel they have no hope for the future.

Aboriginal youth must be able to see for themselves a positive future within their communities. They must be part of the decision-making in the development of solutions.

I would like to return again to the letter I received from the Tuktoyaktuk Youth Committee and what they would like to see happen in their community:

> We want to get something done for the youth in the community of Tuktoyaktuk. We need national, regional, and local youth programs. We need funding— If we had other communities to work with, we could see what they are doing, and have different exchange programs with other communities. We could break down trouble between different places and get new ideas. Sometimes other youth might be doing things that we would like to do.
>
> There is no place for the youth to go to. No drop-in centre, no place to hang out, nothing happening in the evenings for the youth in our community. There isn't enough recreational programs. Right now, the youth are getting into trouble because of not enough things to do. A drop-in centre would really benefit our community.
>
> We need to be given responsibility and be taught how to use this responsibility, and given the power to make decisions.
>
> There is not enough, if any, substance abuse or alcohol programs that are for youth in the community. We do not have anyone our age who is trained in this area. Unless we do, the message does not get through. We need our peers to teach us what happens. We need someone our own age that we can look up to. They are trying to use programs for adults, and these programs do not work for the youth.

Improving educational attainment levels is essential. Educational attainment levels among aboriginal people are still significantly lower than among non-aboriginal people. Grade 9 attainment for the general population is 80 per cent. For Indians living on urban reserves it is 66 per cent. For Indians living on rural reserves it is 51 per cent.

• (1730)

[*Translation from Inuktitut*]

In the Northwest Territories, 63 per cent of aboriginal people have less than a grade 9 education. Only 2 per cent of aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories have attended university. School dropout and failure rates are still high. Less than half of the students enrolled in grate 10 in the Northwest Territories graduate. It is at this stage that most young people quit school because most of them are reluctant to leave their home communities to attend high school in one of the major centres.

While it is true that attainment levels have been increasing over recent years, there is still much more to be done. And what are the employment prospects of these young aboriginal students once they graduate? Not good.

I am concerned we may have an aboriginal youth employment crisis of major proportions very soon unless some priority attention is given to this issue.

[*English*]

The aboriginal population of the country is growing at a much faster rate than the non-aboriginal population. The 1989-1990 estimates of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs indicate that the Indian population has been growing at a rate three times as fast as the Canadian population as a whole. This rate does not even include the increase in the Indian population due to Bill C-31, passed a few years ago by Parliament, which has restored Indian status to thousands of Indian people who had lost this status under various discriminatory provisions of the Indian Act.

This growth rate has resulted in a population which is very young. Almost two thirds of the Indian population is under the age of 25, compared to less than one quarter of the Canadian population as a whole.

Internal documents of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs point out the serious employment consequences of this young and growing population. Between 1987 and 1997, 140,000 young aboriginal people will become eligible to join the labour force. According to the department, the problems this will create cannot be understated. Just to maintain employment rates at present low levels will require 8,000 plus new jobs annually. Most of the new jobs will be required in rural areas where opportunities to date have been very limited.

In the Northwest Territories, where I am from, the picture is similar. The population growth rate of the Territories aboriginal people is 3 per cent annually. Over half of the total population of the Northwest Territories, about 53 per cent, is under the age of 25. About 43 per cent of the NWT population is under the age of 20. In the Northwest Territories, there will be 600 potential entrants to the labour force every year for the next decade.

Current unemployment rates among aboriginal people range from 35 to 50 per cent. In remote communities, the rates are higher. In the Northwest Territories, most of the almost 30,000 Inuit, Dene and Métis live in small, widely scattered villages where the prospects for growth are limited. Unemployment rates in some of the communities reach 50 per cent and higher.

In the NWT, in the winter of 1989, the aboriginal unemployment rate was six times higher than the non-aboriginal rate. Unemployment was highest for young people aged 15 to 24.

Regionally, youth unemployment was 49 per cent in the Kitikmeot region, 34 per cent in the Baffin region, 31 per cent in the Keewatin, 28 per cent in the Inuvik region, and 20 per cent in the Fort Smith region.

The population boom in the aboriginal communities has outstripped the number of jobs being created. For example, in the Northwest Territories aboriginal communities, the working age population increased by 2,600 people between 1981 and 1986. Over the same period, employment in those communities grew by only 1,185.

The challenge of establishing conditions which will enable young people of these communities to have an economic future and lead productive lives is an enormous one.

I am encouraged, however, by the many signs that aboriginal youth are increasingly taking matters into their own hands. Last February the Aboriginal Youth of Canada held a conference here in Ottawa. The purpose of the conference was to bring together aboriginal youths from throughout Canada to provide a forum for discussions and opportunities for consensus on the course of action. The theme chosen for the conference was: "From the past, in the present, and for the future". The theme was chosen to reflect the reality that in order for aboriginal peoples to attain their goal of self-determination in the present, it is necessary to respect the traditional ways and have a clear vision of what people want to be in the future. The Aboriginal Youth Council of Canada would like to have another such conference in the new year, and I would encourage the government to support this request for funding.

In closing, I would like to express my wish that as many Members of Parliament as possible from all three parties speak to this motion. I have corresponded with many members already, inviting them to participate in this debate. The more these issues are discussed and the more people become aware of their importance, the better will be our understanding.

In conclusion, I will return to the comments of the Tuktoyaktuk youth committee which stated: "It is the hope of the youth of Tuktoyaktuk, that the concerns we have put down on paper, will be taken to heart by the politicians in Ottawa. We want to work together, to help the aboriginal youth of the north and south. The government in Ottawa has the final say that is very powerful—we hope the government in Ottawa will help us with our concerns, issues and problems." Imaginative efforts are needed to address the concerns of the aboriginal youth of Canada. I am sure that everyone will agree that it is in the national interest to ensure that the productive and creative potential of these young people is harnessed and not wasted.

Mrs. Dorothy Dobbie (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on the motion of the hon. member for Nunatsiaq. I cannot help but commend him for his concern and his care about the well-being of aboriginal peoples in Canada. His is a concern that is shared by this government and by me personally, and it is shared by a government which is striving to accomplish real progress and bringing new hope and dignity to native Canadians.

However, I must say that while the member himself is unquestionably sincere and a man of honourable motivation, it is unfortunate that the political party he represents is astonishingly hypocritical in its dealings with this matter over the past century.

Throughout most of the past century, successive Liberal governments have demonstrated a tremendous insensitivity to the needs of the aboriginal peoples, and I bring this up because it is relevant to the policies that we have to deal with today. Liberal policies have slammed the doors on the aspirations of natives. Liberal thinking relegated the first Canadians to an existence that was separate and apart from the mainstream of modern life.

Instead of educating the young and employing the vibrant, vital, adult population of the day, these policies created what was a destructive and soul-destroying system of welfare and hopelessness where identity and self-respect were stripped away, leaving behind a very sad and weakened shadow of the proud people who once held dominion over this land.

Since 1984, this government has been working to bring some order out of this chaos. We have had to return to the very fundamentals of the relationship between Canada and its aboriginal people, and we have done so in our continuing search for answers to address these wrongs.

First, there is the issue of land claims, many of them outstanding for over a century. Since taking office five years ago, this government has settled 40 specific claims and is working on 140 more. We have also achieved agreements in principle on two comprehensive claims, and are on the brink of signing a third. As well, we are negotiating six others and the groundwork has been laid for negotiations to get under way on several more. This issue is critical to the self-esteem of the native people, who gave way to the European invasion believing, because governments told them that this was so, that there would be a place for them that they could call home. Therefore, as quickly as we can, we are working to settle these claims and deliver on that promise.

Second, there is the issue of self-determination, what some call self-government. Quite simply, our effort toward self-government means that we are returning to the people their birthright, the birthright that is expected by all human beings, to make their own decisions over their own everyday lives, and this is necessary because the paternalistic attitudes of past governments gave Indian Affairs officials a most extraordinary and almost Orwellian control over the lives of Indian and Inuit people.

• (1740)

This big brotherism must now be reversed so that Indian and Inuit people are enabled to take their rightful place as equal participants in the affairs of this country, and that they do so having honed their skills through the experience that they have gained in running their own lives.

In the past, bands have been restricted as to what they may or may not decide without reference to the federal government through the Department of Indian Affairs. They have been unable to deal with such simple things as local problems like control of the dog population. They have had virtually no control over administration of funds used to provide basic services to a reserve. Direction over the welfare of their children was wrenched

away from them, frequently as were the children themselves.

Certainly, the questions of schooling and access to health care were totally under the direction of government bureaucrats who often made decisions according to their own perceptions rather than in response to the actual needs of the people.

All these things are being reversed under the progressive policies of this government and the leadership of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. We are sensitive to the need to introduce these changes with great flexibility and with concern for the specific needs of each band, group or community. We know that what works for communities in the south in the highly populated areas will not always be appropriate and will not always apply to people in the more remote areas. Nevertheless, we also recognize that we must proceed at all levels without delay so that the degradation of the first citizens of this land is halted at once.

Our objectives are clear. We are fully committed to a full return of local decision making and power over local self direction to Indian and Inuit communities within the framework of the Constitution. This includes control over programs delivered by the federal government, and we have made great progress in these areas. For example, administrative control over funds provided for post-secondary education has been turned over to the Indian communities in Manitoba and in many other jurisdictions.

Many bands disperse social assistance on their own and run local municipal type services such as water, sewage and firefighting programs. More and more bands are running their own schools, employing educators and setting the curriculum according to community objectives and values. Bands are running housing projects, administering mortgage funding and planning community development programs. Bands own and manage construction companies, building schools, roads and other community facilities.

Out of these initiatives is growing a self confidence that will allow these native people to take full advantage of the new Canadian Economic Aboriginal Development Program introduced by this government in June. This is a program that over the next five years will see the injection of $874 million into the aboriginal community. This will help to establish a renewal of the entrepreneurial spirit that is so natural to a self motivated people.

This is a program that is designed to help develop an economic base that will allow aboriginal people to grow and to thrive in financial independence. I am proud to say that there are hundreds of successful, incipiently successful, and looking forward to being successful Indian entrepreneurs out there, proving once again that the initiative is available when the opportunity is offered.

This is good news for many, many reasons, but most important because it puts the lie to the stereotypes of the aboriginal people that so many people have. These stereotypes are being put to bed in 100 different ways right across this land. They are evident to me as I travel from place to place visiting aboriginal communities throughout Canada. What I see is a people who are struggling to take hold, to gain control, to provide their children with a new sense of tomorrow. I see successes everywhere I go because now people have what they lacked in the past. They finally have some hope.

Without doubt, there is much to be done and there are many new challenges before us as more and more young people drift into the cities looking for additional opportunities. This government will continue to respond flexibly and appropriately as the need arises.

Canadians at large and as individuals must also assume their own share of responsibility for easing aboriginal peoples over the adjustment period. I would suggest that we begin by learning about what the successes are of our native people and through that gain a new perspective and reflect a new respect for their ability to survive against tremendous odds. I can tell you that the more you know about the successes, the sooner that respect becomes admiration for those who have succeeded against those odds.

It is heartening also to see volunteer organizations such as the Canadian Council for Native Business springing up. It is a private sector organization led by key business leaders across Canada that encourages young native business entrepreneurs through a mentoring system to develop their business skills. In the final resolution, we will need many more such as these in order to complete the process of repairing the damage that past attitudes and policies have created.

I said already that much remains to be done. Daily we are learning new approaches through the collaborate process we have established with native leaders. In our five years of experience with the native question, we have not discovered a single magic solution, but we have developed a very strong sense that we are working toward the right goals, and we have many successes to bear that out.

Before European settlement of this land, the aboriginal people were self-reliant, self-governing, and they were totally self-resourceful. We have made some progress in restoring some of that responsibility. The task before us is to complete that process and that we complete it to the benefit of all Canadians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond on a point of order.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, in view of the subject matter which we are dealing with here and the urgency of it, I believe there is a five-hour debate. I am wondering if the Speaker could indicate to the House whether or not he has a list of those who wish to participate in debate because, Sir, I wish to add my name to those who wish to participate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I have the hon. member for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake as the next speaker, the hon. member for Burlington, and the hon. member for Kenora—Rainy River on this first hour of the five-hour debate.

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in support of this motion put forward by the member for Nunatsiaq which states:

> That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider developing special initiatives, in consultation with Aboriginal peoples, to respond to the serious employment, education and health needs of Aboriginal youth.

The member has properly identified a key area of concern that requires immediate attention and a greater degree of priority in the government's planning activities. Young people of aboriginal origin face a tremendous challenge as they try to find their identity and their place in this large world of ours. Despite natural hurdles, as well as social and economic barriers, these young people must overcome obstacles put in their path by this federal government.

We must remember that Indian youth are growing up in a world much different than that which bred their elders. Indian youth are confused and frightened and unsure of their future. They live in a world ravaged by the frustrations of the generations that preceded them, and as they try to respond they receive conflicting messages about how to cope with those frustrations.

Like their elders, every time they witness progress being made on one front, they see a government betrayal on another. These are people who see their elders struggling to survive in a world that seems so much different from the world they see before them on the television signals coming into their homes. The messages they receive from the non-Indian world help to reinforce their feelings of mistrust and lack of confidence in their own ability to initiate change. Into this world of mistrust creeps abuse and victimization and sometimes violence. It is not a pleasant world, and it serves only to perpetuate poverty and despair.

• (1750)

Indian leaders across the country are addressing the problems facing Indian youth as best they can. As they look to the future, these leaders know their children must be armed with the knowledge of their history, their culture and their way of life, as well as the understanding that is necessary for achieving the social and economic goals they set for themselves. Indian leaders have identified, like the member from Nunatsiaq who has brought forward this motion today, that employment, education and health care for young people are the pillars on which their future will be built. Without opportunity, skills, patience, and a strong body, as well as mind, young Indian people will not have much of a future.

One thing I want to make clear in the developing of this motion before us today is the simple definition and interpretation of the word "aboriginal". I want to stress that, as the member who presents this motion represents in the strictest sense aboriginal people in Canada, and I support his motion in that regard. I also support the motion in the context that it applies to treaty people, those people who are the descendants of those who signed treaties with the Crown so that they could retain their inherent sovereignty and live as Indian people on their land forever. Treaty people include many of those who reside in my constituency and are equally concerned with the future of their children, and as such are working

to improve and develop employment, education, and health care opportunities.

When we as parliamentarians are addressing this government with plans for programs or policies, and we are addressing the needs of aboriginal people, the government must understand that our plans are not meant to distract from the plans or programs of all the people who may be aboriginal in origin, but who may be addressing their own special needs differently. I say this for a couple of reasons, not the least of which is that the government tends in its public relations to regard all aboriginal people as the same, and as such reacts inappropriately with inappropriate legislation.

Chief Rolland Crowe of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations stated: "The actions and words of the present government are totally contradictory. On the one hand it says that Indians must retain and develop their cultural heritage and the political or social institutions; on the other hand the government has repackaged the termination policy as a devolution policy and thereby continues the Crown's apparent deliberate efforts to dilute and eventually eliminate the special status and rights of treaty Indian people!" This government obviously needs constant reminders that its responsibilities are to all aboriginal people, just as they are to all Canadians.

In that context, Mr. Speaker, I want to draw your attention to the position on education that was developed by one of the bands in the riding that I represent, The Battlefords—Meadow Lake. The Little Pine Band believes that education holds the key to the future for their children and for their band which they regard as a nation distinct in its own right. As such, the band is working to an education for their young people that is holistic in nature and encompasses the total and complete preparation of the young for active participation as responsible and competent individuals in society as a whole. The education received must provide not only for mental and academic development but also for moral, spiritual and physical development as well.

Let me quote from one of Little Pine Band's education planning documents: "Education must recognize the distinctive attributes and values of the traditional Indian culture and must seek to develop in young people a knowledge of their cultural background and heritage as well as a pride in being recognized as an Indian in society, both now and in the future. It is important that young people be taught their special rights as guaranteed through the treaties. They must be helped to understand the spirit and intent of those treaties and to respect and honour their forefathers for their wisdom and foresight in negotiating the treaties which have granted the Indian bands status as distinct nations. People must not abuse their rights by expecting preferential treatment where it is not warranted and in such a way that their own sense of independence and responsibility is eroded. They must understand that these rights were intended to offer them opportunities to become functional, responsible and contributing citizens of their band and of Canadian society."

The Little Pine Band made these comments in a proposal to the Department of Indian Affairs last June. I supported those comments then and I continue to support them now. The department must be reminded of its responsibilities. I say that again, because often it reacts without thinking of those.

You will remember not too long ago when the department was doing what it should have done at the time, Mr. Speaker. A proposal was accepted that would see the construction of a school on Indian land that would prepare Indian youth for specific employment opportunities. That school, the All Nations Institute of Technology, was built on the Thunderchild Reserve, also an area within the boundaries of the Battlefords—Meadow Lake constituency.

That school now sits empty and idle because the department forgot about its plan. Money for capital was easily found, but funds for operations disappeared. Money for the building alone will not educate or employ Indian people. The government must remember that Indian youth, to achieve the success they want to achieve, must be provided with the tools that are needed to build the bridges to that success. Those tools include, as the member pointed out, education, employment and health care.

Indian populations are growing and because a significant portion of that population is under the age of 20, it is imperative that further support systems be established to assist students to complete their studies. It is readily apparent by the high drop-out rates, particularly among Indian students in urban schools, that the system is not meeting their needs. A special effort must be made to get an Indian curriculum, Indian teachers, and Indian elders into the schools in the territories, on the reserves,

and in the urban centres where Indian populations warrant.

Keeping Indian and aboriginal youth interested in their education is not only an important part of the school system, it is an important part of the development of our society. What use will a good education be to an Indian youth if there are no jobs that will utilize the acquired skills and knowledge? As long as attitudes against the creation of Indian job development programs and economic opportunities persist, there will be little commitment or motivation from Indian youth to follow through and achieve that which is so much desired.

I take this opportunity in concluding my remarks to ask the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs to immediately call together a meeting of Indian leaders, with the simple purpose of creating a special task force, a task force to be made up of Indian people who would have the duty to recommend initiatives that the federal government could take to respond to these serious employment, education, and health needs of Indian youth. If the minister would do this, it would address the concerns put forward by the motion today and, more important, provide us with specific direction and focus on one of this nation's most pressing social and human problems.

Mr. Bill Kempling (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to talk about a topic of great concern, not only to the government, but to the people of Canada. While acknowledging the special needs of aboriginal youth, I would first like to applaud the many accomplishments of these young people in many fields.

Aboriginal youth have excelled in the arts, education and are increasingly making inroads in the private sector ventures. These achievements are particularly outstanding, considering the difficulties they often face in health, employment and education.

Given the importance of the aboriginal culture, both to the aboriginal people and the richness of the fabric of Canada, it is important that aboriginal youth are afforded every opportunity to support and to further their unique cultural heritage.

Each of us understands that the problems experienced by aboriginal youth are many. Every one of us appreciates that significant measures must be undertaken if we are to break the cycle of poverty in which too many of these young people find themselves trapped.

The future of any society rests with its young people. It is especially true for status Indians. Approximately 54 per cent of their population is under the age of 24, compared with 38 per cent of non-aboriginal Canadians.

The first nations of Canada are rightly anxious that these young people realize their full potential. Mr. Speaker, you will hear many members from this side of the House agree with that sentiment. You will hear us state that we are not at all satisfied with the state of affairs our aboriginal youth find themselves in. You will hear that while there have been improvements in many areas, this government remains deeply concerned about the conditions of aboriginal youth.

• (1800)

More specifically, we readily acknowledge that Canada has a long way to go before aboriginal people achieve the same standards of health, employment and education as other members of our society. But at the same time we are beginning to see positive developments and new opportunities that will significantly benefit aboriginal youth.

I would like to assure this House that the Minister of State for Youth and the Minister of Employment and Immigration remain dedicated to changing the conditions that have prevented aboriginal people from securing their rightful place in Canadian society. But we also acknowledge that a major reason behind the failure of past government efforts to improve the conditions of aboriginal people lies in the basic approach taken. Too often the programs were initiated by social planners who thought they knew all the answers and they were wrong.

It is now evident that the aboriginal people of Canada should assume control of the matters that directly affect their lives. That is why the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs has worked as closely as possible with the diverse groups that make up the First Nations of Canada to promote aboriginal self-government. He is

committed to a dramatic increase in local decision-making. He is determined to equip aboriginal governments with the increased powers within the framework of the Canadian constitution and he is ready to provide the aboriginal people with increased resources to achieve their objectives.

A key feature of self-determination lies in increasing employment opportunities for aboriginal people. There can be no doubt that we must work to improve the unemployment rate among aboriginal youth which is at 31.6 per cent, much higher than the national average of 11 per cent. We want aboriginal youth to take advantage of our shift in emphasis in employment and immigration, away from the passive income support programs and toward programs and services that will help people secure a stable niche in the labour market.

We want them in these programs because it is clear from all the statistics that aboriginal youth desperately need to be better equipped for the demanding requirements of a modern global economy.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, many training and employment initiatives undertaken by Employment and Immigration Canada have targeted aboriginal people as a top priority. Employment and Immigration Canada is committed to helping those who have difficulty entering or remaining in the work force. That is why the aboriginal peoples are one of the designated groups that receive special consideration in the programs we offer.

Projects have been launched under the Canadian Jobs Strategy all across the country to address the very real training concerns of our aboriginal peoples. For example, a life and work skills training project was recently launched in Vancouver, directed at unemployed native youth who have come into conflict with the law. This project, worth $331,538, was sponsored under our job entry program of the Canadian Jobs Strategy in co-operation with the Indian and Métis Society. It now employs 48 native people and is providing them with supervised work experience. The project provides alcohol and drug counselling and offers social orientation and anger control techniques for those who need it. This is the type of practical opportunity we are providing aboriginal peoples. By participating in these projects they receive important training that will allow them to enter the job market.

The life skills training they obtain in these programs is culturally based. Job placement assistance is provided and those needing further employment related training are directed to appropriate programs.

This is all part of our concentrated efforts under the Canadian Jobs Strategy to begin addressing the many inequities in the education and training that aboriginal peoples experience in Canada. In our concern, we have supported innovative efforts to meet the unique needs of aboriginal youth. In Regina and Winnipeg we have attempted to upgrade literacy among unemployed aboriginal street youth with our "Beat the Street" program. This is a unique undertaking that uses peer tutoring to reach street kids. Unemployed youth are often more receptive to the training offered by people who understand their situation, as the success of "Beat the Street" indicates. Participants in the program who have failed elsewhere have acquired the reading, the writing and the life and job skills they need to successfully enter the world of work.

Other examples of government efforts include the native internship program that has been successfully operated by the federal government since 1976. It is now being significantly expanded and operates under the Summer Challenge program offered by Employment and Immigration Canada. The native internship program creates summer employment and opportunities for aboriginal youth in the Employment and Immigration Canada offices throughout the country. It provides them not only with an income but training and work experience. This gives them the marketable skills that helps them successfully enter the job market. Since 1976 participation has increased from 65 to 586. Every effort is made in this program to provide employment in the federal service that supports the career and vocational aspirations of the aboriginal young people.

I know there is a lot of concern about the deplorable educational record of the aboriginal people in Canada. It is a problem that has bedevilled our government and many previous governments before us. All of our studies show that anyone, aboriginal or not, who drops out of high school severely restricts their economic and work prospects. Education clearly remains as the best way of avoiding unemployment. Yet we readily understand that the aboriginal youth drop-out rate is much, much higher

than any comparable group. We are determined to help them develop to their full potential.

One of the ways we do this is through our work orientation workshops, or WOW. These provide early school leavers with guidance on their future participation in the labour market. The WOW program provides a combination of workshops and on-the-job training to both orient young students to the world of work and encourage them to continue their education. It helps them to appreciate the importance of seeking specific skills training based on their future employment ambitions.

These are all part of our over-all approach of assisting youth. The development of comprehensive pilot projects such as the Canada-New Brunswick Youth Strategy and the Canada-Newfoundland Youth Strategy addresses the unemployment problems of youth in these provinces, with aboriginal youth being one of the groups being targeted for assistance.

These strategies address the very real difficulties young people face as they attempt to enter the labour force. For example, a key feature of these strategies is that preventive stay-in-school emphasis. This includes counselling, co-operative education programs and employment projects that will give students a realistic understanding of the workplace and the long-term benefits education provides.

In New Brunswick special attention is placed on high risk students from aboriginal backgrounds who are potential drop-outs. The Youth Strategies co-ordinate the current federal and provincial programs and services for youth; strengthen existing federal programs and services—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member is winding up?

Mr. Kempling: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

As I have already mentioned, aboriginal youth receive a very high priority. Recently, for example, we provided $140,000 to the Union of New Brunswick Indians to accept the Maleseet and Micmac youth in taking advantage of the full range of assistance under the Canada-New Brunswick Youth Strategy.

We have also provided almost $100,000 to the New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council to ensure that the off-reserve aboriginal youth can better participate in the Canada-New Brunswick Youth Strategy. Nevertheless, we are dedicated to a process of consultation, negotiation and co-operation. It is a process I am confident will lead us to a just resolution of the issues we face.

I would like to ensure the hon. member who put forward this resolution that we are firm in our commitment to provide aboriginal youth with job skills that will allow them to fully participate in the 21st century. Canada's ability to compete in the global markets of the future depends on the preparations we provide to today's young people. Our young people are our future.

• (1810)

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for Nunatsiaq for putting forward this private member's motion on aboriginal youth and for allowing me the opportunity to speak to this very important matter.

Initially, I was going to focus my remarks on education and economic development. However, I must address one other issue before addressing these topics. There have been some extremely disturbing stories recently involving teen suicides in the aboriginal communities in my riding.

We have often heard that the incidence of suicide in the native communities is higher than the national average. There is no question that this statement is an accurate one. But what is being done to lower the rate of teen suicide in the aboriginal communities is another situation. From what I have been told by the native leaders in my riding, there is not much being done. The Shibogama Tribal Council represents six native communities, located in an isolated area of northwestern Ontario. The six communities can only be reached by air. In the past two and a half years there have been 40 suicides in these communities which have a total population of less than 1,800.

The suicide rate in these communities is seven times higher than the national average. Native leaders in this Shibogama Tribal Council area are discouraged by the increase in suicides among their young people. They are most concerned with the increasing number of aboriginal youth who turn to suicide as a way of solving their problems.

The latest suicide occurred last week at Kingfisher Lake. A 16 year old boy ended his life. His death has left a void in the hearts of many residents of that community

of 300. The parents of this young man are devastated. Losing one's child to suicide is a most difficult experience for parents. Many questions are left unanswered, which makes the acceptance of death all the more painful. The community of Kingfisher Lake has experienced four such suicides in the past two years. While its native leaders continue to work hard at building their community for future generations, they are seeing their young people torn apart by violence, poverty, drug and alcohol abuse.

Earlier this summer I travelled to many of the native communities in my riding. Upon arrival at Wapekeka Indian reserve, the chief and council greeted me at the dock with the news that a 17 year old boy had taken his life the night before. He had been receiving treatment in Kenora at a drug and alcohol abuse treatment centre. I was taken to visit the boy's mother and other members of his family. What I saw has left a profound mark on me. The mother, the grandmother, the brother and sister of this young man were completely shattered by the news of their loved one's suicide. The whole community was grieving with the family. When one member of the community loses his or her life in such a violent and unnecessary fashion, the spark goes out of the eyes of the other members of the community and only pain, sorrow and helplessness are left.

At a native mental health seminar in Thunder Bay last month, Dr. Harvey Armstrong, head of the Canadian Psychiatric Association's native mental health section, said native parents are developing feelings of hopelessness and inadequacy because many of the children are damaging their minds with alcohol and chemicals. At the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians annual health conference in London, Ontario, earlier this month, native author and clergyman, Arthur Holmes, also related some disturbing statistics. He said 80 per cent of Indians die in either unexpected or violent ways.

Canadians would never accept these kinds of statistics in non-native communities. Cries for help would be listened to and acted upon. So, why do we have a different set of standards for the aboriginal communities? As legislators we must find solutions to the many problems and issues before us.

The 1986 report of the special Senate committee on youth dedicated a complete chapter to native youth and the problems they face. In a section on suicide, and drug and alcohol abuse, the committee said:

> We believe that drug and alcohol counselling and suicide prevention programs need to be designed and carried out by native people themselves.

The report goes on to say:

> The most successful programs seem to involve young people helping other young people and providing healthy alternatives for solving their problems.

I have been a witness to the success of crisis intervention programs in three of the native communities in my riding.

In 1980 the communities of Grassy Narrows, Whitedog and Whitefish Bay, faced with high unemployment and welfare, were confronted with a major crisis. The young native people were either in the care of the Children's Aid Society, under the supervision of the probation and after-care service or involved in substance abuse. The native leaders recognized the need for crisis intervention programs and they designed programs in their communities which are run by them and for them. With financial assistance from Health and Welfare's National Native Alcohol and Drug and Abuse Program, the the crisis intervention programs in these three communities have been a tremendous success.

Recent statistics from the Grassy Narrows, Whitedog and Whitefish Bay communities show an 80 per cent decrease in the rate of violent deaths, an 80 per cent decrease in the suicide rate, a 90 per cent decrease in young offenders and an 80 per cent decrease in solvent abuse. All of this, over a seven-year period. These are very encouraging statistics and testimony to the statement of the special Senate committee on youth which stated that prevention programs designed and carried out by native people are the most successful.

The communities of Grassy Narrows, Whitedog and Whitefish Bay have proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that they can turn things around in their respective communities with adequate financial and moral support.

While funding for the crisis intervention program in these three communities in my riding has continued to decrease substantially, the programs continue, but with great difficulty. Earlier this year, the crisis intervention

programs almost became a target in the federal budget cuts.

The native leaders travelled to Ottawa with me and met with Health and Welfare officials and managed to salvage some of the funding. You see, Mr. Speaker, the crisis intervention programs at Grassy Narrows, Whitefish Bay and Whitedog, are not an actual program of the department. This program was designed by the native leaders for their people. Any other native community attempting to obtain funding for similar programs have been turned down. The department has not recognized this program as an "official program".

I honestly believe that funds should be immediately set aside which would allow every native community in this country to design and administer a crisis intervention program which best addresses the individual needs of each community. We would see declines in the rate of violent death, suicide and substance abuse in very short time. We have an opportunity to invest in the future of aboriginal youth in this country. It is recognized worldwide that our youth are the future. We can give aboriginal youth a future filled with hope and future built on hope.

Now is the time for the government to act. Now is the time for us to put our money where our mouth is. We must do so in order to prevent the suicide rate from climbing any further. The cultural and economic survival of the aboriginal people depend on it.

I realize I have very little time left, Mr. Speaker, so I will use it to touch briefly on the education of aboriginal youth. It is no secret that education programs in native communities fall below the provincial standards. For years, native leaders have attempted to design curriculum which is tailor-made to the needs of the respective communities.

As the Department of Indian Affairs prepares for the transfer of education programs to Indian control, it is essential that such a transfer take place with the full consultation of the aboriginal people. There is a great fear among the native leaders that once this transfer takes place the financial resources will not be there for curriculum development. This is why a full consultative process must be established. Curriculum development in native communities is tantamount to the future of these communities.

If the aboriginal youth receive a sound education with curriculum designed by their leaders for them, I believe we will see an increase in enrolment in the post-secondary institutions in this country. The difficulties many of the post-secondary native students have in completing their studies stems from an inadequate curriculum at the elementary and secondary levels. They are literally thrown into a system which is virtually foreign to them and they are not adequately prepared for it.

I would like to see the department provide the necessary resources to allow the native educators the opportunity to begin designing curriculum now, before the transfer of education programs take place. This way, once the transfer takes place, the communities would be ready to proceed with curriculum suited to their needs.

There are so many more issues concerning aboriginal youth which I could speak on. While I have yet to address the issue of economic development, let me say this much. There is no doubt in my mind that if the government were to provide the financial resources needed which would allow native leaders to design crisis intervention programs for the communities and curriculum for the schools based on their needs and cultural beliefs, we would see a dramatic increase in post-secondary and native graduates who would return to the communities and work for the betterment of their people.

• (1820)

I have seen what economic development can do for a community. People have jobs. They are happy and living life to the fullest. Economic development works in the single industry towns and it works in aboriginal communities.

In closing, I would again like to thank my hon. colleague for Nunatsiaq for putting forward this motion and I call on all members to support it in the interest of aboriginal youth.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the order is dropped to the bottom of the list in the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed from Thursday, November 23, consideration of the motion of Mr. Lewis that Bill C–43, an act respecting abortion, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): On a point of order, the hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the three parties. According to the House order we were scheduled to finish off debate tonight at 10 o'clock but I understand that the Liberal party has 17 speakers who wish to address the issue tonight, the New Democratic Party has three speakers who would like to address the issue and we, ourselves, have six.

So, it is possible that we may have to go beyond 10 o'clock. You will find that there is an agreement among the three parties to not see the clock at 10 o'clock and we also have a further agreement not to have any dilatory motions or any other motions between now and that time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it so agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Jean–Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I want to participate in this debate because this country has, at this time, no abortion legislation. It has not had any since January 28, 1988 when the Supreme Court of Canada struck down the existing legislation adopted by this House in 1969.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, it took two years and meanwhile, as a result of this government's failure to act, the private lives of Canadian men and women were paraded through the media. We had some flagrant examples of this last summer. We have had two years of stormy, divisive and sometimes even troubling debate. The 1988 election campaign was a time when the abortion issue created some very difficult situations.

For many years I have had a chance to read and listen to the comments of my constituents in Ottawa—Vanier, and many of them support my position, which is that of a moderate. I have noticed that pro–choice people are not as extreme as people think. They do not necessarily favour abortion on demand. Nor do they consider abortion as an alternative to contraception. The less extreme proponents of pro–life accept or at least say they can accept abortion as a last resort in cases of incest, rape or when the mother's life is at risk.

If I had to indicate where I stand between the two, I think I would qualify as moderate pro–life. I am against abortion on demand, but I realize that in some situations, abortion may be necessary. Of course I would prefer to live in a society where the issue did not arise. However, reality is different, and as a legislator and a Member of this Parliament, I cannot look the other way and ignore the problem.

Bill C–43, the bill before the House today is, in my view, too permissive and unfair in its present form. The bill is ambiguous, to say the least. For instance, some people read the bill and say that in its present form it supports pro–life. Others read the same bill and say that, substantially, it is pro–choice. One doctor, on the basis of his personal values and religious beliefs, might be able to justify and promote abortion on demand. Another doctor, however, either from a different part of the country or even from the same town, might reject abortion on any grounds. In remote areas, where health services are limited, this could become a real nightmare.

In any case, Bill C–43 shifts the whole burden of responsibility to the doctor. The government and this Parliament are asking him to be clairvoyant and to predict the mother's moral, psychological, physical and mental health after the abortion.

Of 65,000 abortions done annually in Canada, nearly 50 per cent were sought by young women under 25. These statistics show that something is very wrong and that something must be done as soon as possible. The legislation before the House today does nothing to eliminate the reasons why women resort to abortion.

To be acceptable, a national policy should urge and enable the parties concerned to make a rational decision. To do so, we must create a secure environment. A good start would be counselling. Although this is certainly not the only answer, it could promote a dialogue and generate a positive attitude to pregnancy. A well structured family policy could also help secure the well being of the child to be born. What about the daycare we have

been promised for two years and which has yet to materialize?

With Bill C–43, the government has, as I see it, tried to please everyone. It has shrugged off its responsibilities by shifting the burden of responsibility to the doctor. Mr. Speaker, is the doctor responsible for making a distinction between legal responsibility and moral values? I don't think so.

I think the potential interpretations of Bill C–43 are as numerous as our medical practitioners.

[*English*]

In a perfect world we would not need to have abortions. In this imperfect world, we have to address this issue. I believe, for one, that legislation controlling abortions is needed.

It took two years for this government to bring forward legislation to fill the legal vacuum created when the Supreme Court of Canada struck down the existing 1969 legislation because it breached the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. After two years of this Conservative Government, Bill C–43 is their best effort. It is far from perfect and it falls short of my personal position on the issue. It needs to be amended in committee.

Some members have told us that they reject this legislation in principle, and will vote in the negative at second reading. I can understand that position. But if the majority believes this bill is wrong in principle and should be defeated tomorrow, then we are faced with the status quo. That is, no abortion legislation. We all know that only the government can bring in enabling legislation and order its consideration by Parliament. Bill C–43, I repeat, is this government's best effort. If defeated, we are not likely to have another bill in this Parliament, thereby confirming the status quo, and that is abortion on demand.

On the other hand, if the majority accepts the principle of Bill C–43, then in my view it should go to committee for study of its clauses. Amendments will be possible to deal with the substance of the bill and redress, I would hope, its imperfections.

I dare say that those who vote against the bill at second reading, being the principle of the bill, will have some convincing to do in committee to substantively amend something to which they object in principle.

Once this bill is in committee it acquires a special status by virtue of it being the object of a free vote for most of us in this House. In committee it will be subjected to scrutiny by backbenchers—no members of the Cabinet will be present—freed from party lines and the discipline of the Whips. Whatever happens to the bill in committee will be the result of our own best efforts, not the government anymore.

As a legislator, I know the great difficulties members will face in coming up with a more acceptable bill. I hope we can meet this very difficult double challenge of respecting, on the one hand, the constitutional requirements as set out in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms with regard to the rights of the women, and also address the legislative demands, in my view, in matters of abortion.

• (1830)

I shall vote for this legislation at second reading and I pray the committee will succeed in amending it.

Mr. Bill Domm (Peterborough): Mr. Speaker, during my ten years as the Member of Parliament for Peterborough very few issues have been as emotional and morally frustrating or as unnerving as the issue of abortion. With regard to abortion we have been living in a permissive society since the Liberal government passed the abortion law in 1969.

The Conservative government, 20 years later, is now introducing Bill C–43 which will not offer one speck of hope to the more than 65,000 foetuses that are aborted annually. This might explain in part why the present Liberal leader is considering, according to the press, supporting Bill C–43.

Citing Section 251 of the Criminal Code as unconstitutional, the Supreme Court, in 1988, sent a clear message to Parliament to draft new legislation that would balance with the woman's constitutional rights the interest that society has shown in the foetus. Might I point out, Mr. Speaker, that Supreme Court Justice Wilson, in her comments following the Supreme Court hearings, said:

> The primary objective of the impugned legislation—

—speaking of the current legislation—

> —is the protection of the foetus. This is perfectly valid legislation as an objective. It has other ancillary objectives, such as the protection of the life and health of the pregnant woman and the maintenance of proper medical standards.
>
> The value to be placed on the foetus as potential life is directly related to the stage of its development during gestation.

Finally, from Supreme Court Justices McIntyre and Laforest:

> Historically, there has always been a clear recognition of a public interest in the protection of the unborn and there is no evidence or indication of general acceptance of the concept of abortion at will in our society.

It is my contention that Bill C–43, which is packaged in pro–life terminology, is legislation which calls for nothing less than abortion on demand as a legal right. Bill C–43, I regret to say, puts society's permissive call for personal comfort and gain ahead of society's call for respect of human life at every stage of its development. I consider Bill C–43 to be morally repugnant. It mirrors a time in history when blacks were slaves and society held a higher regard for their own personal comfort and gain than they did for the rights of slaves held in bondage and not considered to have any rights whatever.

Today's legislation needs to reflect a society that supports life at all stages of development and which will enable children to be raised with dignity. In the drafting of the bill I had hoped for a closer adherence to the direction of the Supreme Court in the Morgentaler decision, that the interests of both the woman and the foetus could be considered. The legislation before us manages to dance around this requirement and does absolutely nothing in reality to protect the foetus.

The bill states that abortion is illegal at all stages of pregnancy and then it goes on to say, except for all circumstances of health. By allowing a woman to have an abortion on mental, physical and psychological health grounds the government is giving women carte blanche rights to have an abortion for any reason they so wish by simply convincing a medical practitioner that the reason warrants such action.

Very few people in my riding support abortion for socio–economic reasons. Under Bill C–43, or under the former bill by the Liberals in 1969, it can be easily shown that strain on the mother results in serious psychological impact on her health and consequently she can be granted an abortion for psychological reasons.

With Bill C–43 in place all that is needed to have an abortion is a pregnant mother, Dr. Morgentaler and a free–standing abortion clinic. These three ingredients are now available in Ontario and Quebec and will continue as they are with the blessing of this Parliament and the provincial governments of both Ontario and Quebec. Nowhere in Bill C–43 do we offer any protection whatever for the rights of the foetus, only for the mother's rights to have an abortion.

Only two short weeks ago, on November 16, the Supreme Court justices, in presenting their reasons for overturning the injunction against Chantal Daigle in August, refused to comment on foetal rights outside of the province of Quebec. The same court, however, in the Morgentaler decision gave the government an indication that foetal rights could be provided under new legislation. The government, in my view, has failed to take up this challenge with Bill C–43.

I must now indicate my unwillingness to support or to endorse Bill C–43. The only possible legislation that I could support would be that which makes abortion illegal at all stages of pregnancy except in the case where the life of the mother is seriously threatened.

Here is the reason why I do not feel we can move along by approving second reading and expect major substantial changes either in committee, in the House as a whole or at third reading. As it is mandatory for cabinet to vote for this bill with no options, it is obvious to me that any substantive changes such as I would require as a pro–life supporter will never come to pass. Therefore, I cannot and will not support this legislation at second reading, report stage or third reading. I feel that although it would be possible to enact a law which would protect all human life from the moment of conception to death, to attempt to do this within the realm of the legislation before us would require such a deviant move from the underlying principles of the bill that it would be virtually impossible.

The Minister of Justice is on record as saying that the government will not accept any amendments that further restrict a woman's access to abortion, according to *The Toronto Star* of November 25.

I spoke earlier about our permissive society that puts people's personal comfort and gain ahead of people's rights and needs. I would like to close with a short quote from the former president of the Catholic Conference of Catholic Bishops, Archbishop Hayes. He said:

> Abortion is the destruction of human life. The challenge is to change our society's attitudes toward life and to channel the energies and strong emotions involved in this debate toward correcting mentalities and situations that lead to abortion. We need to create a society that supports life and enables children to be raised with dignity; a society that puts other people's rights and needs ahead of personal comfort and gain; a society that respects human life at every stage of its development.

As a Member of Parliament, and as a man who just two weeks ago became a grandfather for the fourth time, I could not agree more. We must, therefore, defeat this bill, defeat it at second reading, and concentrate our efforts on a piece of legislation that will provide the unborn with significant rights as a human being. I remind this House of elected representatives that when last given an opportunity to vote on this issue more Members of Parliament from all sides of this House supported a pro-life position than any of the other options that were available to us at that time.

So it is important that we defeat the bill. With our free vote I would like to show the Canadian people that Parliament wants to offer more protection to the foetus and reduce abortions in Canada.

• (1840)

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness, and indeed considerable anger, that I rise to address this House on the subject before us, namely, the recriminalization of abortion in Canada.

I have given a great deal of thought to what I would say on this sad day, both in response to Bill C-43, an act respecting abortion, and in response to speeches made by some of the spokespersons supporting this criminalization legislation.

Most have spoken with great sincerity. Some have spoken to rationalize their compromise of basic beliefs. Some have done so to retain positions of power, and the saddest part is that they should even have to make that choice.

Equally sad is that many women must often face bearing a child not of their choosing, but what is tragic is that they must, if this bill passes, make decisions with the threat of criminal sanction.

In addition, a woman must approach her doctor who also has the weight of criminal sanction to contend with, and the doctor must decide whether an abortion for her is legal. I contend that the choice is no longer one of whether or not abortion is the appropriate course of action for the woman, but whether or not, if an abortion is sought, it will be legal in her circumstance.

I have spent most of my working life advocating, in one way or another, for women; most often low income women. I have seen the great distress women have faced with unplanned and unexpected pregnancy. I have seen the results of incredibly difficult decisions. I have known women who died because abortion was not legally available and, in desperation, they had put themselves in the hands of back room butchers.

I have seen women who carried to term and delivered children that they allowed to be placed for adoption, in the hope that the child would have a better life, and then spent a lifetime of torment longing for that child. I have seen women who faced pregnancy from failed birth control, or the inability to afford birth control, left alone with the consequences.

I have seen women who have made a difficult choice, harassed and harangued by people who claim to care about them, not just outside clinics, but daily in the media. And along with all Canadians, I watched the tragedy this past summer of young women dragged through the courts, having every intimate detail of their lives dissected on the evening news.

[*Translation*]

To my sisters from Quebec, I would like to say that I am glad the Supreme Court has guaranteed our right to choose under the Quebec Charter. And it is a right we hope to preserve for all women in Canada.

[*English*]

I contend, Mr. Speaker, that the whole question of abortion has been elevated to the level of emotionalism that we have seen in the past few years by a concerted and a sustained effort, but the true underlying question before us is the question of power.

Throughout history women have been the subject of control by men. The dictionary definition of power is "a position of ascendancy over others". Throughout the history of religion and civilization women's place has

been assigned by men based on their reproductive capacity.

Often women's position has been elevated. Women have been put on a pedestal, so to speak, to control their actions and participation in society. For example, women did not work outside the home because it was not their place. The fact that this only applied to women who came from well-to-do circumstances had nothing to do with society's attitude. Poor women, who have always worked, were not in the equation. Women, until 60 years ago, were not considered persons. Society has finally recognized how absurd this attitude was and few today would dare advocate turning back the clock. Twenty-five years ago women could not have access to birth control unless they were married. Men had access but not the societal responsibility for the outcome.

Today, in some jurisdictions, a woman still must have signed permission from her husband for a tubal ligation, but her husband is not required to seek her consent for a vasectomy.

Some of these practices have been codified in the past. Some are merely practices. But in either case, they are norms established by men for women. They are norms established by those who have always participated as partners in the process that leads to pregnancy but have never, to this very day, been required to participate in the consequences of pregnancy, much less be required to take responsibility for these consequences. Indeed, men are physiologically unable to face the same consequences as women.

Here we are today faced with yet another law, another criminal sanction, drafted, debated and passed, mostly by men who will never bear the consequences of their decision.

Throughout the discussion in this House, men have stood and passed judgment on women and their ability to make thoughtful, responsible choices regarding reproductive rights. They have demeaned women. They have cast them again on a false pedestal saying: "We know what is best for you and we will decide what is good for you". In other words, they are saying: "We will continue to exercise power over you".

One of my colleagues, earlier in the debate, said: "One would wonder if this type of bill, based on this concept of women, would be before this House if this House were made up of 255 women and 40 men instead of its present make-up of 255 men and 40 women".

The Minister responsible for the Status of Women stated in this House:

> The last time I spoke in this place on the issue before us, I began by saying that I speak on behalf of those women who have been faced with bearing a child not of their choosing. Once again, I rise on behalf of those women.

She went on to say:

> Since I first uttered those words we have no law in this country regarding abortion. In the view of many women including myself the absence of legislation appeared to respect what I believe, that the judgment of women faced with a difficult decision and their capacity to make a better decision than anyone in this chamber on their behalf was respected in that environment.

I concur with the minister's statements. I find it impossible, however, to believe her later remarks that to provide a framework for women in the world as it is, and not as we would like it to be, the solution is to support this motion to re-criminalize abortion.

If women in the past had been prepared to live the world as it was and failed to struggle for the world as we would like it to be, we would still not be persons, we would not have the vote and some of us would not be Cabinet ministers.

The criminal sanction is dressed up differently than past laws. Its greatest distinction is that it is purported to please no one. I suspect that it will possibly secretly please those who would maintain power over women.

This criminal sanction says to women: You are not capable of making your own moral decision. You must attend your doctor on the basis of a medical decision. Your doctor will make the final choice. If that choice is deemed wrong, your doctor will have to prove to the satisfaction of the courts that the procedure was legal. In so proving the legality of his or her decision it is you and every detail of your personal life that will be examined.

The Minister of Justice and Attorney General, when he introduced the bill, said:

> The proposed new abortion law is understandable, it is workable and it is fair.

I suggest it is not understandable. It is not understandable to me why this government feels compelled to re-criminalize abortion. I suggest it is not workable. It is not workable because it is vague and creates the requirement to establish a whole new set of jurisprudence and risks withdrawal of doctors from performing abortions, especially if some are charged under this law. It is not fair. It is not fair to present a law that completely takes the final choice out of the hands of the woman and places it in the hands of her doctor while the threat of

criminal law looms overhead. As well, this legislation to re-criminalize abortion is unacceptable for Canadian women.

One of the special things about this House is the respect members accord each other. We address each other as honourable, knowing that we try to acquit ourselves with dignity, honour and integrity. I plead with the hon. members in this House to accord the women of Canada the same respect, knowing that they will acquit themselves with dignity, honour and integrity.

In this world, as women struggle to establish their rights and freedoms, I submit to all hon. members the words of J.S. Woodsworth: "What we desire for ourselves, we wish for all".

• (1850)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Roy-Arcelin (Ahuntsic): Mr. Speaker, after listening very carefully to Hon. Members whose speeches reflected widely divergent opinions; after reading Bill C-43, an Act respecting abortion, a subject that has been extremely controversial for many years; after long discussions with many of my constituents in Ahuntsic, people whose opinions are varied and diverse; after a thorough study of the impact on abortion of our society and the moral, ethical, social, economic and demographic aspects of this issue, one which compels Canadians to examine their democratic conscience as well as their moral values; and after consulting experts on the subject such as physicians, legislators, lawyers, priests and ministers, Catholics, those of the Orthodox faith, Protestants and atheists, today, Mr. Speaker, it is my duty to give my opinion of this bill, and be as objective as I can.

First of all, I would like to say that as a Member of Parliament, a woman and former nurse, in other words, someone with a respect for life, I will vote in favour of this bill which provides a judicious and clear response to all the concerns and questions I may have had since the debate started in the House of Commons. Mr. Speaker, my support for Bill C-43 is not just a matter of subjective emotion and deep-seated feeling, it is a reasoned and rational decision.

This bill, Mr. Speaker, coming as it does after the Supreme Court's judgment in the Morgentaler case in January 1988, is intended to fill a legal vacuum, in response to demands by Canada's modern, pluralistic society. Since our society is not monolithic, its members holding various beliefs and views, it was imperative that this legislation should strike a balance between women's constitutional rights and society's interest in protecting the foetus. This means, Mr. Speaker, that these two fundamental rights are entirely compatible: the right of the woman to control her own body and her own destiny, and that of the foetus which, although unfortunately, it has yet to be recognized by the Supreme Court, is nevertheless a moral value that no normal society would be able to reject indefinitely.

Mr. Speaker, at a time when legislators, human rights activists and even the United Nations are talking about children's rights, minority rights and women is rights, a perverse selfishness that stifles all feelings of compassion and generosity leads us to ignore the rights of the foetus which is, at whatever stage of its development—embryology and the latest scientific techniques such as ultrasound prove it—a being in essence, in other words, a human being that is genetically alive. To talk about the rights of this fragile and voiceless being is, according to some people, tantamount to preaching in the wilderness and having opinions that are reactionary and outdated.

If, as these modernists claim, morality changes as new scientific discoveries are made, then I say those who speak for the unborn are pioneers, working towards a future where the rights of all will be respected, including the rights of the foetus. What future is there for a society that is unmoved by its own voluntary extinction and does not fight for its survival? What future is there for a country that, if it does not pass laws on such an essential issue, is doomed to a geometrical decline in its birth rate? The primary objective of this bill, Mr. Speaker, is to reconcile two fundamental rights that are complementary and equal.

The second objective of this legislation is to provide fair and reasonable access to abortion, while preventing abuse and charlatanism. We know that many women, especially young women, left to themselves, accept willingly or are forced into some abortion practices that endanger their own physical and psychological health. For all the reasons that have already been given, abor-

tion must not be a form of birth control. It is therefore our duty as a responsible government to protect the life and health of the women in our country. This bill does so by removing several administrative obstacles, such as therapeutic abortion committees. These took a long time to make a final decision and thus prevented women from fully exercising their right to a legal abortion, thereby infringing on their physical and psychological health.

But, as I see it, Mr. Speaker, what is most important and what convinced me that this bill is positive and fair is the doctor's involvement in this big decision. For me, this is not paternalistic; the doctor will not tell the woman in an authoritarian way what choice or decision to make. Whatever decision she makes, she will always need to call on a doctor to perform an abortion and thus abortion is first and foremost a medical procedure. Who, Mr. Speaker, is in a better position than the doctor, with his scientific knowledge, professional ethics and practice, to make a definite decision that will take into account the woman's health, the foetus' rights and society's responsibilities?

Furthermore, the doctor who performs an abortion as prescribed by law for medical reasons related to physical, mental and psychological health is, according to the generally recognized standards of his profession, responsible for monitoring the woman after her abortion. He is inevitably involved and takes part in this process, like it or not. The bill simply confirms his deep involvement in providing an abortion. He is not acting as a moral adviser but as a qualified professional trained to make such a dicision. This decision is not unilateral but is made together with the women, for health reasons and with full respect for her freedom.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, some groups stubbornly criticize the criminalization of abortion. The Government has no alternative, since placing abortion in the Criminal Code was the only way for Parliament to regulate abortion nationally.

If abortion is performed in the legal framework, in accordance with legislation that is in the interest of our civilized society and defends the rithts of both the foetus and the women, I do not see how one could deliberately go against such a piece of legislation, because it is a reasonable compromise among all the opposition tendencies in our society. Bill C-43 is based on consensus, unity, not division, reconciling basic differences and eliminating unyielding opposition. It is a bill which, like our country, is built on compromise and dialogue. That is why, Mr. Speaker, I support it with all my heart and all my mind.

[*English*]

Mr. Gilbert Parent (Welland—St. Catharines—Thorold): Mr. Speaker, life is precious. Some five days ago I found I had reason to believe this more and more as just three hours ago I left the hospital with a health problem.

I wanted to take part in this debate because during the 15 years since I was first elected to Parliament in 1974 there have been only a handful of issues which have touched the very soul of this nation, issues which have required that we look inside ourselves and make decisions which affect not only us but which will affect all of our fellow citizens for generations to come. I would list in this category capital punishment, the Constitution, the free trade bill, and now abortion.

• (1900)

Abortion has been discussed for many years not only in this nation but around the world. There are a few things I would like to make clear at the outset. I speak today not only as the representative of the people of the Welland—St. Catharines—Thorold riding; I also speak as a grandfather, a father, a son and a brother. I speak as a friend to all those people who have entrusted to me the duty to speak on their behalf. Like other members in this House I too have searched very deeply into my own soul.

I have sought advice from friends and scholars, from people whom I respect a great deal, from people who are in favour of abortion and from people who are opposed. After having digested all of this information I have decided the course of action which I will follow.

Abortion is no more and no less than the taking of human life. This bill fortifies the idea that there can be in this country abortion on demand. I base my thoughts on logic. You see, life must begin sometime. There are those who argue that life begins at the moment of conception. Some will say after 12 weeks and others will say after 20 weeks. The legal definition is that life begins at the moment that you come out of the womb and from that moment on you have the protection of the law. As for me, I believe that life begins at the moment of conception for if I do not believe that, then life must begin at some arbitrary point. I say "arbitrary" because you can take any time, from one week of gestation to 12

weeks to 30 weeks, but you must always go back and say that life begins sometime.

If life does not begin at conception, then why can we not legislate that life begins one hour after you come out of the womb? In that way if someone were to be born with a deformity or illness then we could destroy this non-human and our consciences would be clear. Why do we not say that you are not legally a person until you are one-year old for greater certainty that there would not be any problems with the child? To me, Mr. Speaker, life begins at conception. To take any step back from that is not logical.

[*Translation*]

If life begins at conception, as I believe, it follows that this person, or entity that is becoming a person, must enjoy the same rights as I, who have been born. I believe that the foetus has inalienable rights, in particular the right to be born we all have and the right to security of the person.

[*English*]

To say that the foetus is not a human until a certain time is to condemn ourselves and future generations to arbitrary decisions as to when we are or are not human. Let me explain.

It was not so very long ago, approximately half a century ago, that one madman declared that there were certain races which were superior to others. Then so decreeing he sought to have a final solution for a whole race of people: the Jews.

But he did not stop with the Jews. He went on from there to clean the streets of what he called cripples, homosexuals and the mentally handicapped, people that he and his henchmen determined undesirable. Their solution was simple. It was to kill these people. To hide their heinous crimes they burnt them in the hopes that the bones and ashes would never be found. As I contemplate these clinics and hospitals in which we abort our young, whether it be at four or thirty weeks, I see the remains thrown out like so much garbage. I am moved to wonder: could not one of these or some of these have helped our society to become a better place?

They say we should abort because a child would be born into circumstances where they would not be wanted, where they would be subject to physical punishment, where indeed they would be emotionally scarred. I am not unaware of this. I know that children who are not wanted are born into this world, that they are not cared for, and that they are abused. Even with this in mind I know full well that there are people who have survived these circumstances and risen above them. Should they not have a chance, just as you and I have?

Is there anyone here who had a perfect childhood? Is there anyone who did not have his cuts and bruises and emotional scars and yet we go on as best we can? Abortion is wrong. Abortion is morally wrong. I believe that we were put on this earth because we have a destiny to fulfil. Our destiny, I believe, is to live good lives as best we can and try to help our fellow man, not destroy him.

Women often resort to abortion because they cannot see any other way. There are other ways. We should help them during pregnancy. We should give them the choice to keep or to give their child to couples who want to adopt. We the government should be helping them, not hindering them.

If you asked me where there are any circumstances under which an abortion could be performed, I would say to you yes. I believe that an abortion can be performed when the physical life of the mother is in danger. That means that you will or you want to save the life of the mother. You do not will or want the death of a child. The child's death is incidental to the good that you want to accomplish.

There are those who say: "Well, can't the mother make a choice on her own"? Once again, I am hard pressed to answer. But would you grant the mother the right to kill a child if she no longer wanted the child and the child was three, four, or five years old? The child belongs to her and although the child is outside her, does she not still care for it? Is the child still not her responsibility?

In this debate, Mr. Speaker, you will hear many voices raised in the defence of the rights of women. What we

have here are really two conflicting rights: the rights of women and the rights of the unborn. I have tried to straddle the fence. I have tried to find a compromise, but there are some things in life, my colleagues, for which there is no compromise. An abortion is one of them.

I respect those who in this debate will speak about the rights of women. I surely have no quarrel with them, but I have chosen to speak for the unborn because to my way of thinking you cannot satisfy both. I know full well in taking this decision that it will not be politically popular. It is a *sans dire* that it is women who vote. There are no votes among the unborn.

But this decision is not a political one, nor do I say it is a political one for you, my colleagues. It is not made to garner votes or to try to appease one side or the other. This decision is made because I believe it is the right decision.

In the final analysis whichever way we decide collectively, the fact is I must still live with myself. I would ask you, my colleagues, before you cast your votes to reflect on another issue which is at the other end of the life spectrum. It is a nice sounding name. It is called euthanasia.

If we decide today to kill at the beginning of the life spectrum, I wonder how far we are away from deciding to kill at the other end. In Norway they used to have what they called passive euthanasia, passive mercy killing. Now they have, shall I use the word progressed or regressed to the point where they are using active euthanasia.

Will the day come when we will decide that someone who reaches 100 years should be killed even though he or she is healthy? How long will it be before we lower that age until it is 80 or 70 or 60, all under the guise that this planet cannot support so many people? And, how long will it be before we look at our mentally, emotionally and physically handicapped and say, no, only the strong will survive in our society, you must be sacrificed? I suggest to you that these things will occur in the lifetime of many of the members who are in this House now.

There are those who shy away from the word "murder", but I do not. The word "murder" is defined as an action causing the destruction of human life which is regarded as morally wicked, whether legal or not. Further down it says, it is a terrible slaughter and a destruction of life.

• (1910)

Is there anyone in this House, is there anyone in Canada who will deny that abortion is the destruction of life? Is there anyone in Canada who will deny that the taking of an innocent life is wrong? I base my stand on the fact that life does begin at the moment of conception and life is so precious that it must be defended all the way through the life process.

If we deny the rights of the unborn today we will be denying the rights of all Canadian citizens in one way or another tomorrow. I will have no part of this action. I will vote against Bill C–43 and everything that is in it.

To those of you in this House who say that history will be your judge, I leave you to history. My judge has been around a little bit longer.

Mr. Al Johnson (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, it is with heartfelt concern that I rise today to join in the debate on abortion.

At this point in the debate it might seem that every point of view has been covered and that we need not hear more, but I believe it is important for each member to be heard on this issue so that our constituents might know that whatever decision we have come to we have not come to it lightly and that we have taken into consideration all the various points of view presented to us in the last few months.

I believe that life begins at conception. This is one of the biggest problems that I have with Bill C–43. Certainly it implies that life begins at conception since it purports to provide some protection to the foetus from the moment of conception until birth. However, there is precious little protection there, and there is no explicit statement that the life in the foetus is a life like any other life including that of its mother.

This means that the fundamental test, the health of the mother, is not balanced by the other fundamental test, the health of the foetus, when the doctor and mother are making their decisions. This is the core of the abortion debate. It is a debate about rights, the rights of mothers, fathers and unborn children. On the one hand, there are those who believe that the mother has the right to self–determination, to make choices that concern her own body and her future. On the other hand, there are those who believe that the unborn child has a right to life and that this right must be protected.

Any bill that would receive my support must recognize explicitly this right of the unborn child. I believe the rights of women and all Canadians to control their own bodies and to shape their own future must be secured. However, just as my rights are limited by the fundamental rights of others, I also believe that a woman's rights over her own body are limited by her unborn child's fundamental right to life. This balancing of rights takes place every day in our society to prevent chaos, to protect life, and to defend the democratic nature of this nation. I believe it must also take place in the case of abortion.

As far as choice is concerned, I believe that choices must be made before conception, not after. For this reason, despite grave misgivings, I am willing to consider abortion in cases of rape or incest as I do not believe that a woman should be forced to carry a child that she has been forced to conceive.

I also believe that abortion can be considered where a mother's life is in real danger. These are examples of the difficult decisions that must be made when rights are balanced for I fully concede that the foetus is never a guilty party.

There are many things about this bill that bother me, not the least of these is the fact that we appear to be approaching the problem from the wrong direction. One of the most serious factors contributing to abortion is what might be called the crisis pregnancy. It can happen at any socio-economic level in society, as we are all well aware. The crisis is defined by each individual woman's own situation.

This bill treats abortion solely in criminal terms, but what we need is much broader access to programs which focus care on people in need and which make raising and having children a primary aim of our society.

There are many programs which could reduce the apparent demand for abortions. I am thinking of some simple things such as better access to psychological counselling and birth control education, of tax laws that do not discriminate against parents who wish to stay home and raise their children, of laws which do not make it difficult for single mothers to get an education and child support; simple things like the need to reverse the trend which discourages adoption by mature couples in favour of encouraging young women to keep children that they are not ready to cope with.

One of my main reasons for getting into politics was a desire to make things simpler. I am well aware that this bill, Bill C-43, appears to be simple and straightforward. I am very concerned that it is just a simple band-aid on a very complicated social illness and that we are doing almost nothing to solve the basic problem which to my view is that society has begun to accept abortion as a quick fix, not recognizing that the very decision to have an abortion is a fundamental symptom of many problems.

I do not delight in the polarization of this debate. I am well aware that those on both ends of the spectrum present their views in terms of love, care and compassion. I understand fully that no right thinking person takes a decision in favour of abortion lightly.

I will not be one of those to condemn those who have made or who may make decisions with which I disagree. Whether this battle is won or lost, I believe we must continue to speak for and promote the development of resources which can help people grow toward healthy, life giving relationships wherein responsibility for birth control and parenting is shared by both parents. We must encourage schools and employers to support women who are pregnant, not to expel or discriminate against them. We must continue to speak out against and deal with family violence so that children may be raised in safety. We must develop more efficient and fairer means of distributing support for child care. We must continue to support the development of preventive or crisis counselling in the areas of sexuality, pregnancy and family planning. Finally, governments including this government must encourage adoption as an alternative to abortion.

One of my hon. colleagues from the other side indicated a few minutes ago that 60 years ago women were not persons, and today they are. I am very distressed that many of those same persons who received their rights 60 years ago are now denying the rights of the foetus.

This debate is about abortion and how to deal with it in a pluralistic society. In the last few days we have heard many well-intentioned arguments on both sides of the question. I return to my first point: we cannot discuss abortion unless we first acknowledge clearly that life begins at conception and then develop a clear, rational approach to the balancing of rights, an approach which

recognizes the foetus as a fully human entity, doing so with compassion and a full understanding of the difficulties that each person faces. I do not support this bill. I cannot imagine supporting it, even in an amended form.

• (1920)

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I want to start by saying that this last year of my life has probably been one of the most exciting. I cannot believe, quite frankly, that I am here tonight in the Parliament of Canada. I feel it is the greatest honour of all to serve for your country. At the same time I want to say that the last 24 hours has been very tough for me. I am not a doctor. I am not a lawyer and I feel humbled in addressing this issue.

I have listened for the last year and a half to people on all sides of this issue. I have met them in my constituency office. I have met people in my office on the Hill. I noticed one thing that all parties have in common. All the people I met with were approachable and caring; they had integrity and they were passionate about their views.

That makes the dilemma even more difficult. I realize it is a dilemma that most politicians from all parties are facing, because many of us are finding that our personal beliefs are in conflict with the majority of our constituents, at least as many of our constituents perceive our responsibility to be.

I personally refer to this issue as the Thomas More dilemma. Few of us, and certainly not I, would pretend to have the learning or courage of Thomas More, but I believe after listening and watching people in this Chamber for the last year that they also have and stress the value of morality, honour and integrity.

Today, when we are struggling with an issue like this, that kind of integrity, that kind of trust, is so important. In fact, I think that trust is the central issue in this debate. It is the trust that our constituents have with each one of us. I take that thought with me as I approach this issue of abortion because we have a choice between acting as a representative of our constituents and voting as we perceive the majority would wish us to vote. In my constituency a majority would wish me to vote in favour of this bill or abortion in whatever limited form it would be allowed.

The other option is that we can act as a delegate of the voters and vote for what we consider to be right. If I were to take the first course, then I would apparently gain the trust of the majority and certainly lose the trust of a significant minority who are against abortion, and I use the word apparently advisedly because I do not think anyone would ever trust me if I really gave in and gave up on deeply held convictions, especially one like this.

I want to speak personally for a moment about my convictions because I believe that human life begins at the moment of conception. This is not a religious conviction; all the medical evidence supports this belief. However I am not a member of the pro-life movement. I question their emotive use of the term.

Who, after all, is in favour of death? My belief is a quiet personal belief. It is important that we have strongly worded legislation to protect the unborn. At the same time we must have the political will to put in infrastructure to support women facing the prospect of an unwanted pregnancy. We must discuss this issue with genuine empathy for the plight of pregnant women. They are often lonely, afraid, deserted, poor and particularly stigmatized, so we must be innovative in our solutions to make it easier for women to continue with their pregnancies.

In listening to this debate for the last few days, I do acknowledge the hon. member from British Columbia when she said it was mostly men who were speaking on this issue. I have to refer to two of my colleagues who are women who spoke on this issue last Thursday, my colleague from Western Arctic made the following statement:

> My position is one for life. I choose life. I do not belong to the pro-life movement, but I belong to a people who believe that life is sacred and always have under the harshest of circumstances.
>
> I also believe in people who are willing to take the unwanted; I believe in the people who adopt. I am an adopted child. I celebrate my mother and I am the oldest of 15 children. I celebrate my mother because she brought 15 of us into this world, under the harshest of circumstances, with great poverty and difficulty.

She went on to say:

> I cannot take the chance of having this legislation pass. I will vote against it. But I can tell you once more, that for my people, children are important, people are important, and life is the most valuable gift you are given.

My colleague, the member from Northumberland made a similar statement. She said:

> Because I believe in and try to live in the spiritual, sacred, mystery side of my, in my intellectual weakness I submit to the view that it is probable that the sacredness of life begins at conception. Therefore, I cannot accept abortion at any stage of life from conception onward.

She went on to talk about companion legislation.

What am I going to do? For me the choice is clear. I shall vote against this bill. I may have to answer to the voters as long as I am in politics, but I have to answer to my own conscience for the rest of my life. I let my belief in this issue be known through the last year and a half. For me, governance is to look after the disadvantaged and for me there is nothing more disadvantaged than an unborn child and, in my opinion, this bill does not pass the test.

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast): Mr. Speaker, no subject is more troubling for any reflective person than abortion. No other issue since I arrived here in 1979 has evoked more letters, phone calls and personal visits from concerned constituents and non-constituents on both sides of the issue. It cuts right to the heart of what human beings, religions of all kinds, pluralism, the proper scope of our criminal law and representative democracy are all about.

In the case of members of the present governing party and the Official Opposition, at least our whips will not tell us how our respective party hierarchies want us to vote. If it is true, as indicated, that the Prime Minister intends to force his cabinet colleagues to vote *en bloc* for Bill C-43, I trust that the right hon. gentleman will allow them to vote their consciences on various amendments which will be proposed both in committee and at the report and third reading stages of the bill.

• (1930)

Let me say now what I find to be positive and what I find to be unacceptable about Bill C-43. First, the more positive. The bill says that Parliament has sufficient respect for unborn children from conception in that it orders that no such child can be aborted unless a medical doctor "is of the opinion that the abortion were not induced, the health or life of the female person would be likely to be threatened".

Second, the bill requires that henceforth for legal abortions in Canada only medical doctors can perform them. One of the consequences of the Supreme Court of Canada's decision in Morgentaler is that in terms of federal legislative sanctions, at least, a person performing an abortion need not currently even be a trained medical doctor.

Third, I personally share the presumed view of the drafters of this bill, that the person charged with inducing an illegal abortion should be a doctor, not the woman. I wonder, though, how doctors across Canada can reconcile performing abortions because, a husband or a boyfriend demands that one be performed, with the Hippocratic Oath taken I gather, by every practising physician across Canada. One part of that oath says, and I quote: "I will not give to a woman an instrument to produce abortion".

Fourth, the doctor's opinion that a continuation of the pregnancy would threaten the health of the pregnant person must accord to "generally accepted standards of the medical profession", not his or her own notions about the matter.

Fifth, I believe as a lawyer that this bill is constitutionally unassailable under the Charter of Rights.

What is illegitimate about the bill? First, it can be said to be pro-life in form; it is clearly strongly pro-choice in substance. Second, and closely related, in terms of the world's realities, it appears to me to pay only lip service to the all important issue of balancing the interests, assuming that they can conflict, of perspective mothers and this Parliament's interest in protecting unborn children. I say this as someone who has worked professionally with the provisions of the Criminal Code for many years both as Crown counsel and defence counsel, and who worries that the member for York Centre has probably characterized very well what will result, in practice, across Canada. The member reportedly said at a press conference, after the bill was introduced, and I quote:

> —what has been attempted here is really nothing more than to provide a fraudulent cover for abortion. What is being said is, "Ladies play our game, go to the right doctors, give the doctors the right story, and you'll have nothing to worry about".

Mr. Kaplan went on:

> That, to my mind, is not the honourable kind of solution that should be brought forward considering all the various interests and all the various rights that are at stake here.

In other words, there are, unfortunately, probably enough medical doctors practising across Canada today who take a less than literal interpretation of their Hippocratic Oath and who favour abortion on demand, that abortions on demand, legalized by the Morgentaler case, will in most communities continue unabated.

Will a single one of the 60,000 unborn girls or boys who now perish each year in the present legal vacuum, survive if this bill becomes law in its present form? Canadians generally, and my constituents in particular, as I understand their views, want a major reduction in the number of abortions being performed across Canada. That at least was the major conclusion I drew from approximately 5,000 questionnaires received from constituents in the spring of 1988. Fully 2,865 or 60 per cent of my constituents, indicated that they wanted "drastically reduced" the number of abortions. Approximately 2,000 or 40 per cent, indicated in effect that they wanted abortion "made more fully accessible".

May I pay particular tribute to the speech made in this House by the member for Ottawa South which voiced many of my own concerns and views. For example, his quote from Mario Cuomo about the need for society to assume that the right to life does not end at the moment of birth. Proper housing, education and nutrition for all children must be the priority of all of us who profess to be pro-life. Also, that of the member for Welland who spoke earlier tonight.

My 10 minutes is going fast. Let me urge all members of this House who are on the pro-life side of the spectrum not to vote against this bill on second reading. If enough of us private MPs do so in this Chamber, the government's bill, flawed as it is from a pro-life point of view, will die and the status quo, that is, abortion on demand will continue across Canada in all likelihood until the next election and possibly beyond.

The only Canadians who will benefit from that possibility would be the 25 per cent to 35 per cent in all 10 provinces who, opinion polls suggest, favour abortion on demand at all stages of all pregnancies.

In closing, I would urge all colleagues to consider carefully and to vote to send C-43 into a legislative committee where, hopefully, the government majority there will recognize the bill, as is, is more pro-choice than a substantive majority of both Canadians and MP's favour. If enough carefully drawn amendments are accepted, C-43 could be moved significantly closer to the government stated objective of balance in the interests of society, the protection of unborn children and the interests of some mothers in not continuing a pregnancy in defined situations.

Finally, if such amendments are not accepted, and I put this to my friends on all sides of the House who are pro-life, the majority of us in this House who believe that human life is sacred could then vote against the bill on third reading.

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak strongly against Bill C-43, an act to recriminalize abortion. I was reluctant to even participate in this debate because I am so angry that it is occurring at all. I, along with my New Democrat colleagues, opposed this bill on its introduction because abortion is a private matter, not for doctors or judges to decide, but for the woman who must live with the outcome of the decision for the rest of her life.

This is not a matter for criminal law. This is not a matter for the 255 male members or 40 female members of this House to decide. It is a matter for the woman involved.

This whole debate and the bill which is at the centre of it is based on a false assumption. That assumption is that controls are necessary, that women are unable or incapable of making this painful decision without some sort of state control. I utterly reject this assumption. Women have always, through time, and in different cultures, made these painful life and death decisions.

There is another assumption implicit in this debate and it is that this debate will somehow bring some resolution to this dilemma which confronts us. This, too, is a false assumption. I doubt that there is a legislative resolution to this question. In a pluralistic society, how can we legislate the solution to abortion?

The question of abortion is a moral question. We all bring our own life's experience, differing religious beliefs and philosophies when considering such a question. We as legislators, acting in a pluralistic society, know there is no legislative resolution to this issue. No law will end abortion. In this instance, I mean political in the crassest sense. It is, as my colleague for Victoria pointed out in last week's debate, a bill designed not to respect women or their decisions, nor in that false polarity, fuelled by

this debate, is it a bill to protect life. It is, to be blunt, a bill to protect politicians.

Some speakers in this debate have characterized this bill as a compromise. At the beginning of this debate I rejected that idea. But now I have come to agree. It is a compromise. But once again I mean that in the crassest sense. It is meant for many in this House to compromise their principles. So in this bill we do have a political compromise flowing from political expediency.

For the record I should state that that last sentence was spoken with contempt. I will now turn from speaking about the debate to the broader discussion of the issue.

The issue of abortion challenges us at the very core of our being. Abortion is a statement of failure. At the individual level, this could mean failure of partners accepting responsibility in expressing their sexuality, or failure in contraception, or failure in a relationship.

At the societal level, abortion is also a statement of failure. It is our society, despite rivers of rhetoric, saying that we do not welcome children, we do not treasure children. In the society we live in today, that message is loud and clear. It is stated in child poverty, which our leader so eloquently addressed in his last statement before this House. It is stated in the lack of resources given to child care. It is stated in overcrowded classrooms and the lack of housing where children are welcomed. There are few enough housing units where children are accepted, even fewer where space for children and those who care for them are included in the planning. These are the reasons I say abortion is a statement of failure. As I said at the beginning of my remarks, women have always recognized this.

• (1940)

For women, this issue is not abstract—it is very real. It is a women's issue. It is women's bodies and women's lives being controlled by this legislation, not men's. Women are the ones who ultimately decide this life and death issue. They have done so since time began and in all cultures. They have done so alone, in fear and secretly, often protecting the men in their lives from the enormity of their decision because they were aware that men have little ability to handle life and death decisions unless these decisions are depersonalized such as during war. They will do so no matter what this House does. I suspect that much of the anger surrounding this issue is based in recognition of this fact because ultimately this issue is about power. Women exercising their power of choice challenges that unstated premise on which our society is based, that men know best, that they are morally superior. If you doubt that assertion, just consider the continuing debate surrounding the ordination of women. I can understand that this challenge is very threatening, especially to those who are reluctant to share power with women. If women cannot be controlled, what will become of us?

Women are not morally deficient. I respect women's rights to choose. As a woman I feel betrayed by this bill. I feel betrayed by some of the formerly pro-choice women of this House. This issue is too important to flip-flop on. I implore all of the formerly pro-choice members of this House to reject political expediency and instead stand in pro-choice solidarity against this bill. Canada has signed the United Nation's Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Paragraph 4 of the Convention calls for signatories such as Canada, to:

> Repeal all national penal provisions which constitute discrimination against women.

This bill before us discriminates against women. It does not control men's sexuality and reproduction; it controls women's sexuality and reproduction. It does not limit men's right to choose whether or not to have children; it limits women's right to choose whether or not to bear a child.

As critic for the New Democratic Party on international development, I am appalled that Canada says one thing abroad and practises another at home. I have become very angry at the arguments used and abused in this House to justify this bill. Some members whom one once would have called pro-choice are saying now that they will support this bill because it proposes a national standard for abortion, a national standard for access. This is utterly outrageous. This bill does not prevent the harassment of women outside clinics. It does not create community health centres where abortions can be performed. It does not prevent restrictive laws such as the one we are currently seeing in Nova Scotia, nor will it lead to abortion services being made available in Prince Edward Island. The only national standard it sets is one of fear of being charged under the Criminal Code. This bill does not meet international standards and it does not promote a national standard. All it does is hurt women. I would have hoped that some formerly pro-choice cabi-

net ministers would have at least had the integrity to admit that.

In conclusion, I want to say that this is the issue that made me a New Democrat. It is only my party which has had the courage to tackle this issue and determine a party policy. This policy was achieved not without pain. Only the New Democrats gave the issue the priority to work through that pain and come to a position on the issue. Our detractors use this as evidence that we do not individually struggle with this issue, that we blindly and unthinkingly follow party policy. Our party speakers during this debate have made it clear that this is patent nonsense. Each one of us have brought our own life's experience, our religious beliefs and philosophies and come to a common conclusion. We, as New Democrats, respect women. We believe that abortion is a private matter for a woman and her conscience. We are confident that each woman is capable of making the right choice.

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound—Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to speak on Bill C–43, which deals with a matter that has caused a great deal of controversy and debate from coast to coast in this nation.

When we choose to enter public life, all politicians know that at times they will be faced with tough decisions. The subject of abortion is, without a doubt, one of these occasions. For example, my colleague, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources even considered quitting politics rather than support a liberal new abortion bill. This vividly illustrates the agonizing nature of reaching a decision on what is very clearly a moral, ethical and personal matter.

I have never been one to shy away from making my views public on difficult policy matters, and the same is true for the abortion issue. I have made my personal position crystal clear ever since I was elected to the House of Commons 17 years ago. I am against abortion on demand. However, I feel the life of the mother is all important and should be given top priority.

I also feel that an abortion should be made available in cases of rape and incest. When I say rape, I mean especially the rape of a minor. Not allowing abortions in these instances is tantamount to condoning these atrocious acts.

At present, we have no abortion legislation in place. This has put the federal government in a no–win situation. An abortion can now be performed at the end of the ninth month, and this is frightening. I believe at least 70 per cent of the people in Canada agree that an abortion should be available under certain circumstances. In all probability, under the circumstances I mentioned earlier.

It is my feeling that the legislation presently before this House presents a reasonable solution to the complex matter of abortion. While I am somewhat concerned that the legislation involves an amendment to the Criminal Code, I realize this is the only way the federal government can ensure a national approach to the issue of access to abortion. Under the proposed legislation, any woman seeking an abortion will have to consult a medical practitioner. If the medical practitioner feels the pregnancy would threaten the life or health of the woman, then an abortion can be performed.

Pro–life supporters have stated that the legislation is not strong enough. However, they should note that with the new legislation, a woman or her doctor can receive a maximum penalty of up to two years in jail if they breach the provisions of the law.

At this point, I would like to stress that the legislation does not provide for abortion on demand. The medical practitioner is required to determine, in accordance with generally accepted standards of the medical profession, whether there are health reasons to justify an abortion. According to these standards, abortions are rarely conducted after the foetus becomes viable, unless there are compelling foetal or maternal complications.

A sad reality is that at present a woman may feel that no alternative to an abortion exists due to her economic or social situation. It is imperative that we do whatever we can to help these individuals avoid the problem in the first place and to provide all the possible alternatives to abortion in cases where unplanned pregnancies have occurred. For this reason, I was heartened by the

measures which the Minister of National Health and Welfare has planned to put in place to reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies in this country. These include increased research into family planning, including contraception, continued funding of planned parenthood and measures to encourage more pregnant women to consider adoption in place of abortion.

• (1950)

It is my sincere hope that these measures will enable us to deal with the startling facts of teenage abortion which have recently come to my attention. In a recent issue of one of the Ottawa newspapers, for example, it stated that of the 800 girls aged 15 to 19 who became pregnant in Ottawa–Carleton in 1987, 62 per cent had abortions. Across Ontario, in the same year, 46.9 per cent of the estimated 12,800 pregnant girls in that age group had abortions. Clearly, this is an unacceptable situation.

In preparing the legislation before us, the justice minister had to keep in mind the issue of the Charter of Rights. If the government presented legislation that was too restrictive, then the Supreme Court could strike it down as it did in the Morgentaler decision. In this decision, Chief Justice Dickson wrote:

> Forcing a woman by threat of criminal sanction to carry a foetus to term is a profound interference with a woman's body and thus an infringement of the security of the person.

I am confident that Bill C–43 has responded to these concerns.

As the justice minister stated in this House, we are not asking the people of Canada to change their opinion on what they think is right. Each and every Canadian is entitled to his or her own value judgment on this very moral issue. We are merely asking Canadians to respect the views of others and to respect this new law.

Canadians will never be unanimous about what abortion laws should be passed, but it is clear that some federal legislation must be passed. If the bill is defeated, we will be right back to square one with abortions available right up to the ninth month. Clearly, this is unacceptable to the majority of Canadians.

This is a tough decision, but governments are elected to make tough decisions. The federal government has never backed away from its responsibilities and has acted to bring in a bill that strikes a moderate and balanced approach to the very sensitive abortion issue. For this reason, Bill C–43 should receive the support of this House.

I am hoping, and I think a great many other members share that hope that certain amendments may be tabled before committee and at report stage. It would then be more acceptable to some of those who have misgivings about it in its present state.

I might point out that down through the years, since I have been a member of Parliament, I have had many delegations coming to my office, primarily in Ottawa but also in my constituency office, and I will concede that the great majority of those were groups of pro–life people who were worried about the previous legislation even before it was struck down.

It is rather unusual that, in the last number of months, I had requests from members of the pro–choice group which is the first time I had ever had that in all my years here. I know we have a very difficult situation before us and I can assure you that a great many of us are worried considerably about it. As I stated, I have made my position clear not just in the last few months but down through the years since I have had the privilege of being a member of Parliament.

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and privilege to contribute to the deliberations of the House of Commons this evening on this very emotional topic. I have listened to many of the speeches during this debate and have read those that I did not hear.

Before I begin my remarks, it is important to remember that we are speaking tonight on second reading debate. If the bill passes second reading, otherwise known as approval in principle, it will go to committee for discussion and attempts at amendment. I cannot support it. I will now explain why.

On November 7 this year, the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby urged us to "speak to our mothers; speak to our sisters; speak to our daughters; speak to our wives". I have done so. I have gone further. I have spoken to my constituents. I have spoken to Canadians all across the country. My mother, my wife, my daughter, the majority of women on my riding executive, the overwhelming majority of people, both female and male with whom I have spoken and the vast majority of those who have written to me, have said no to abortion on demand. The question is not whether we should have

restrictions but, rather, the nature of the restrictions that we should have.

Of course, there are some of the opposite view. In today's mail I received a letter from a constituent. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, I quote:

> No man has the right to tell me to carry what amounts to little more than a parasite in my body. A foetus lives off the woman carrying it. This so-called human life can cause diabetes, high blood pressure, let alone discomfort, nausea and pain.

I cannot and will not subscribe to this view of the unborn being akin to a tapeworm. If this person's own mother thought as she does, perhaps she would not be alive today to write to me.

I am opposed to this bill. I believe it should be defeated tomorrow on the vote for second reading and the issue sent back for further consideration by this government. Why? This bill is the spawn of the entirely unsavoury union of hypocrisy and cowardice. With origins such as this, it must be condemned to the dustbin. Let us examine the bill.

It says, "Every person who induces an abortion". What does that mean? What is so objectionable? After all, there is no law prohibiting appendectomies or tonsillectomies. Why a law to prevent abortion? Is it not just a medical procedure like any other? Well, logic would suggest that we look to the bill for definition of what we are talking about. There is no definition. This is cowardice, this failure to deal squarely with the fundamental issue of abortion. If there is no definition, how can we possibly know what the bill is pretending to outlaw? In the absence of a definition, look to the dictionary. The shorter Oxford English Dictionary, based on historical principles, third edition, being the abridged version of the massive Oxford English Dictionary, says about abortion that it is "the procuring of premature delivery so as to destroy offspring". Offspring is defined by the dictionary as "a person's child or children". That is what abortion is. The destruction of human life, nothing less.

This bill pretends to ban the procuring of premature delivery for the purpose of destroying one's child. Does it really do so? Here begins the hypocrisy. The destruction of a human being is permitted if the medical practitioner, and that is any medical practitioner, and only one, such as Dr. Morgentaler, is of the opinion that: "The health or life of the female person would be likely to be threatened". "Likely to be threatened". Not "will be threatened". Just a mere possibility. It is totally subjective and completely open-ended.

• (2000)

It is interesting to note that notwithstanding the fact that the word "abortion" is not defined in the legislation, the word "health" is defined. Surely, this is further hypocrisy. This wide-open definition with virtually no restrictions is really nothing more than abortion on demand under the guise of what some misguided individuals believe is an implicit recognition of the humanity of the foetus.

The Supreme Court of Canada unanimously in the Daigle case has told us and all Canadians that the foetus has absolutely no rights in Canadian law whatsoever. You only get rights once you are born alive. But it went further. It said that if Canadians wish the foetus to have rights, then these rights must be explicitly, not implicitly, spelled out in legislation by the House of Commons.

I was speaking of hypocrisy. I will mention two situations only, due to time constraints, and let you be the judge as to whether there is hypocrisy or not.

First, on May 2, 1980, a member of this House of Commons proposed a private member's bill concerning an act to amend the Criminal Code, Bill C-293. It proposed that the procuring of a miscarriage, as abortion was then known, would be permissible only if the continuation of the pregnancy would be likely to actually, physically or mentally, endanger the life of the pregnant woman. This same member now supports Bill C-43, the abortion-on-demand bill. Who is this member? It is the Minister of National Health and Welfare, the member for Wellington—Grey—Dufferin—Simcoe.

Second, the Prime Minister has said he personally opposes abortion, but he will not say why. I know why. It is because he knows that abortion is the destruction of human life. If this is not why, then I challenge him to refute me tomorrow in his speech and tell us all why he personally opposes abortion.

He has said this about life:

> It is wrong to take life. I can think of no circumstances except self-defence to justify it—I will resist with all my strength, all of my life, any action that would diminish that reality and would lessen value.

Those are noble words, applicable in his mind to convicted murderers but apparently not to unborn human beings. This is a man who promised a free vote and yet has forced his ministers to choose between loyalty and conscience only to have them demonstrate apparently that loyalty overrides conscience. This is a man who is so weak of will on this issue, indistinguishable in principle from the issue of life he so vigorously defended in the capital punishment debate, that he follows rather than leads. Not only does he not have the courage of his convictions, but he insists that his ministers abandon theirs.

This bill, being a concoction of one part hypocrisy and one part cowardice, is a drink designed to be distasteful to all. It cannot in my view be amended without direct explicit recognition of the humanity of the unborn child, something which the rules of this House will not in my opinion permit by way of amendment.

It must be rejected with the admonition to the government to return with legislation which does three things: explicitly establishes the humanity of the unborn human being, protects the unborn human being from conception and is coupled with companion legislation which, as my colleague the hon. member for Northumberland has said, supports pregnant women and their children and deals with the underlying causes of abortion in this country.

Mr. Howard Crosby (Halifax West): Mr. Speaker, let me begin by saying that it is very difficult to add anything of real substance to this debate on the second reading of Bill C-43 respecting abortion in Canada.

I had the honour to precede you very briefly in the chair, Mr. Speaker, at your request. I was very grateful that I had that opportunity because it enabled me to listen to speeches from members on all sides of the House. In the short span of time that I sat in the chair, I heard a defence of what might be called the pro-life stand and a staunch defence of what might be called the pro-choice stand.

While I have my own views on abortion and the need for a law with respect to abortion, I want to say very clearly and add to the record that I think all of us have to respect those who support either view. There is no right inherent in any of us to condemn those who approach the abortion issue from a pro-life standpoint or from a pro-choice standpoint. It is only with an understanding of all the views that pertain to the issue of abortion in Canada that we can come to any national reconciliation on the issue.

In that respect, I want to point out that I understand that there is no compromising on the issue of abortion. I understand that many regard it as the killing of an unborn child, while others regard the act of abortion as saving and protecting the woman whose rights must be honoured. It is difficult to compromise on those two positions.

What we have to do is achieve some kind of balance of rights because we are, after all, legislators. We are here to legislate in the interests of all the people of Canada. To the extent that we can effectively legislate and create some reconciliation among all Canadians on the issue, that is our challenge. Our challenge is not, in my opinion, to stand here and provide support for our own particular view, or to represent any particular point of view, but rather to achieve some kind of resolution of this problem.

In that connection, let me say very quickly that I believe there has to be a law on abortion. I think that that is in the interest of all Canadians. I respect the rights of women. I understand the difficulties faced by pregnant women who want their pregnancy terminated. But I think at this point in our history it is in the interest of all Canadians to have a law on abortion.

There may come a time in the future when we will not need a law on abortion, when we have the social instruments that will preclude unwanted pregnancies or take care of unwanted pregnancies when they do occur so that we can avoid this issue of abortion. But in the meantime we have to recognize the void that exists in the law of Canada. If we can possibly remedy and fill that void, then that is or obligation. That is why I want to spend my time reviewing the law.

We had for many years in Canada complete prohibition against abortion. It was contrary to the Criminal Code. Then we allowed, by virtue of Criminal Code provisions, abortions to be performed under certain circumstances.

We cannot neglect and avoid the fact that this House of Commons, this Parliament of Canada, with the consent and concurrence of the provinces, enacted a Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We gave to the courts of Canada and to the Supreme Court of Canada the right to interpret that Charter, and the Supreme Court did so. It exercised the mandate to determine what the rights were under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It said that the existing abortion law, the law restricting abortion, providing for hospital committees to approve abortions, was not valid.

We have to recognize that that was the right of the Supreme Court of Canada to make that decision. We have to answer the question, what are we going to do about it to give it the exercise of that right in the Charter.

I have heard members say that we cannot approve the law as enacted by Bill C–43, that it does not go far enough, that it does not protect the foetus, that it does not recognize that life begins at conception, or any of the positions taken by people who espouse a pro–life point of view. But you have to recognize what the Parliament of Canada is permitted to do under the law. Very few of those members who take that position referred to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and recognize that we must amend the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms if we are to provide rights to the unborn. It is a constitutional issue.

The member from Scarborough talked about a law that defined the rights of a foetus. We cannot enact that law in Parliament. It has to be by way of amendment to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We can only do what the law permits the House of Commons and the Parliament of Canada to do, that is to enact a law that does not violate the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada. If I had the opportunity to enact a law, I would do so.

• (2010)

I presented Bill C–203 to the House of Commons in the first session of the thirty–fourth Parliament. It indicates, I believe, the strongest law that can be enacted with respect to abortion, but I do not think that the government and many lawyers will accept the fact that that law would pass the test of the Supreme Court of Canada.

My point is simply this. In Bill C–43 now before the House of Commons we have been presented with a law that restricts abortion in Canada. It may not restrict abortion to the extent that many members want, but I cannot accept that as a reason to vote against the bill. I can understand that those who espouse a pro–choice position will vote against that bill. They believe that a woman should have a right to an abortion if that is her decision with respect to a particular pregnancy. I understand that they would vote against the bill, but I do not understand a person who is interested in protecting life voting against Bill C–43 at second reading. I do not understand that position. If this bill is defeated in this House of Commons, there will be in Canada no law on abortion and no real possibility of enacting a law. Is that the position that members want?

Ms. Black: Yes!

Mr. Crosby: I have said very clearly that I believe that Canadians want and require a law on abortion. It is not an overwhelming majority but it is the consensus of opinion in Canada.

Why do I think that? Because I do not think most Canadians desire and want what is happening in Halifax, Nova Scotia at the Morgentaler clinic. I do not think that Canadians want abortion reduced to the level of walking in off the street and having it over and done with and forget about the consequences.

I believe that Canadians want consideration. They want the sanctity of life protected by a law. Whether or not this should mean that women will be denied abortions in reasonable circumstances is another matter. I believe that at this stage in our history the law while restrictive must conform to the Supreme Court of Canada decision. We really do not have that choice without a constitutional amendment.

My purpose is simply to remind members of the state of the law, to recognize what the House of Commons, the Parliament of Canada, can do and cannot do with respect to abortion.

I believe Bill C–43 represents a measure that the Parliament of Canada can take, not a measure that will satisfy those who believe that life begins at conception and under no or very, very extremely limited circumstances can a pregnancy be terminated. I recognize their position, but it is not one that we can implement in this House of Commons today.

The expression comes to mind like half a loaf is better than none at all. I know it is considered to be unsatisfactory. I think the fact that the bill is opposed by both pro–life advocates and pro–choice advocates indicates that it does effect some kind of balancing of rights. I

think all we can do at this stage of our history is balance rights.

We can and we will have the opportunity to add amendments to the bill. I think that abortion should be performed in an accredited hospital. I do not think it should be left to the parties to decide where an abortion can be performed.

As far as the bill having no real effect, that is not true. It would be very unwise for a medical practitioner in Canada if this bill is enacted to perform an abortion without having objective criteria to adjudicate whether or not health was affected. I think a medical practitioner would be very unwise to not have a second opinion on an abortion. I say that to the people who advocate that pro-choice view. That is something that they should consider. It is possible for a woman to be prosecuted under this provision. I do not think that we should hide behind the fact that a woman may not be prosecuted because under the existing law pregnant women were specifically mentioned and they are not under this bill.

I think we should look at this provision realistically. It does restrict abortion. Do not make any mistake about that. There is not a doctor in Canada who will rush in and perform an abortion just on his own say so that the health of the mother is in jeopardy. They will get second opinions. They will go through processes. It is going to take time and effort to get an abortion. Those people who regard the provisions as meaningless are mistaken in my opinion.

I am not supporting in any way, shape or form the pro-choice group. I want to point that out. The bill does restrict abortion. It restricts it in a way that is valid under the Supreme Court of Canada decision. It is all the Parliament of Canada can do at this stage in history. I would urge members to support the bill and propose amendments at the committee stage.

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in this debate this evening on the crucial matter of abortion facing not only this Parliament but, indeed, this country. It is, of course, an extremely delicate and complex subject matter which has aroused and will continue to arouse the passions of Canadians from coast to coast and lead them to explore this most fundamental dilemma.

In any discussion on abortion several parameters need to be drawn. First, most Canadians would acknowledge that this issue is not an easy one, for such fundamental questions of life and death strike at the very foundation of our society.

Second, the issue is a multi-faceted one which involves the social, moral, philosophical and religious forces of the day, as well as pits the rights and the choice of individual women against the collective rights of a society and, indeed, the rights of the unborn.

Thus, because the equation is a multi-dimensional one, the challenge becomes one of distinguishing the order of importance among the competing variables. Which is the most important variable? Which is of paramount priority?

Third, there are few issues like abortion which create the polarized extremes which seem to colour this particular debate. Consequently, the traditional Canadian way of compromise or building bridges between these two polarized shores is made extremely difficult, if not nearly impossible.

Under these three parameters any discussion will prove difficult and challenging to say the least. But, at the same time, it requires an extra investment on our part as a Parliament and as a society to ensure that our response to the issue rises in honesty and in clarity to the occasion.

I had the opportunity during the previous Parliament, as you well know, Mr. Speaker, back in July of 1988 to voice my thoughts on the question of abortion. Therefore, I will try not to repeat the arguments that I made some years ago, but yet, in the 10 minutes allotted to me this evening, I will take the opportunity to specifically focus on the government's proposed abortion legislation and thereby share with my constituents and my colleagues my views and feelings about the quality of the current legislative response to this emotional issue.

In the last Parliament when we were asked to choose among a multitude of motions I supported the one motion which was considered to be the pro-life option. I did so with conviction and deep belief and without any regrets or apologies. I did express, however, my deep reservations with three specific exceptions which I simply was not prepared to overlook, namely, where an abortion was performed in a case where the life of the mother was seriously endangered; where the pregnancy was the

result of rape; and where the pregnancy was the result of incest.

I was not able under those three conditions to carry through with simply the one view that the pro-life option was not prepared to take into consideration the sense of compassion and fairness. That was my position then and that remains my position today.

Consequently, I am not pleased with the proposed legislative response by this government today. I believe the bill is a poor, inadequate attempt at addressing and accounting for the many delicate issues that define the abortion discussion and the abortion debate. I, therefore, will not and cannot support this bill at second reading under any circumstances.

• (2020)

Let me illustrate briefly why I will vote against this legislative measure. First, for me, this proposed law as written is paramount to abortion on demand. The proposed law would make it very easy and very open-ended for the vast majority of women in Canada to obtain and secure an abortion. It is open-ended for any health reason which is loosely defined as including physical, mental and/or psychological factors. It is open-ended for any medical practitioner to approve the abortion. It is open-ended for ending a pregnancy at any stage of a woman's pregnancy. Really, is there a major difference between this bad law and no law at all?

Second, there is absolutely no reference, no effort in defining the rights of the foetus, the rights of the unborn. There is no attempt to define at what stage in the pregnancy that right, that life becomes paramount.

What about the past Supreme Court decision which requested and indeed challenged Parliament and parliamentarians to toil with this issue in order to provide guidance and leadership to both the country and our courts? Was this not to be a central premise in this current debate? Do we think that as a Parliament by avoiding the issue it will go away by itself? I do not believe it will. I believe with a deep sense of commitment that the majority of Canadians feel the same way. They would have in fact greater respect for us and this place as an institution if they believed and sensed that we really toiled over this emotional dilemma.

Third, with regard to women who do not wish to continue with their pregnancies, how does this proposed legislative package help to offer an alternative other than abortion? Where is the incentive, the resources and the support to encourage the birth alternative? Does an unwanted, unwarranted pregnancy have to mean an unwanted baby? Clearly, it should not and does not. Therefore if we wish, as a government, as a Parliament, to encourage women that they can and should give life to their unborn without having to jeopardize their own lives, then we must commit to effective counselling, for instance, to rebuild a woman's self-esteem and self confidence. We must provide nurturing and homes for women whose families may not be willing to accept an unwanted pregnancy.

We must provide medical assistance to meet those sudden physical and medical needs that may legitimately arise. We must provide career and educational programs to allow those women to resume their career or academic studies. We must provide necessary financial assistance for the expenses inherent in that pregnancy. This bill, however, does not even begin to discuss any kind or any type of support mechanism whatsoever. It is bankrupt of any commitment or compassion toward those women in severe difficulty.

Fourth, why is there no discussion, no reform of our adoption procedures as a possible answer and option to the unwanted child as an answer and a bridge of understanding to the growing number of childless Canadian couples who would dearly love to experience the special gift of parenthood? Why is the bill silent on these concerns when couples presently cannot find children to adopt in this country? If you are the chosen and fortunate few, then the process takes years, not months and clearly not weeks.

Alternatively, if these couples look for parenthood opportunities abroad, they will not only find a flourishing expensive business, but a very complicated bureaucratic process be it overseas or be it in this country.

Are we to have no answers at all? Unfortunately, Bill C-43 is silent on many issues. Yes, these questions are difficult. Yes, these questions are challenging. But, by the same token, it is far too easy for us as a Parliament and for the government to hide from them. That is precisely what this bill does. It runs away from making the necessary difficult decisions. Instead, it attempts to please superficially the two ends of the current debate.

For the pro-life element, this bill in the very first sentence of the very first paragraph makes abortion an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment.

Yet, in the very next breath, at the very end of that first line in the first paragraph for the pro-choice element the bill basically says: "Don't you worry, because if you get approval of any medical practitioner on any health reason, then abortion is legitimate and not an offence." I cannot, and I refuse, to support that type of cheap rationale.

Moreover, I cannot accept the challenge or the arguments of those who say: "Well, I don't like the bill at all, but I will support it at second reading. Let it get into committee and then we have a chance of amending the bill to our liking". That kind of rationale has two faults. First, it fails to recognize that Bill C-43 is bad legislation, that it is a fatally flawed document that does not merit that compromise. It is, for me, far better to make a strong unequivocal statement that Parliament and Canadians deserve better, that the government ought to bring back a proposed piece of legislation that is more worthy, more responsible to the challenges that confront us as a Parliament.

Second, the government has made it abundantly clear that it will not tolerate any loosening of the woman's free choice to choose. When this overriding point of view is complemented with the parliamentary committee process that does not permit amendments outside the purview of the bill, then what is the point of this charade at second reading? Is it to prove to the government that it was able to get the bill to second reading? Is it to delay the ultimate showdown to third reading? If it is, how better off are we going to be as a country if, after a lengthy process at committee stage, the amendments for either the pro-choice or pro-life elements are refused and the resulting shift in votes assures defeat at third reading? How would we have advanced the cause for a mature and rational law which would govern abortion and which would define the rights of the unborn?

In conclusion, both the issue and Canadians deserve better. Let us involve Canadians in a process where, in the end, the process will yield positive results, tangible results, and not a process that risks producing a stalemate which would only further aggravate and frustrate the respective passions intensively felt on this issue.

I will vote against this bill at second reading. I truly hope a majority of my colleagues will be joining me.

Mr. Jack Whittaker (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Mr. Speaker, as I stand here I wonder why it is that I am standing here speaking on a bill that concerns women. When I watched in the last Parliament the last debate on the abortion issue, what I saw was a number of middle-aged men once again trying to tell women how they should arrange their lives. At that time, as I sat in my home in the comfort of my living-room watching the television, I wondered why it was that a male-dominated Parliament should be once again trying to control or continue to control a significant part of Canada's population.

When is the male population that I am a part of going to realize that women are capable of managing their own affairs without interference from us, the men of Canada? Life, death and all of the terms and times in between are of concern to me. But when I look at Bill C-43, it does nothing to accomplish what must be accomplished and what already has been accomplished by the Supreme Court of Canada in its recent decisions. It struck down the criminalization of abortion in Canada. In the period of time since then, women have once again proven to all in the world, and particularly all in Canada, that they are very capable of arranging and controlling their lives. There has not been a massive increase in abortions within Canada. There has not been what so many of those against choice for women have said will happen. I repeat that women have proven once again that they are very capable of managing their own lives.

• (2030)

In trying to grapple with the very issue that is before us and has been brought once again before Parliament, even though it was already dealt with through Bill C-43, I had to look for help from those who would be affected by the legislation. One of the people I looked to was one of my constituents who wrote to me. I would like to read to you today what she said to me: "I am one of your pro-choice constituents and I am also definitely one of your pro-life constituents. No dichotomy exists in being pro-life and pro-choice. I have two children and support any woman's right to bear children. However, I also support any woman's right not to bear children. Women will always have the final say on abortion. No legislature or Supreme Court justice can change that, all they can

do is make it illegal or difficult to obtain. All that politicians or members of the judiciary can do is force women, mainly poor women, to suffer the indignities of hurdling barriers designed solely to harass them. Access to reproductive health care for a woman should not depend on geography or a bank account."

If we analyze what this constituent has been telling me and I pass on to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the people of Canada that it appears that what is in fact going to happen through Bill C–43, and through any legislation that criminalizes the termination of an unwanted pregnancy, will force more and more people, more and more women, poor women, into the back streets for their abortions, with the problems that we have seen so often in those areas.

I deeply respect and value all life on our fragile planet, but denying women access to safe therapeutic abortions will not in any way enhance our communities' respect for human life. Desperate women will seek illegal abortions at the hands of back street abortionists, or use methods themselves which endanger their own lives.

Under Italy's harsh anti–abortion laws, repealed in 1978, estimates placed the annual number of illegal abortions as high as 800,000 per year with 2,000 women dying annually of complications.

Limiting access to abortion will not reduce the number of abortions in Canada, but will cause a significant increase in maternal mortality and injury. This surely constitutes disregard and not respect for human life.

I must also point out that we on this side of the House have never advocated abortion as an alternative to contraception. The decision to have an abortion is an agonizing one for any woman, yet it is ultimately her own choice determined by the dictates of her own conscience and in consultation with her physician. It cannot be a choice determined by the legislators.

I certainly acknowledge the complexities and sensitivity of this issue. I also recognize the importance of reducing the number of abortions in Canada. This can be accomplished by improving the availability of contraceptive information and materials, ensuring better sex education programs, and providing increased funding for birth control research and family planning programs. This position was taken as long ago as 1971 by the Canadian Medical Association and supported by many other well respected organizations and individuals in Canada, including the United Church of Canada.

In supporting childbirth by choice, I am supporting the principle of freedom of choice in planning one's family. This principle was recognized by the International Conference on Population and Development and sponsored by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities. I fully support this principle that they have enunciated, and believe that it is a responsibility of government to provide alternatives to abortion, such as counselling, prenatal care, child care and adoption assistance. Funding these types of services, rather than restricting access to abortion, will do more to help decrease the number of abortions than will a return to criminalization.

I cannot support this bill because of that.

Mr. Joe McGuire (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, it is both my pleasure and duty to participate in this most important debate on abortion, and I welcome the opportunity to do so tonight. It is a subject which has provoked incredibly intense feelings on both sides, and has tortured the heart and soul of millions of people across this country. The argument has been one in which emotion has often transcended reason.

That having been said, it is incumbent upon us as members of Parliament to deal with this most sensitive of issues. We must fulfill our responsibilities as legislators. We must provide leadership and direction, and we must formulate a law which is moral and just.

During the year which has passed since I was elected to represent the riding of Egmont, I have received hundreds of letters and visits from constituents on this issue of abortion. It has been a great comfort to me that the vast majority of those who took the time and trouble to write and speak to me share my views on this matter.

I consider the question of abortion to be one of public as well as private morality. It is a question which involves the sanctity of human life and the civil rights of all

human beings. It is a question the answer to which provides a measure of our country as a civilized country.

In introducing Bill C–43, the government took the simplest course available to it, other than doing nothing. It declared that abortion is a matter between a woman and her doctor, but with penalties for abuses of the law. Symbolically, it makes abortion illegal. Effectively, it provides abortion on demand. There is no protection for the unborn child.

Who is responsible for the protection of life in our society? Upon whom does the onus lie to protect all members of that society? Who, if not the state? I consider this bill an abdication of that responsibility. The youngest, the most innocent, the most defenceless members of our society have been abandoned. Our laws are a reflection of our morality. How sad it is today that we are being asked to support legislation which legitimizes the killing of the unborn. A law which permits the killing of human beings is uncivilized and thus unacceptable.

The Minister of Health and Welfare in his remarks to the House said: "We have been elected by Canadians to choose the course which best balances the rights of everyone concerned."

I contend that every one concerned has not been considered in this bill. One group has been omitted, left unprotected. The unborn have been left to the mercy of their mothers and their doctors. They have been given the authority to pronounce the death sentence on unborn children. It is an appalling situation.

• (2040)

My colleague from Leeds—Grenville, in one of the coherent and reasoned speeches of this debate, referred to that kind of situation as an extension of our throw-away society. When something is inconvenient, get rid of it. He asked, is it moral for the strong to destroy the weak? Remember that two people go into a Morgentaler clinic but only one comes out.

Our society generally embraces and upholds the sacredness of life. We resist the threat to life posed by the world's nuclear capabilities. We resist the threat to life generated by racial strife and by poverty. We in this country have resisted capital punishment. I believe that we have developed a consistent life ethic in our nation. We pride ourselves in that. We consider ourselves the most civilized of societies.

Any society that calls itself civilized will have as its highest value the preservation of human life. It logically follows that legislators in such a society will have as their highest priority laws which serve to protect that human life from its beginning to its end.

Medical technology has proven beyond any doubt that life begins at conception. Where else could it begin? Given this fact, I cannot accept that from the moment of conception until some optional time during the pregnancy, we are prepared to give a woman and her doctor the legal right to arbitrarily terminate that life. We cannot say that terminating a life is okay up to a point, but from that point onward it is a criminal offence. I contend that there is a serious flaw in the logic of this process, a flaw which is embedded in Bill C–43. It also makes one wonder what the future holds for the aged, and for the physically and mentally handicapped.

An American writer, Shelley Douglas, raised an interesting point. She states: "We have been so busy arguing over the right to choose that we have lost sight of whether the choice itself is a good choice for people to have to make". Much of the discussion now is not on whether abortion is right or wrong, but rather on the woman's right to choose. Abortion is now cast as a struggle of power, domination and control. Mercy and compassion are disappearing. The idea of abortion as a moral failure is lost on many people. For some, abortion has become a convenience, an acceptable form of birth control.

This debate has illustrated the dilemma in which we find ourselves. The rights of women are being pitted against the lives of the unborn. Let us look at some figures. Each year in Canada approximately 65,000 unborn children are killed. In the United States since the *Wade vs. Roe* decision in 1973, over 20 million Americans have lost their lives without ever having seen the light of day. No atrocity of history can match these figures.

The violence which is abortion is a violence against the unborn and a violence against women. The very heart of this position is an understanding that women, men and children, including the unborn are equal.

American psychologist, Sidney Callahan states: "It is my personal conviction that all human beings are of equal intrinsic moral worth; that no human being is

morally inferior to another". This is also a basic tenet of our liberal democratic society.

From this moral premise it follows that those persons in a society endowed with power, ability and goods have moral obligations to protect and aid those who are in need, those who are vulnerable, and those who are dependent upon others.

The unborn child, being a dependent human being, relies on others in the human community. These others have a moral obligation to its protection and nurture. The woman who alone has the power to sustain life in her womb has a corresponding obligation to protect and nurture it. Our most fundamental right is the right to life, the right not to be killed. This intrinsic right to life is more basic than the right to self-determination or liberty. In fact, it is the right upon which all others depend.

This, I believe to be the bottom line in this entire debate. Abortions which serve social ends or are used for contraception or family planning negate the basic principle of the moral equality of all human beings. Therefore, if the basic issue of this debate is reduced to the mother's right to choose versus the child's right to life, there is no question, absolutely no question, the unborn child's right to life must prevail.

While being unequivocally opposed to abortion, I realize that being just anti-abortion does not make one fully pro-life. A new abortion law which would give full protection to the unborn should not stand by itself. It must be supported by policies and programs which would address the social and economic conditions that contribute to abortion.

In a full pro-life program, a thorough presentation of abortion alternatives must be presented. Abortion procedures, adoption procedures and incentives must be reconstructed to better serve the infant, the mother and the receiving family. The stigma of putting a child up for adoption and of being adopted must be removed. Job security, financial support, counselling programs, nutritional programs, crisis pregnancy centers, and especially day care must be made available. Equal opportunity and pay for women must be enforced. Maternity and paternity leave to care for sick children must be implemented.

In conjunction with these programs, we must attack the problem of abortion at its roots before the pregnancy starts. We must educate, we must develop a healthy understanding of our sexuality, and of our sexual behaviour and its physical, emotional and spiritual consequences. Therefore, our various levels of government, our private sector, our various churches and church groups must come together to address the problem of unplanned pregnancies and unwanted children.

Abortion is an incredibly poor response to the beginning of a new life.

Pro-life then is a package deal. We cannot talk about protecting the unborn in an isolated fashion.

As American pro-life writer, Melissa Simmons Tulin states: "We must be willing to take our platitudes off our placards and put our ideology into action."

There are those among us who would argue that we must legalize abortion at least until all these previously mentioned programs are in place. To do that would be to ensure that the programs would never be developed, and we would never reach the kind of world for which we strive.

In fact, American experience would indicate that we should expect a regression in this area. In the U.S. there has been an attrition of programs to support human needs and this has been blamed directly on the availability of abortion.

Canada is the kinder and gentler nation of which President George Bush spoke after his election campaign. We must not compromise these qualities of which Mr. Bush was so envious. We must not allow life to become cheap and expendable. But we must build barriers to abortion and at the same time create alternatives that women's, men's and children's lives become more joyful and more meaningful.

In conclusion, I believe that life begins at conception. I believe that the foetus is a living human being. The right of a woman to have an abortion can only be made law by denying the unborn child the right to exist, by allowing the murder of another human being. Bill C-43 would legalize the taking of another human being's life. I cannot support this legislation, and I intend to vote against it at every stage.

Mr. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt): Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to stand in the House and exercise democracy. Yet, when I stand to to speak on this particular Bill C–43, I am disheartened.

Our country has been without a law for almost two years and the party in power brings in a law which does not satisfy any side. It does not say anything. It is all a bunch of hogwash.

The one question that is very important, the one question that we Canadians must ask ourselves is a fundamental one. When does life begin? We are sure that life begins at birth, so there is no question about that. Does life begin before birth? The one question that we can also ask is, will you kill a child five minutes before birth? Will you have an abortion two days before birth? Will you have an abortion a week before birth? I have to find one Canadian who will say, yes, you can have an abortion one week before birth. By that time the child is fully developed, ready to sustain itself. Therefore, we clearly come to an agreement that life begins somewhere before birth. And yet you go to the medical profession and ask: When does life begin? Some doctors say it begins at 12 weeks; others say at 8, others say at 16, others say at 18. They are not clear. They are presenting a grey area. Therefore, my belief is to take it right back to basics and believe that life starts at conception. I cannot and will not support a bill which does not realize that life begins at conception. Therefore, when life begins at conception, the rights of the unborn, the rights of the foetus, should be protected.

• (2050)

We have in this country a Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and yet that Charter of Rights does not protect the unborn. We should make sure, we have to work hard and we have to strive to ensure, that the life of the unborn is protected from the beginning.

Canada needs a law, not this particular piece of legislation that the government wants to bring in. I cannot support it, I will not support it and I join many of my colleagues who feel the same. This particular bill, in my eyes, and in the view of many Canadians is a complete failure. Canada needs a law that will protect the unborn. We have to protect the unborn from the day of conception.

The other question that arises in protecting the unborn, how can you tell a 14 or a 16 year old girl who got into trouble that she has to have that child? She goes home and says to her mother and her father: 'Mother, father, I have made a mistake." Or "I am pregnant." Then the father panics and says that she has to have an abortion. We have to reach out and educate Canadians. We have to reach out and educate every single Canadian that life is precious. If the father or the mother is to say to the young girl who got into trouble that they do not want her and she has to leave, then we have a moral responsibility as Canadians to protect and support that individual through her pregnancy and after her pregnancy.

In my riding there is a place where young mothers who want to keep their children and whose parents will not allow them to stay at home can and do go in order to go through their pregnancy and bring the child into the world.

In our country, there is a backlog of up to five years in some places for people who want to adopt children. There is also, I believe, a certain age limit over which people cannot adopt any children. Yet, many Canadians travel outside Canada to places such as Mexico, Brazil, and South Asia in order to adopt children. If we were to bring in a law that protects the unborn and if the pregnancy was to be fulfilled, if the young mother does not want to have the child, and that child was to be given up for adoption, then we will make a family that cannot bear children happy. They will be very glad to look after that child.

We have also to provide education for our youth, education that says to young people: If you make the mistake, we will provide for you. However, this is what you do so you do not make mistakes. We have to bring in legislation that protects and encourages our young people not to fall into that particular trap of unwanted pregnancies. Further, the government, in my view, has to bring in legislation that will provide and care for a young individual or a mother who wants to go through a pregnancy after conception.

In closing, I find it very difficult to support this bill. I cannot see how on one side the Prime Minister says it is going to be a free vote while the Cabinet is forced to vote one way. That clearly sends a message to the members on the other side that since the Cabinet is voting that way, if you do not toe the line, you will not be looked upon favourably.

Do we have a double standard on this? Do we not let individuals have a free vote on a very important moral issue? I find that a little disturbing. Democracy is not allowed to take its full course when a member is told that this is what he or she has to do on an issue which is very, very important. The Canadian people cannot tolerate such an action. It is like putting a gun to the member's head and saying: "You vote this way".

I cannot support it. I will not support it. I believe life starts at conception. I encourage colleagues in this House not to support this particular bill.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak to Bill C–43, whose purpose is to provide for legislation respecting abortion.

Since my speaking time is limited, I will not go into the details of this issue. As you know, Mr. Speaker, abortion is a very complex matter. People are divided in their opinions and we have a long way to go before a consensus is reached. On one side, we have those who say that abortion should be available on demand, while on the other side, people would like to see access to abortion restricted altogether. Where is the happy medium?

The abortion issue has created one of the most difficult dilemmas Canadians and Members of Parliament have had to face in recent years.

Like other Members, I received a large number of letters and telephone calls from my constituents and many other Canadians, all of whom expressed their views, firmly believing that their particular position was the best.

I would like to thank all these people for having shared their thoughts and views with me on this very delicate matter. Many of these people, Mr. Speaker, informed me that they wanted to see this dilemma resolved once and for all. Canadians expect their elected representatives to use the means at their disposal to fill the existing legal vacuum with respect to abortion.

Many believe that abortion should not be available on demand, but at the same time, they feel that access should not be eliminated entirely. I am sure my hon. colleagues have received similar comments.

As far as dealing with the abortion issue is concerned, the government has a wide variety of legal and political options at its disposal.

The government has been slow to table a bill on abortion, and I find this attitude deplorable. In fact, the former Minister of Justice promised he would table a bill as soon as possible, and this was some time ago.

Be that as it may, we must now deal with the issue before the House, Bill C–43.

[*English*]

This is a very sensitive question and certainly a moral dilemma. Personally, my view of abortion has evolved over the years. It has not remained static. I believe that in examining the bill on abortion it is important not to make a decision based on our own personal views alone. One must be prepared to sacrifice personal opinions and biases for the common good. To do otherwise would lead to a very selfish society, to say the least.

There is no doubt that the government has been remiss in not introducing companion legislation that would eradicate or reduce greatly the need for abortions.

The priority of this government and any successive governments should be to eliminate the need for abortions other than in life–threatening situations. To do this, the government must take action and not just talk about it. This government has been in office since 1984 and has yet to deliver on its promise for child care. What kind of message is that to Canadians? We need more education for all Canadians, especially young Canadians, to ensure that they become responsible citizens.

Society, through government, must offer an opportunity for women to handle unwanted pregnancies. We tend to blame the mother for the decision to have an abortion. But society must accept the blame because of its attitude toward these mothers. Society must accept the blame because of its negative attitude toward unwanted pregnancies. Society must accept the blame because of its failure to deal with the many social and economic problems faced by many women with unwanted pregnancies.

Bill C–43, according to the Minister of Justice, was supposed to be a compromise. Unfortunately, I have difficulty in reaching the same conclusions as the hon. minister. There is no doubt an abortion law is needed. However, the law must be a good one. If the bill is obviously poor and if it is found to be completely

unsatisfactory then the Member of Parliament is duty bound to deny it his support.

After reviewing this bill, C–43, it is obvious that it is abortion on demand. It is not a compromise but just a disguised bill that favours abortion on demand. A proper compromise could have limited abortions where the life of the mother, incest or rape is involved.

Another compromise could have been to decriminalize abortions. Neither of these compromises were attempted. Definitions of terms, such as the health of the mother, have not been sufficiently explained. The question of rights of the foetus has not been addressed either. This law will not resolve the current debate but only muddy the issue and prolong anguish and uncertainty that now exist on the question. As such, I must state that I will not be supporting Bill C–43.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, Bill C–43 in my view is a fraudulent and dishonest piece of legislation. On the one hand, the Government of Canada, through the Minister of Justice, is prohibiting abortion by criminalizing abortion in the Criminal Code of Canada. In effect, it is telling Canadians that abortion is legal. On the other hand, however, it has defined the situations under which an abortion would be available in such a broad fashion as to result in abortion on demand.

Before addressing some particular provisions in Bill C–43, I would like to comment very briefly on the process that we are going through with respect to this particular piece of legislation. As you know, Canada has been without an abortion law since January 28, 1988 when the Supreme Court of Canada struck down the Criminal Code provisions dealing with abortion. For almost two years the government has failed to live up to its responsibility to provide the necessary leadership in order to ensure that abortion in Canada is regulated. There was an attempt to sense the will of the House of Commons when the government tried by way of resolution to get a clear consensus in the House and, of course, that particular process failed. The Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice on a number of occasions have indicated that legislation would be introduced and that the legislation would recognize the pluralistic nature of Canadian society.

The Prime Minister also promised that there would be a free vote in the House of Commons. Well, let me say that there will not be a free vote. This particular piece of legislation is rigged. It is rigged in order to ensure passage of the bill. If we were dealing with a free vote situation, then the Prime Minister would not be instructing his cabinet ministers to support the legislation. The Minister of Justice would not be indicating to members of the House that the government would not be accepting amendments to this legislation.

If it were a true free vote situation, then all members of Parliament would be permitted to vote according to his or her own conscience. Well, they are not permitted to do so. Conservative back–benchers are told that they have a free vote on the matter but Conservative cabinet ministers are forced into supporting the position of the government. Having said that, it is clear that tomorrow this House will be called upon to decide whether or not this legislation should proceed further, whether or not this legislation should be considered by a legislative committee. In my view, it is essential that the bill pass tomorrow, that the bill be referred to a legislative committee because if this House does not support passage of Bill C–43 at second reading stage, regardless of how one might feel about this particular legislation, that will be the end of the matter as far as the House of Commons is concerned. In effect, the so–called pro–choice people will have scored a significant victory in that there will be no legislation and the *status quo* will continue. We will continue to have no law in Canada. There will be abortion on demand.

However, if the bill is referred to committee there is an opportunity to amend the bill in order to ensure that the innocent unborn will be afforded the protection that they deserve.

I have spoken on many occasions over the past five years on the issue of abortion. My views are well known. I have introduced a number of private member's bills, the latest of which was introduced last September. I have spoken outside the House on many occasions. I would like to make it absolutely clear that I am opposed to abortion. I believe that abortion is morally wrong, that it

is the destruction of human life, that human life begins at the moment of conception and that it ought to be protected from the moment of conception to natural birth.

We as legislators, we as parliamentarians have no right to distinguish between human life after birth, regardless of how miserable a life may be after the moment of birth. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms says that every Canadian is entitled to the right to life. The right to life is the only absolute right that we as Canadians enjoy. We do not have capital punishment in Canada. Under no circumstances does the state or any individual have the right to take another life.

Every other right, whether it is the right to free speech or the right to freedom of assembly, or the right to the security of the person, those rights have to be balanced against other rights. The right to free speech is limited by the laws of slander. For example, the right of assembly is limited by municipal ordinance, and every other right that one can think of, those enunciated under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and other rights under common law are subject and limited. The right to life is unlimited in Canada after birth. This government has not dealt with the crucial issue of foetal rights, when life begins.

• (2110)

Just last week the Supreme Court of Canada in the Daigle case confirmed that there is no recognition in Canada of foetal rights. It is incumbent upon this Parliament and the Government of Canada to indicate in a very explicit way that life begins before birth, that life begins at the moment of conception.

Bill C-43 is unenforceable. As I indicated, it is a fraudulent piece of legislation. There is absolutely no explicit recognition of foetal rights although one can argue that there is an implicit recognition of foetal rights. Why else would you have a piece of criminal legislation dealing with abortion?

In its present form, the bill is totally unenforceable; the question of abortion is rendered a medical decision if the health of the mother, and health is defined as being physical, mental or psychological, is deemed to be endangered. To use the words in the legislation itself: "if the health or life of the female person would be likely to be threatened" then an abortion can be performed.

The bill indicates that a medical practitioner must form the opinion, it does not indicate that the doctor who forms the opinion must perform the abortion. In effect, you can have one doctor forming the opinion and another doctor performing the abortion. As I indicated, health is defined in such a broad way as to result in abortion on demand, and that is totally unacceptable.

I and I know other members intend to move amendments at committee to afford protection to the innocent unborn, but in order to do that and in order to have the opportunity to produce truly pro-life legislation, this bill must pass the second reading hurdle, and that happens tomorrow. Regardless of how bad this legislation is, in order to have that opportunity and avoid the situation where we will have absolutely no law at all, I urge my colleagues to support the bill. If the pro-life amendments are not accepted then we can defeat the bill at third reading stage.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Rocheleau (Hull—Aylmer): Mr. Speaker, I could have waited and then gone ahead and voted on Bill C-43, but I felt that voting without giving any explanation would be taking the easy way out.

During the last election campaign, I was approached on several occasions by both pro-life and pro-choice group, and at the time, I announced that I supported pro-life.

I think the Bill as tabled by the government is an intellectual fraud which, on the face of it, would seem to satisfy both parties, pro-life and pro-choice. That is not the case, however. This evening, we are talking about a basic right, a right to life. To me, the issue is not women's rights or human rights but simply the right of a child from the time of conception, a child that has no other demands but to be born and one day serve its fellow citizens. The way the bill was tabled, the impression was given that Cabinet of course had to support it, and the rest of the House was free to deal with the bill as it pleased. However, Mr. Speaker, that is not the case, because the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lewis) already indicated in the House that there would be no amendments to this bill. And if there are no amendments, I can hardly support legislation that provides no remedies at all Mr. Speaker.

I think a fundamental principle, a moral issue and a matter of conscience are at stake here, and as I explained to many of my constituents, just because the polls or the majority of Canadians are pro-choice, I still don't think that I, as a Member of the House of Commons, elected by the people of the riding of Hull—Aylmer, should vote the way the majority votes. I think that a lot more is involved, Mr. Speaker. It is a matter of conscience. I respect people who take a different view, but tomorrow, if there is a vote, I will have to vote against the bill, Mr.

Speaker, because I cannot accept it in its present form, nor an I accept any of the amendments that may be tabled.

[*English*]

Mr. Jerry Pickard (Essex—Kent): Mr. Speaker, I stand today to oppose Bill C–43 and make a commitment that tomorrow I will not support that bill.

I believe that our society is a very compassionate society, and as a compassionate society we have to protect children. We have to protect those who are weaker than others, and in this case in particular we have to protect those unborn children. I believe that this bill has a very negative effect on compassion in this society.

I also believe that pregnant mothers suffer a great deal when we talk about abortion. The effects on those mothers who have had an abortion are very great and very dramatic.

Senator Hubert Humphrey of the United States stated that the test of a civilized society is how that society treats those in the dawn of life, in the margins of life and in the twilight of life. If we stop and consider it, abortion is a devastating set–back to our civilization.

When I stop and think about what a friend said to me a while back, it really is an issue of human compassion. I was the sixth of several children in my family and had this bill C–43 been in effect 40 years ago I may not be here today. In fact, that is very true. It is very true that Bill C–43 will allow abortions to go almost at hand on the demand of a pregnant woman and with the agreement of the doctor.

Statistics show that from 1970 to 1989, there has been a tremendous increase in the rate of abortion. In 1970, 11,000 abortions occurred. The upswing to 1989 has shown that 63,000 abortions have occurred to date. Eight–eight per cent of those occur before the thirteenth week of pregnancy, while only .4 per cent after the twentieth week.

Those who are having most abortions are unmarried women. They account for 78 per cent of abortions. Twenty per cent of abortion recipients have had prior abortions. Fifty–seven per cent of the women were childless. Abortions among those from age 15 to 19 was 21 per cent; 20 to 24 years of age, 31 per cent; 25 to 29 years, 22 per cent, which illustrates that a majority of abortions were in the younger age groups.

I believe that life begins at conception. Eighty–eight per cent of abortions are done on or before the thirteenth week which means that over 56,000 abortions were conducted when it was possible that some of these characteristics were in that foetus.

• (2120)

Some 18 days after conception heartbeat begins; at 30 days, foundation to the brain begins; at 43 days, brain waves start. At six weeks, the nervous system and muscles start working; at seven weeks, internal organs are present; at eight weeks, lines of hands develop; at eight and a half weeks, the child squints, fingertips close to the touch; at ten weeks, thyroid and adrenalin glands work; at twelve weeks, the child kicks, turns, curls, fans his toes, inhales, exhales, swallows and drinks fluids.

Certainly if we consider these actions we realize that this foetus at a very young age is a human being doing many of the human functions. I believe it is a crime that this bill considers the destruction of young children. Vince Collin, MD, on February 13, 1984 suggested that the human foetus experiences pain as early as 13 weeks. Foetal pain could be experienced simply by the mother moving. The child in the womb responds in a certain way by kicking or some other movement. By the eleventh week the foetus develops sensitivity to touch; the hands and the feet first move when they are touched.

As an educator I experienced many times that pregnant women when exposed to music and other stimuli during their pregnancy would increase the ability of that child to learn at later stages of life. Many things can be done to develop human qualities and human characteristics before the child is born. Therefore, we must perceive that this young being is human at very early stages and abortion certainly ignores this.

Let us consider the 10 most common ways women have responded to abortion. Studies conclude that 100 per cent of the women surveyed showed that they grieve

when or after an abortion occurred. Some 92 per cent illustrated depression, 92 per cent illustrated anger and guilt. Fear that others would find out was illustrated in 89 per cent. Surprise emotion was illustrated by 85 per cent, and a lower sense of dignity was illustrated by 73 per cent. When we stop and think about that we realize that the woman who has had an abortion is certainly suffering from the effects of that abortion at later times as well.

Health is one of the reasons this bill gives in trying to justify abortions. It seems to me that 63,000 Canadian women, mostly between the ages of 15 and 29, are not at health risks, therefore statistics would illustrate that the reason for health and abortion does not seem to go together.

The proposed legislation bans abortion except when recommended by doctors for reasons of physical or mental health of patients. Will this reduce abortions? No, it will not. If 63,000 abortions are necessary, there would be a serious epidemic among those women. Unmarried women have a great percentage of those abortions carried out. Are unmarried women at more of a health risk than married women? I do not think so.

In 1987 a study in England and Wales showed that abortions in 1968 and 1986 revealed that only .005 per cent were actually for mothers in danger of losing lives. If we apply that figure to today's number of abortions needed for women in danger of losing their life, we would find that only three out of the 63,000 require protection of life. Therefore, it seems to me that that issue is not an important one either.

If statistics and history show that mental and physical danger are not real claims to reason for abortion, should the law protect the unborn? I believe it should. This law should enhance the right to life of children. The bill should provide an environment where women may have children and have alternatives to abortion. This bill does not fill those needs. This bill does not protect the right of the unborn or help mothers who are pregnant. I feel that this law is not a good one. It is one that I cannot support.

Mr. Maurice A. Dionne (Miramichi): Mr. Speaker, I consider the speech I am making tonight to be the most important intervention I have made in my 11 years in this House. What we are talking about is truly a matter of life and death.

I had the opportunity to speak in the debate on capital punishment and I spoke against the state taking the lives of criminals, because I believe that the state should be consistent. That is, the state cannot say: "Thou shalt not kill, but I can". If I vote to save the lives of criminals, how much more important is it that I vote to protect the life of the unborn child?

Having been born and reared on a farm many miles from a city, I came early to an understanding of the value of life, for generally children on farms were cherished. They were essential to the long-term viability of the health of the family and of the productivity of the land.

Even the lives of animals on farms were important. Human babies were cherished and, indeed, the wealth of the family was judged more by the size of the family than by the bank account, which was usually non-existent anyway. Times were tough, but generally our parents and grandparents had their priorities straight. Had it not been so, this country would not have grown, matured and prospered to the affluent state we have today.

It is true that our parents and grandparents did not have the knowledge and the easy access to birth control methods and means that we have today, or perhaps many of us would not be here and we would have had even more immigration. It is also true that there were more sacrifices demanded of our forebears, but are they or we any the worse for that? I think not.

Early on in our lives we were taught to cherish life, to love life, and to live it to the fullest, but living life to the fullest then meant to be productive, to share with others who were less fortunate, to contribute to the community's growth and development, to look after the weak, and to care for friends and neighbours.

Since the 1960s we have witnessed the explosion of knowledge, the growth of urban development, the flights to new frontiers, the era of medical transplants, and many other advances in science and technology which instead of making us more human, more caring, more secure and more loving too often tend to be in the opposite direction. In general, we seem to have become more ambitious, more grasping, more selfish, more uncaring. We are now surrounded by a very different

environment that makes it more difficult for us to recognize day after day the importance of certain values.

Let us look at the question facing us today. Should we allow abortions in this country, or should we not? On the one side, we have those who want women to have the right to have an abortion, period.

Those people are usually in favour of abortion for various reasons, but most of these reasons are the following: first, freedom of choice. They believe that women should have the right to decide when they want to be pregnant. They also believe that women should have the right to decide how many children they want to have. Many of them believe that by keeping control over their family they will have a better chance to pursue their education or their career. All of that is quite fine, but the question is: When does that control begin? Second is to preserve the mother's health and third is to protect the mental state of some women who would not be able to deal with pregnancy.

• (2130)

On the other hand there are those opposed to abortion. These people believe that abortion is actually an act by which the life of a human being is taken. They believe that abortion is in fact the killing of a baby, that it is criminal, and that it should be not allowed.

For my part I can tell you I strongly believe that a foetus is a living human being from the very moment the ovum and the sperm are united. At that moment the die is cast, the characteristics of the individual are irrevocably determined, and as such it has the right to life.

I want to make it clear that I agree with most of the concerns and aspirations of today's women. I am not saying that their aspirations are wrong. I totally support them, but I am saying I am opposed to the fact that abortion could be a means toward those ends.

I believe that there are positive solutions we must use or find. I believe that abortion is wrong. I believe that abortion is the killing of an unborn child. It is our duty as parliamentarians to help bring about the necessary changes to make this country a place where families and mothers will feel confident and happy to give birth. It is our duty as parliamentarians to concentrate on solutions that will help those changes happen.

We have to be serious. No longer can we make empty promises. No longer can we make more equivocation. We must act. We are a caring nation. We always have been. We will make sure that women will have equal opportunity, equal rights, and equal pay for work of equal value.

If we are a caring nation we will make sure that women will have adequate maternity benefits and adequate incentives and safeguards to allow for both motherhood and career. We will make sure to address the problems facing single mothers, especially those living in poverty. We will make sure to address the problems facing the children of our country, our most important natural resource. I believe that if we find solutions to these problems we will find the solution to abortion and the solution to many other social problems that no legislation can or will solve completely.

I want to tell you that I am for life and I believe there are other ways to solve the problems of women than killing the unborn. As far as I am concerned, it is very clear and simple. I am opposed to abortion, and I will vote against this bill because I believe that it is virtually abortion on demand.

This legislation is another example of a government afraid to take a stance. This is another example of a government taking both sides of the issue. This is another example of a lack of leadership. This is another example of smoke and mirrors politics.

It is time for this government to cease the systematic destruction of our social programs. It is time for this government to address the serious problem facing the country rather than try to abolish symptoms. It is time for this government to say no to the killing of the unborn and to say yes to life.

It is time for this government to examine its collective conscience and have the courage to change its mindless flight to discredited theories of the past and to create the kinds of social programs that will address these problems and make it unnecessary for the killing of the unborn. It is time for compassion, enlightenment and innovation. It is time to say no to the killing of the unborn and to say yes to life.

It is time for all of us to put our priorities in order and to make number one the priority of the development of systems that will make it possible for women to bear children and still maintain a place in the workplace. I will

vote against this bill. I was not elected to be an accessory to the destruction of human life.

• (2135)

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I, too, follow the theme developed by many of the members who have spoken on this issue in the House in the last few weeks. We have been thinking about the seriousness of the issue in front of us and the number of hours we have all put in in our constituency offices and in Parliament. We have been thinking about the problems at hand and about what our colleagues have said before us and what people will say after us, and about how the public is judging the importance of this debate. I know that in the Liberal caucus it has been a subject of many hours of discussion because of the diverse views and each one of us approaches this from our own perspective in a very serious manner.

It is with a combination of sadness and determination that I must oppose this particular piece of legislation. I am opposing it because I think that there is no place in the Criminal Code for this particular amendment. The issue at hand for me is whether or not having an abortion is a criminal activity. The essence of the government's decision and the legislation it has put in front of the House of Commons is that abortion should be treated as a criminal activity and therefore those people involved with it, particularly doctors, should be subject to criminal examination under the criminal law.

I for one find that this is a most difficult situation, one in which there is much private agony for a woman. Whether she is on her own or discusses this with friends or others, I cannot think of any situation more difficult for someone to go through and I think it is wrong to combine that with a piece of legislation which says that on top of dealing with this very difficult moral situation, you also must deal with the law which makes this a crime.

For that reason I have decided to vote against this particular piece of legislation. I wish the government to understand that the use of the criminal law is no way to deal with one of the most serious issues on a personal level, and therefore on a societal level, that we have in front of us.

Although the government has presented itself as being very brave in the presentation of this legislation, saying that in fact it has shown great management, that it has shown itself to be a leader on both a moral and legally difficult question, in fact it has walked away from some of the most important questions facing us.

Those questions deal, first, with the health system. Because most of our health system is administered provincially, we have questions of definition of health and questions of definition of access to be determined not by the federal government but in the provincial system. For women the question becomes not only what is the national law, but in fact what is the legislation in each province.

There are already regions in this country where women do not have access to medical help in situations such as this. This will only be making it more difficult because not only do you have the moral question but you have the legal parameters which make many people afraid of getting involved with these situations.

Second, the administration of the criminal law generally speaking falls to the provincial government. The definition of what action should be taken and the definition of who should be prosecuted will end up falling in the Attorney General's office. Thus the two most important components of this piece of legislation, the definition of health which follows from the administration of health and the definition of an illegal activity, in fact fall within the parameters of the provincial governments.

For those reasons, instead of presenting us with a most progressive approach to a difficult problem, the government has in fact walked away from it entirely. It disappoints me greatly that we are going to be left with a criminal definition and no other suggestions.

Also, though the Minister of Health has intervened very briefly in this debate to indicate there will be new family legislation, I join my many colleagues to say that one of the sad things in this country is that once people are born into it, in many circumstances, whether we are talking about reserves in northern Manitoba or low income families in downtown Winnipeg or elsewhere in this country, the plight of children weighs heavily upon all of us.

Although the Canadian government supports this universal declaration on the rights of children that is being discussed in the United Nations, in reality when it

comes to showing Canadians that their children will be looked after, that there will be nourishment, that there will be education, that there will be appropriate laws, that there will be supports for them, the Canadian government is totally absent.

• (2140)

In all particular efforts, whether we are talking about dealing with family law or family support systems for children the Criminal Code, this government has walked away from its responsibilities. In that respect the particular proposal to criminalize abortion should be rejected and the House of Commons should give every indication to the women of this country that as they make these difficult decisions, those are decisions that they make themselves, those are not decisions that we are going to impose upon them, that we respect their freedom and we respect their independence.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Beauséjour): Mr. Speaker, I am speaking on this bill because this piece of legislation upsets me. I would much rather have spoken on a bill that talked about life, the right to life, this ultimate right which precedes all others. This bill deals with existence and non-existence, and for those like me who believe that life begins at conception, this bill is a matter of life and death.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, every one of us pursues freedom, all freedoms, freedom of expression, freedom to choose what we please, freedom to live our life as we see fit. But this pursuit of freedom should never lead us to refuse life and to make a judgement against life. I believe that if we took such a course, we would be mistaken.

The bill which the government has presented to us is an abdication of its responsibility to govern, to give Canadians direction, some clear indication, and I believe it also has a responsibility to protect life. As it is now written, this bill is an open door to abortion, it is abortion on demand, birth control via abortion. For me, this approach is completely unacceptable. I also find it unacceptable for this government to present us with such a vague and open bill that it will lead both supporters of the right to abortion and supporters of the right to life to vote against it for completely opposite reasons. Should that happen, which seems quite likely, we would find ourselves with no law to protect and guarantee the foetus' right to life.

When he presented this bill to the House, the Minister of Justice told us that it was a compromise—the only compromise which the government could put forward. I would have hoped that if there had to be compromise, the government would have compromised on the side of life. I am very disappointed with this option which the government has chosen and also with the way it has chosen to proceed.

• (2145)

Very briefly, I can say I have no problem when people talk about protecting life, since in cases where the mother's life would have been at risk, no one would have denied the mother the same right to life.

I also have a problem with the various stages at which the bill will be considered. It is now being considered on second reading and will then go to committee. If I had any hope that the bill might be reported back with significant amendments, I would be inclined to support the bill on second reading. However, I am afraid the bill might come back from committee without amendments. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lewis) raised these doubts in my mind when he said the government could not accept any amendments and that the bill had to go ahead as tabled.

So you see the kind of dilemma I am facing. If I vote for the bill on second reading, the government may think it can go ahead and consider my vote as positive support for the bill. It may choose to go ahead without any amendments, and finally, the bill might not survive third reading, which brings us back to square one, and we would still have no legislation.

So I think it is unacceptable that we have no laws to protect this life, to give this right,—I should not say give, because it is not ours to give—to protect and secure the foetus' right to life.

[*English*]

In conclusion, I want to make very clear that I support the protection of life. I think the government should have come up with a bill that would have given this protection to the foetus and I will vote accordingly so that life is afforded all the protection we can give it.

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, everyone finds that they are in a unique position, a most difficult position in this debate. I rise as a member of the New Democratic Party and also as an ex-principal of a Catholic school for some 26 years. To suggest other than what I am about to suggest, I believe I would be labelled as a hypocrite. I am proud to be a member of my party, and I am also proud of my stance.

I would like to quote Father Bob Ogle who, on November 18, 1980, delivered a speech on abortion. He stated, as reported at page 4826 of *Hansard*:

> The human rights which I support are, first, the right to be born; second, the right to adequate food, housing, medical care, and education; third, the right to live in, at least, frugal comfort within one's cultural tradition; fourth, freedom of conscience, worship expression, political participation and peaceful dissent; fifth, equal treatment in public, job markets, and courts, regardless of sex, age, ethnic origin, marital status, religious of political beliefs, social and economic status; sixth, the right to social assistance when age or other circumstances make self-support inadequate; and seventh, the right to die with dignity.

I am proud to espouse those same principles.

• (2150)

People asked me just one year ago how I could become a New Democrat and have an anti-abortionist stance. I am proud of both of my decisions. Over the past month I have undergone the most poignant, gut-wrenching, if you will, period of my life. I know that our party has a pro-choice stance but I believe that our party has the most pro-life philosophies and policies of any party available to the Canadian public.

I am going to digress, no doubt, from the context of my speech. I am going to thank my women colleagues in the New Democratic Party for empathizing with me at a most difficult time in my life. I have become very sensitive to what they believe in and I believe that they have shown empathy to me. Through this all, they have taught me a great deal. Once we have become sensitized to one another, the issue has not become any easier. In fact, it has become much more difficult. They have told me that we must continue to dialogue and we have continued to dialogue.

My party stands for choice. It was clear and it is clear that I have not agreed with the position. We, nevertheless, stand together against this legislation for different reasons. But even in this variance in opinion we agree that the proposed legislation is nothing more than a sham, a feeble attempt at a compromise.

It is proffered that if you do not vote for this, you are not getting anything in its stead; this is the best you can expect. I believe that oftentimes in politics, compromise is important but on this issue I do not believe the compromise is acceptable.

In isolation the abortion issue cannot be addressed. In this legislation there is no mention of the rights of the foetus. There is no accompanying legislation, no mention of social spending, no mention of assistance in areas of obvious need, counselling, infrastructure, support systems, adoption; nothing to address the obvious significant demand for abortion. We must reduce this demand but we can only do it through legislation that helps, not hinders the poor, the homeless, the uncared for and the unloved.

We can be occupied with deficits but not preoccupied with them. We must be concerned with GST's and clawbacks, but not overly concerned. We must be concerned with foreign aid, but not overly concerned when our own suffer each and every day. We should not persecute those who make their choice, although different from ours, because it is not an acceptable way to act. We should not accuse others of being chauvinist or feminist because of the choices they have made. We must not pretend to not understand or appreciate the opposing viewpoints when we truly do understand and appreciate.

These are the letters that I have received in one week, I think because of my station in life prior to my position as a member of Parliament. I would like to say that I have read them all. It does not make the decision any easier. I will say that I am a little disappointed in some of my friends at home because some long-term associates greeted me with "Dear Mr. Butland, My future political decisions will be based on your vote". There were no P.S.'s saying "Hi Steve, how are you doing?", nothing personalized at all. They were generic letters from people that I knew and know and am very friendly with on a regular basis. I hope that they will not be affronted by what I have said but that we can continue to dialogue as well.

• (2155)

I have literally thousands of generic letters. I received one letter that touched me to the very core and I would

like to read just a few excerpts because I think this woman has put it more succinctly and more poignantly than any of the other thousands of letters I have received.

It reads: "I would like to address the issue of abortion and would appreciate your reading this letter. I was an unwanted child born into an alcoholic home. I was severely abused; physically, sexually, emotionally and psychologically. I now carry the scars of this abuse. If abortion had been legal then I am sure I would not be writing this letter today. I have been in therapy for 13 years, have contemplated suicide many times and have had two emotional breakdowns. I wake up with the pain in the morning and I go to bed with it at night. My point to you, Sir, is not that I should not have been born but, instead, that I had every right to be born and every right to walk this planet for the last number of years. My only mistake all those years was believing I did not have a right to the air that I breathe."

It really does get more and more poignant as it continues and I think that it is appropriate that I stop now.

I will be opposing this legislation because it does not take a stand on either side of an issue which demands a very definite stand.

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North): Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening in this House to debate one of the most important issues facing our nation, Bill C–43, an act respecting abortion. I feel I must rise this evening and speak in this debate in order to put my opinions forward as unequivocally as possible. Tonight in this Chamber we are debating abortion but, more important, we are debating life.

The bill proposed by the Conservative government was presented as a bill that attempted to strike a compromise between the right of the woman to personal freedom, to personal choice, to personal privacy and, of course, the community's and the nation's interest in protecting the right to life of the unborn child.

Obviously the government thought that this bill represented a balanced approach. Well, it is not a balanced approach to the issue of life. Hon. members, everything I believe, everything that I hold dear, my social and cultural make-up, my personal beliefs as a human being, tells me that abortion is wrong. I feel within myself, passionately, that abortion is against the natural order. It negates the essence of our being.

This bill does absolutely nothing to protect the life of the unborn child. It does not in any way answer the fundamental question, the question of life. It does not address the value and the dignity of human existence. This bill's definitions are unbelievably vague. The bill states that abortion is prohibited unless the mother's health is endangered, but how does the government define health? The definition is so broad and so vague that we are basically speaking about abortion on demand.

Who is this government trying to fool? This government, I believe, really needs to do some soul searching from within, it needs to look within itself and take a serious stand on this extremely important issue. I think this government has failed drastically with this bill. I particularly do not think that abortion on demand is the answer to building a caring, compassionate and humanitarian society, a responsible society.

• (2200)

There is no question in my mind that personal freedom, personal liberty, is one of the most fundamental characteristics of our state, of our nation. However, I must also say that the personal freedom of one individual should take into consideration the impact, the effects it has on other lives and one must always focus on the essence of human rights and human dignity. Nor does personal freedom give you a licence to destroy other life. Thus, tonight we have to debate the right of the mother versus the right of the unborn.

Tonight I am going to speak on behalf of those who cannot speak for themselves, the unborn children of our nation. As members of Parliament, we are all here today simply because our parents decided to allow us to live. Quite frankly, with all due respect to my mother, I do not think she had the right to decide whether I should continue to live or not.

All of the hon. members in this House I am sure are happy to be alive. If we can make this statement consciously and responsibly, then I do not understand how any of us can accept giving the responsibility and the right to anyone to decide on who will live and who will not. Abortion is a human issue that affects all of us. We never think of leaving an abandoned child to die. We take great pain in seeing children in poor countries dying of malnutrition and starvation. Our hearts go out to them. Why then do we allow ourselves and why do we

allow thousands of babies born alive in late term abortions to die? How can we allow millions more to be destroyed in the womb and still do nothing about it?

I firmly and passionately believe that we owe the same responsibility to these unfortunates as we do to all other human beings. We certainly have the right and the obligation to initiate laws and to establish laws to protect all human life. We have it in our power to re-establish the value of human life and respect due to it.

We often hear this so-called right to choose argument. While often cited, I believe it is irrelevant to the issue. The issue is not the right of the mother to control her own body, but whether she has the right to decide the future of another human being who shares her body. The innocent baby is certainly denied the right to choose. No one has the right to take the life of another person at will. Not the doctor, not the mother. Absolutely no one.

If there is a cause to be concerned about the health of the mother, then as a society we must make all possible efforts to save, not just one life, but both.

We must remember that pregnancy is not an illness. It is a natural state, a beautiful gift of life that unfortunately many people are not able to experience. We must build a nation that welcomes childbirth rather than promote abortions.

As Parliamentarians, I think we must devote our attention toward building the type of socio-economic infrastructure that will give the unborn child a better chance to live. Today, with the introduction of this bill we have taken a serious step backwards. We should concentrate our energies on better education, more accessible social services such as day care, counselling, adequate housing for the disadvantaged, a social safety net that will mean that women of this nation, by giving birth to a child are not signing their names on the poverty role of our nation. Unfortunately, in this country this is the reality. More attention should be placed on the identification of causes of abortion so that our social and economic structure can better address the needs of our people.

As a Member of Parliament, I have always believed that one of my important duties and obligations was to represent those Canadians who, through no fault of their own, could not help themselves, the disadvantaged. The unborn child is certainly disadvantaged. He cannot express his views. He cannot manifest his emotions or his feelings. He is helpless and weak. I cannot accept the law that will allow the continuous destruction of human life. We must help people at the most vulnerable point of their lives. We must have faith and endure to protect human life. Canadians must realize that caring for the unborn child is the cornerstone and the beginning of a caring nation, caring for our future and caring for our people.

I am sure that the residents of York North agree that all measures must be taken by this government to make sure that the life of the unborn child is protected. I will vote against this bill because it does not show any consideration for the life of the unborn child.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The debate on the motion for second reading and reference to a legislative committee of Bill C-43 is adjourned to the next sitting of the House, pursuant to order made Thursday, November 23, 1989.

Pursuant to order made Thursday, November 23, 1989 this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

The House adjourned at 10.07 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, November 28, 1989

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed from Monday, November 27, consideration of the motion of Mr. Lewis that Bill C–43, an act respecting abortion, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, I too stand here today to speak on Bill C–43, an act respecting abortion. I welcome the opportunity to participate in the debate on this bill. I do not assume to be any different from any of the other legislators in this House, in the approach used in reaching a conclusion on this very complex issue. I must give thanks to the hundreds of my Nepean constituents who have corresponded with me over the past few months, expressing their opinion on abortion. They have been most helpful. In the absence of the bill, those correspondents addressed abortion generally. Now that Bill C–43 is before us, a different set of opinions is coming forward.

Every one of us entering this abortion debate brings a different idea of the meaning of life and the purpose of our existence. This debate has nothing to do with what I personally think about this issue. This debate, being held in the House of Commons, must centre around the legislation which we, as legislators, must implement.

Like most married women, I am a mother, a mother of five and a grandmother of two. I never had to make a decision as to whether or not they were wanted children. They were all automatically wanted children. That obviously places me very much on the side of life. Interestingly enough, I have discovered that no one likes abortion, regardless of which side of the issue they fall into.

Our role as legislators is to find a way to deal with this issue so that the constitutional rights of women are balanced with the rights of the foetus. The question then becomes, does Bill C–43 achieve this? The government has an obligation to present legislation that delineates purpose and direction. Bill C–43 does not give us a compromise, it does not give us a solution. I believe that this bill is intellectually disgraceful and constitutionally dishonest. In my estimation, the bill neither addresses the rights of the foetus nor the rights of the woman. As the Citizens for Public Justice stated: "To introduce a pro–life amendment to the Criminal Code without social policy changes will not adequately protect human life."

• (1010)

"To give women legal rights to abortion without social policy changes means that many woman have few effective choices, other than abortion". We as a society need legislation and we need regulation. However, it saddens me that this bill will come under the Criminal Code. It saddened me to hear a member of this House say a few days ago: "Women who abort must be punished". I say that women must be supported, not punished, when her behaviour is contrary to what that person feels is right.

The issue at hand is how do you protect the unborn and how do you protect the mother? I believe we are attacking this issue from the wrong direction.

Let us address the whys and the wherefores of abortion. There is absolutely no support system in place, a system that would ensure counselling at the outset, moral support, financial support, assurances that adoption procedures are available. Fifty per cent of abortions are performed on young women under 25 years of age. Why are we not looking at ways to help women avoid unwanted pregnancies and to cope with these pregnancies when they occur? Why are we not dealing with women caught in the poverty trap? Why are we not

addressing housing? Why are we not addressing the victims of rape and incest?

I would like to suggest that if we address the social aspect of pregnancies and subsequent abortions, that the present 60,000 annual abortions would most likely be reduced by two-thirds.

Health regulation is predominantly within provincial jurisdiction. Although it has been argued that the federal government should use the spending power under the Canada Health Act to enforce equality of access and funding, it would appear the federal government feels that it is impossible to address access and funding in criminal legislation.

I note that the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources comments that Bill C-43 is: "The best the government could do. The best the House could do. The best that society could do on this issue at this time". I believe that Bill C-43 is second best.

We are presently living in a country that allows abortion on demand. I cannot support that approach either, but neither can I support legislation criminalizing women. It is unacceptable to create abortion legislation without creating legislation that assures adequate resources to both women and children. Women and the unborn deserve better than Bill C-43.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, like my colleagues I am pleased to participate in this debate on Bill C-43. Like many of my colleagues, I can say that it is one of the most difficult questions that I as a member of Parliament have had to deal with in the 10 years I have been here.

I rise today to make a plea to colleagues, notwithstanding the powerful conviction they may have about this issue, notwithstanding the passion they may feel on this issue to at least allow the process of a substantive debate in Canada on the question of abortion to proceed. I respect the views of all those who have spoken because I know this is a difficult question. It is one that goes right to the heart of notion of conscience, individual conscience of a member of Parliament.

Personally I have some difficulty, notwithstanding my personal feelings on a abortion, with the notion that perhaps a majority of members, with the best of intentions, with the most pristine notions in mind, may put an end to a long overdue substantive discussion on abortion by defeating Bill C-43 at this stage without giving this Parliament, and through Parliament the people of Canada, an opportunity to engage in a debate on this question by way of committee.

In the 10 years that I have been in Parliament the number of times this issue has come up, it has come up primarily as a consequence of somebody who can be described as either pro-choice or pro-life making a 60-second statement before Question Period. There can be no rebuttal, no debate, no exchange of views, and no real attempt in that process to understand each other or even to persuade, but rather it is an opportunity to put a particular position on the record. That is what has happened for 10 years. In doing that, members have either put their own personal point of view on the record, or as some have said, they believe that they are representing the point of view of the majority of their constituents.

However, we have not had in this place a real discussion, an opportunity to hear witnesses representing every point of view, or to call upon the best legal minds in Canada and to try to consider and understand what the legal implications are of this bill *vis-à-vis* the Supreme Court decisions that have already been made or what other propositions might be.

Personally, this bill is not the route that I would have preferred. I would have preferred something different. I would like an opportunity through the committee process to see whether or not that something different—and I can tell you that it is the gestational approach—might have an opportunity to find support before a legislative committee of this Parliament.

Notwithstanding my own point of view, it seems to me for members to say today that because the bill does not represent what I want, whatever that point of view might be, I am going to vote against the bill, I am going to end the debate, I am going to stop the discussion, I am going to walk away from this issue and leave it to some future Parliament, some more brilliant, enlightened collection of men and women to deal with, is not acceptable. In my mind, that is simply not an acceptable process.

I respect those who think differently. But I ask those who feel differently to consider what is being contemplated. What is being contemplated is to continue in and outside this place and across this country a sterile debate, a total conflict between two extreme points of view, with no possibility of any substantial discussion, meaningful

discussion, communication, listening, understanding; putting yourself in somebody else's shoes, whether you decided they fit or not is not important, at least take a moment to put yourself in them and try to build for Canada on this very difficulty moral question some consensus.

It is quite possible at the end of a legislative process that Parliament and members will be as unhappy as many of them are today about this bill. It is quite possible at the end of a legislative process that I personally will vote against this bill.

• (1020)

Recently, I was a member of a standing committee that used its wisdom to reject a government measure. I refer to the Standing Committee on Transport which rejected the government's decision on VIA Rail. It asked for a moratorium, and said more work needs to be done. Therefore, if I understand the notion of the legislative process and the spirit of parliamentary reform, and have any faith in the process, certainly on a matter of conscience, I believe that it is possible for a legislative committee to act in a totally non-partisan manner, to give this bill its best consideration, to explore in every sense of the word what this bill represents and to possibly propose amendments, some that might find favour in this House.

My difficulty is that if we stop the process because the bill we want is not before us, and defeat the bill at this stage, there is no doubt in my mind that there will not be another bill, and perhaps some people desire that, before this Parliament for many, many years to come.

I am being non-partisan, but certainly the party opposite, and the Minister of Justice, is not going to bring in another bill. Whether we appreciate his effort or not, whether we applaud it or not, this is the minister's best effort. It is not the bill that I would have drafted but I did not have the job. If we at least do not take it to the legislative process, I can tell you this government will not bring in another bill. Let me go farther. I speak for myself only. That would not surprise me, nor would I particularly blame them. I believe if there were—thankfully for the people of Canada—an election next week and a new administration sworn in, it is questionable whether that new administration, if this bill were defeated at this stage and did not even make the legislative process, would bring in a new piece of legislation.

At the end of the day none of us can predict if we will have a piece of legislation that the House can support. I cannot say, nor can any member, based on going through the legislative process, when, presumably, amendments are made or suggested, that the bill that goes into the legislative process will bear any resemblance to the one that comes out. None of us can predict at the end of the day what a legislative committee will do. What anyone who has been here for any period of time can predict is, if we kill the bill at this stage, no matter what one's individual point of view, or the point of view of his or her constituents, there will be no other legislation.

I think that the Minister of Justice will be in a powerful position and, indeed, the government and the Prime Minister will be in a powerful position to say that we gave it our best judgment, we sought what we thought was the most reasonable consensus, whether or not it is a reasonable consensus, whether or not it is deemed to be good judgment. The House of Commons has taken a decision not even to take it to committee, not even to debate the matter further, rejected it out of hand, and not exercised the process available to us. We at this stage believe we have no other obligation, we have discharged our duties. We have put a proposal before Parliament. Parliament has refused not to approve or disapprove it, but even consider it.

I submit to members that that is a fundamental responsibility of parliamentarians. That is why we fight here with great passion, especially members of the opposition and members on the back-benches on the government side, for the independence or growing independence or increased independence of committees. We claim it is absolutely vital to our work that we have an opportunity to consider government bills with a measure of independence; that we have an opportunity at the end of the day to make up our own minds and to make objective recommendations back to Parliament. We claim that we must have the opportunity, if we want, in committee to practically rewrite government legislation, or dramatically alter it, if the word Parliament is to mean something, and if the role of the individual member beyond that of supporting a party chief is to mean something. If the role of elected representatives beyond being a member of their caucus is to mean something, there has to be beyond the glare, the glitter and the glamour of Question Period, some place for us

to exercise our best judgment, and to give us the opportunity, notwithstanding party stripes or caucuses, to persuade each other and to find out if, on occasion, notwithstanding ideological differences, there is common ground.

If we at this stage defeat this bill we have turned our back on all of that. We have said that we only believe in the legislative process and the role of a member of Parliament independent of the leadership and independent of his caucus only when it is convenient.

If this bill is sent on to the legislative committee it is going to be a very difficult process for all those who participate. It is going to be by extension a very tough process for all those who observe or participate indirectly, or have to deal with the recommendations of a committee. But that is our job.

I am not pleading for the bill. I am not pleading that this bill be passed or accepted today as it currently stands, but I do make a plea for colleagues to take a chance on launching us beyond a sterile debate in which we get as different as day and night, black and white, conflicting views on this question hurled across the floor by members in 60 seconds, and a sterile debate from which there is no resolution. We may not find a resolution this time but at least let us not walk away from the opportunity to have as members on behalf of Canadians an opportunity for a full debate.

My plea today is for members to take advantage of the process that we have for ordinary members. I am one. I have no special privileges or titles. I am not an officer of this place. It will enable members to have an opportunity to participate in an important debate, and to give back to this House a recommendation, which may be this one or it may be dramatically different, that represents the best judgment of members when they have gathered, when they are conscientious and want to do good work on behalf of the people of Canada.

I hope this bill is supported when it comes up next for a vote.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I do understand that there are a couple of members who have been caught by the weather coming in from the airport and are having difficulties getting here. We did want to make sure that they would have an opportunity to speak.

Perhaps the House could agree to adjourn to the call of the Chair until we can send signals to the Speaker that these members have arrived. We can still proceed with the House order and have the Prime Minister speak at eleven o'clock without having to worry about quorum calls.

Mr. Gauthier: I would like to agree with that disposition, although I do not think we should adjourn. I think we should suspend the sitting which would be easier in procedural terms.

I understand we have a speaker who is presently in a taxi, but the streets are quite slippery, it is raining outside and he is having difficulty getting here. As soon as he arrives, I would appreciate if the House would reconvene and we continue with the debate.

SITTING SUSPENDED

Mr. Speaker: The suggestion put by the parliamentary secretary, supported by the hon. member for Ottawa–Vanier, and I take it supported by the New Democratic Party is that we suspend until I receive a message to resume debate.

Is it the wish of the House to suspend the sitting to the call of the bell?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

The sitting of the House was suspended at 10.30 a.m.

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 11.05 a.m.

Mr. Speaker: As hon. members know, the sitting was suspended for some minutes due to inclement weather and the difficulties some members were having in reaching the House. The debate is now resuming.

I recognize the Right Hon. Prime Minister of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, this has been a difficult debate for all hon. members, but it has been edifying for those who value the institution of Parliament. I respect the integrity of all those who preceded me. Their arguments have been principled and, I thought, persuasive.

There can be few questions on which views are as strongly or as deeply held. Some believe there should be no impediment to abortion. Others believe abortion should be severely restricted. Both of these positions have been advanced in this debate, sometimes passionately, but always with the clear, true ring of personal sincerity and conviction.

[*Translation*]

As individuals, my cabinet colleagues and I feel no less intensely than other Hon. Members about these questions. Indeed, some ministers, speaking in this debate in support of the bill, have properly taken the occasion to state their own personal conscientious views on the subject of abortion. Ministers, however, have an added responsibility.

In a situtation such as we now face, we must provide leadership. We must achieve a solution that is philosophically sound, constitutionally correct, politically acceptable and administratively practicable; that is, a solution which can be understood and implemented. Our duty is to act for the common good.

[*English*]

The government accepts its responsibility. On this matter we ask all members of Parliament to share in that responsibility.

[*Editor's Note: Disturbance in gallery.*]

• (1110)

Mr. Speaker: The Right Hon. Prime Minister has the floor.

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, I was just about to say that I do not seek to change anyone's personal conscientious views on abortion. With regard to some people, it is unlikely that anyone would ever succeed. What is important, what is absolutely indispensable, is that all members of the House have the right to rise in their places and to speak for or against this resolution and to be listened to carefully, and with respect by all other members at all times.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: That is what explains the simple magnificence of Parliament. That is what election to the House of Commons brings. We are called upon as best we can, products that we are of our own environments, to come together to resolve great national issues. We do it based on respect for one another, respect for one another's deeply held religious and moral views, and we do it always by listening carefully to one another and respecting one another's opinions.

What we heard a few moments ago is the antithesis of Parliament, and parliamentary democracy must resist that. That is why this House of Commons must always be supreme.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: I do not seek to change anyone's personal conscientious views on abortion. Rather I ask that you consider joining me in exercising leadership, in achieving balance, in finding a workable legislative solution to this problem in the national interest.

Almost two years have passed since the Supreme Court of Canada struck down Section 251 of the Criminal Code. All three majority judgments of the court concurred that the abortion law was a violation of the guarantee of security of the person and the principles of fundamental justice in Section 7 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Section 251 of the Criminal Code had been the law of the land on abortion for 19 years. If hon. members think that the question is difficult today, and it is, they should spare a thought or two for our predecessors of 20 years ago in this House, some of whom are still with us, who had to legislate for the first time the conditions under which abortion would be legal in this country.

[*Translation*]

Nobody speaks with more authority on the subject than the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition who was Minister of Justice in 1969. It is he who brought in the law that we are seeking to replace today. Twenty years ago, near the close of a long and emotional debate, he appealed to the House in these words:

> I realize full well that this matter goes right to the essence of life, goes right to the bone. There is not going to be any consensus on this issue in the House or in the country. We have not reached a consensus.

He went on to say:

> We have only reached what I might call an accommodation.

That was the position of the Leader of the Official Opposition, 20 years ago. He was quite right.

On November 8, when the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition spoke in this debate, he used words almost identical to those he had used in 1969, and I quote from page 5728 of *Hansard*:

> Speaking frankly, we will never reach a consensus on this issue in the House of Commons or in the country. We can reach only an accommodation at best.

[*English*]

I think the Leader of the Opposition was right again. He was right 20 years ago, and he was right again this autumn. Parliament must again find what he accurately described as an accommodation. Canada requires that this be done, and it must be done now.

There is no denying at all that Canadian society has changed a great deal since 1969. Our law, our Constitution and many of our attitudes to social and moral questions have changed. Many of them changed for the better.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms expresses many of the values Canadians cherish as individuals and as a nation. The courts review the compatibility of our laws with the Charter in the light of changing times and circumstances.

In light of the Charter and in light of the times, the considerations that the Supreme Court of Canada tried to balance in the decision on abortion are very relevant. I think they should be repeated briefly today.

First, there is the right of a woman to security of her person. Second, there is the right of a woman to obtain medical services without limits that adversely affect her health. Third, there is the interest of society in protecting the health of the woman; and, of course, the interest of society in protecting the foetus.

[*Translation*]

In the bill that is now before the House, the government has sought to achieve a balance among those very valid considerations. We and our legal advisers have studied the Supreme Court judgments with the greatest care and respect. And we have drafted a law which we firmly believe is constitutional. We have tried to achieve a balance among the views held in Parliament and in public opinion. Most important, we have tried to fill the legal void created by the Supreme Court decision in January 1988.

Various interest groups, some with extreme views, as we saw this morning, others with much more moderate views, have rushed into that void.

Some provincial governments, in exercising their own constitutional responsibility for health, have tried to fill the void themselves by legislative or administrative action. And pregnant women and putative fathers have fought out their personal differences in the courts and the media, in a manner that at times brought both concern and sadness to the nation. We cannot allow such scenes to be repeated.

[*English*]

It is the proper role of government to restore certainty to this important social issue. It is our duty as legislators to assume our responsibilities to reconcile the often conflicting principles at play, to fill the legal void and to put an end to the vagaries of using particular cases to settle judicial rules.

It is now our duty as legislators to convey to the court the view of Parliament so that judges will know before they rule on individual cases how the members of this elected House of Commons feel collectively.

What does this mean in a country like ours with our vastly different ethnic and religious backgrounds, and disparate regional and local views? Ours is a society that values tolerance because it is the key to our integrity as a nation. Tolerance requires sensitivity to diverse interests and beliefs. Tolerance accepts that a balance must be struck in our national life.

The challenge that the government faces is to achieve a new law on abortion that balances divergent and sometimes even incompatible views, interests, beliefs and, in some cases, customs. I now appeal to hon. members in the spirit of tolerance to accept this law, to pass this law in the interests of all Canadians.

• (1120)

This bill is not long or complex. Its provisions have been explained cogently and I think fully by the Minister of Justice.

Let me say a brief word about the philosophical basis of the bill. It comes back again to the very important and vital question of balance. Life is deserving of protection throughout the pregnancy, but a woman has full constitutional rights to security of the person. Failure to respect her rights would make any law unconstitutional.

That much is clear from the decision of the Supreme Court.

I suppose that opinion is more polarized in this House of Commons on this issue than it is in the country, and that is, I think, very understandable. As candidates for Parliament, most of us have been pressed to take a stand on one side or the other of the issue, not as it really is, not in all of its sensitivity and its complexity, but as it has been defined by the various protagonists, "pro-choice" or " pro-life". All of us know how simplistic and unfair these labels are, and how inadequate they are in expressing the complexity of the issues involved and the factors which weigh upon the private conscience and the public duty of a Member of Parliament.

Let me, however, address all of those colleagues, a large majority I suspect for whom this bill does not represent the ideal.

Let me speak first to those hon. members who would describe themselves or be described as on the "pro-life" side of the debate. We have heard and understood your fundamental conscientious opposition to what is sometimes referred to as a gestational approach. We have tried to accommodate, to use the felicitous term of the Leader of the Opposition, your concern.

This bill makes no distinction as to life at any stage of development. The protection for life throughout the pregnancy is that of a qualified medical opinion on grounds of health according to the accepted standards of the medical profession. This provision and these standards are not perfunctory and the leaders of the medical profession have made it very clear that they do not regard these principles as such.

Still, this is not the very restricted access to abortion that some would have preferred. It is, nonetheless, an approach offering consistent protection throughout the pregnancy. We have gone as far in this direction as constitutional constraints permit.

Let me speak briefly to those hon. members who would describe themselves as on the "pro-choice" side of the debate. This bill declares that abortion is a health matter to be decided between a woman and her doctor on grounds of physical, mental or psychological health.

The law will be in the Criminal Code because, as the Minister of Justice has pointed out, the Criminal Code is the only tool by which the federal government can develop directly a framework within which abortion can be provided.

Suggestions that Parliament could use the Canada Health Act to regulate abortion are in the view of every one of our legal advisers highly dubious in a constitutional sense. The Canada Health Act cannot provide abortion or other medical services. It provides only for a financial penalty against those provinces that fail to observe the four fundamental conditions for the application of medicare.

So I ask those who are concerned about protecting the rights and the dignity and the health of women to consider the importance of this bill in providing leadership to those provincial governments which have jurisdiction for the delivery of health services and which, in some cases, would seek to deliver services in a manner inconsistent with the collective views of the members of this House.

I draw to your attention recent comments of Mr. Justice Allan Linden, the distinguished chairman of the Law Reform Commission of Canada, as reported on November 7. "Recriminalizing abortion," Mr. Justice Linden said, "was needed to ensure that various provinces did not enact Draconian laws to restrict access to the procedure."

"What always concerned me," he said, "was the prospect of provincial intrusions. By making abortion a therapeutic procedure covered by the Criminal Code, the provinces will find it much more difficult to jump in with their own legislation and evade their obligations under the Canada Health Act to pay for medical services—"

I think Mr. Justice Linden makes an extremely valid and important point. Nobody sought to recriminalize the question of abortion for the pleasure of doing it. It was brought under the purview of the Criminal Code because of legal imperatives in terms of application nationally.

Moreover, this bill does not treat women as criminals for seeking a therapeutic abortion. On the contrary, this bill provides penalties only for those who induce an abortion illegally, that is, anyone other than a qualified practitioner.

[*Translation*]

This bill does not provide for abortion on demand. It does require a medical opinion in addition to the decision of the woman, on health grounds. I think this is a logical consequence of treating abortion as a health matter, as it should be.

Regarding the availability of abortions to women who need them, this bill, by providing a national framework, sends the provinces a signal that should clarify their approach and assist them in the provision of abortion as a medical service. This can only improve access and it is the most immediately effective way for the federal government to do so within our constitutional authority.

Mr. Speaker, this bill represents our best effort to legislate an acceptable solution to the problem Canada has faced since the Supreme Court decision of January 1988.

[*English*]

If this bill does not succeed, it is hard to see what other bill could win the approval of the House and survive a challenge before the courts. It is highly unlikely that we could return to the issue with any prospect of success before another general election is held.

There are disappointed members on either side of the issue who may be tempted to vote against it. Some might prefer to wait until the chances are better for a stronger pro-life bill. Others might believe that the absence of any federal law on abortion favours the pro-choice viewpoint.

I disagree with both of these perspectives, because the imperatives at issue preclude any one-sided outcome to this debate. The outcome clearly must balance the rights of women to security of the person and the interest of society in protecting the foetus.

The absence of a federal law on abortion as we saw last summer satisfies only one of these imperatives and as such is unacceptable to the majority of Canadians.

[*Translation*]

The message most of us have been getting from Canadians with increasing insistence since last summer is that Parliament must act. The designation of abortion as a medical act is, alone, a reason of the utmost significance, impelling us to act. It would be unconscionable and intolerable to fail to restrict those who are unqualified, and who are not health professionals, from terminating a pregnancy.

[*English*]

We are urged to act on this matter in different ways, but there is no doubt whatsoever that people expect us to end the current unacceptable situation. They want us to accept our responsibility and bring in a new abortion law.

• (1130)

[*Editor's Note: Disturbance in gallery.*]

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps I could assist the House. As hon. members know, there has been a disturbance; not a difficult matter, but a disturbance. Objects have been thrown into the Chamber. We have cleared the gallery. I just want to advise all hon. members that I have also sent word up that in a moment or two, now that the difficulty is over, we will allow, of course, the public back into the gallery.

The Right Hon. Prime Minister.

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, earlier, in an effort to reflect the status of this matter as a question of conscience, I referred to a free vote in this House, a series of options to resolve the legislative dilemma resulting from the Supreme Court's decision in Morgentaler. Each of these options failed in turn to muster a majority, leaving us no better off than when we began.

Further delay is unacceptable. Parliament must act and it must act now.

We in this House cannot solve the moral dilemma of the problem of abortion; nor can we substitute our judgment for the judgment of those many Canadian women who must weigh health and family considerations in reaching their decisions. They have my genuine consideration and deep respect.

And while all decisions in politics have moral implications and each of us tries to bring an informed conscience to the exercise of our public duty, no one in this House has been appointed an arbiter of anyone else's personal morality.

Many of us have been brought up to believe, and do believe, that abortion under almost any circumstances is morally wrong. But what we are called upon to do, as elected representatives of the people, is to determine under what circumstances the state should characterize abortion not as a sin, but as a crime. This power is one

that lawmakers should always exercise with the utmost care and restraint.

The bill before us is philosophically sound; it is constitutionally valid; it is workable; it achieves balance and is fair. It is credible and just and will therefore be respected.

[*Translation*]

My colleagues and I are also convinced that this bill comes closer than any practical alternative to reflecting the position of the clear majority of Canadians who reject extremes and favour a moderate and balanced solution.

[*English*]

This new bill permits the most complex personal, moral and medical decisions to be made by a woman in privacy and dignity, free of coercion or undue sanctions by the state. In that spirit, Mr. Speaker, I appeal to all hon. members to support this bill. Let us together provide the leadership that Canadians expect of us today and need of us in the decades to come.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

• (1140)

Mr. Speaker: I wonder if members could give the Chair a moment's attention. We have had, as I said a moment ago, an interruption in the Chamber. I want to make it very clear that in view of what happened—and I hasten to assure all members and the public that there has been no harm done—it was necessary to clear the gallery for security purposes. The gallery was cleared quietly and those members of the public who were in the gallery co-operated completely with our security officials. Shortly after the Prime Minister resumed his speech some members of the public, of course, came back in, as I had ordered that they be allowed to do.

I do want all hon members to understand that on your behalf I have to take into consideration security matters. I hasten to advise all hon. members and the public that no harm was done. As soon as the precautions that are necessary had been taken, the public was re-admitted to the gallery and some members of the public did come back in before the Right Hon. Prime Minister finished his speech.

Again, we are mindful of our great traditions. It took us many centuries to be able to debate and to speak freely without interruption. Again, I hasten to add that there has been no harm done. I thank all hon. members for their co-operation and forbearance. I think hon. members would want to join with me in thanking our security officials for their quiet but efficient, courteous and effective treatment of the situation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker: Pursuant to order made Thursday, November 23, 1989, the question on the motion for second reading and reference to a legislative committee of Bill C-43 is deemed to have been put and a recorded division thereon deferred until 1 p.m. later today.

[*English*]

SITTING SUSPENDED

Mr. Speaker: Pursuant to order made Thursday, November 23, 1989, the sitting is suspended until 1 o'clock p.m.

The sitting of the House was suspended at 11.43 a.m.

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 1 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Order. It being 1 p.m., pursuant to order made Thursday, November 23, 1989—

[*Translation*]

The House will now proceed with the deferred recorded division on the motion for second reading reference to a legislative committee of Bill C-43, An Act respecting abortion.

[*English*]

Call in the members.

• (1320)

[*Translation*]

And the bells having ceased to ring:

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I think that considering this afternoon's subject, it is probably appropriate for the Chair to explain the exact procedure for the division. It will be the same as for an ordinary government bill. To be more specific, first the *yeas*—

[*English*]

—for the government, followed by the Official Opposition, followed by the New Democratic Party, followed by the Independent member.

For the nays, it will start with Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, the New Democratic Party, the Independent member and then to the government members.

[*Translation*]

I would ask hon. members to pay attention.

[*English*]

If there is any doubt, I ask that hon. members to consult immediately with their House Leader. If there needs to be further explanation I will give it, but I take it that members understand the voting procedure. I shall go slowly and I do not think we should have any difficulty.

I repeat, on the yeas we will start on the government side. We will go to the Official Opposition, then to the New Democratic Party and then to the Independent member.

On the nays, we should go first of all to the Official Opposition, then to the New Democratic Party, then to the Independent member and then to the government side.

The hon. member for Kamloops on a point of order.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a very short point of order to seek clarification. Members of the House are about to decide whether or not to give second reading to Bill C–43. I have heard many of my colleagues say in debate that while they oppose the principle of the bill, they wish to have the abortion bill studied by a House committee and for this reason they will vote in favour of the bill today.

It is my understanding that a vote in favour of this bill will commit the House to the exact principles of Bill C–43, that once we have adopted this bill the committee will be constrained to making it either a bill—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Kamloops will understand that the Speaker is put in a position of some difficulty. The hon. member had given me notice that he might raise this question.

[*Translation*]

However, there is a problem for the Chair. There is clearly a problem, since a discussion about the bill at this stage, of course, becomes a discussion about the subject of the bill.

[*English*]

It is not appropriate to get into a discussion now, even on the basis of a point of order, that tends to be, however subtlely, a furtherance of the debate that has taken place for a number of days.

[*Translation*]

The subject of this bill is a very difficult one for all members and probably for most people in this country. That is why the Chair must remain very firm about the rules of procedure.

• (1340)

The House divided on the motion of Mr. Lewis, which was agreed to on the following division:

(*Division No. 133*)

YEAS

Members

Anderson	Andre
Atkinson	Attewell
Beatty	Bélair
Bellemare	Belsher
Bernier	Bertrand
Bird	Bjornson
Blackburn (Jonquière)	Blais
Blenkarn	Bosley
Bouchard (Roberval)	Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Boudria	Bourgault
Boyer	Brightwell
Browes	Cadieux
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)	Cardiff
Casey	Chadwick
Champagne (Champlain)	Charest
Clark (Yellowhead)	Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Clifford	Cole
Collins	Cook
Cooper	Corbeil
Côté	Couture
Crosbie (St. John's West)	Crosby (Halifax West)
Darling	DeBlois
de Cotret	Della Noce
Desjardins	Dick
Dobbie	Dorin
Duplessis	Edwards
Epp	Fee
Feltham	Ferland
Finestone	Fontaine
Fretz	Friesen
Gauthier	Gérin
Gibeau	Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gray (Windsor West)	Greene
Guilbault	Gustafson
Halliday	Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hawkes	Hicks
Hockin	Hogue
Holtmann	Horner
Horning	Hudon
Hughes	Jacques
James	Jelinek
Joncas	Kempling

Keyes
Koury
Langlois
Layton
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Littlechild
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacKay
Manley
Martin (Lincoln)
Mazankowski
McDermid
McKnight
Merrithew
Milliken
Moore
Nunziata
O'Kurley
Paproski
Porter
Proud
Reid
Ricard
Rideout
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Turner (Vancouver Quadra)
Van de Walle
Vien
Weiner
White
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)
Worthy—164
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Landry
Larrivée
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
Lewis
Loiselle
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Malone
Marin
Mayer
McCreath
McDougall (St. Paul's)
McLean
Mifflin
Monteith
Mulroney
Oberle
Pagtakhan
Plourde
Pronovost
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Robitaille
St-Julien
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Tobin
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Valcourt
Vézina
Vincent
Wenman
Wilbee
Winegard

NAYS

Members

Althouse
Angus
Assad
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Benjamin
Bevilacqua
Blackburn (Brant)
Blondin
Broadbent
Caccia
Campbell (South West Nova)
Chartrand
Comuzzi
Corbett
de Jong
Dionne
Duhamel
Fisher
Fontana
Fulton
Gaffney
Grey (Beaver River)
Harb
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hopkins
Hunter
Jordan
Kaplan
Karygiannis
Kindy
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)
Laporte
MacAulay
MacLaren
Anawak
Arseneault
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Barrett
Berger
Black
Blaikie
Brewin
Butland
Callbeck
Catterall
Clancy
Copps
Crawford
Dingwall
Domm
Ferguson
Flis
Foster
Funk
Gardiner
Guarnieri
Harvard
Heap
Hovdebo
Johnson
Jourdenais
Karpoff
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Kristiansen
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Lee
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacLellan
MacWilliam
Marchi
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McGuire
Mills
Mitges
Nault
Nowlan
Ouellet
Parker
Phinney
Prud'homme
Robichaud
Rocheleau
Rompkey
Simmons
Speller
Stupich
Thompson
Volpe
Walker
Whittaker
Young (Gloucester)
Maheu
Marleau
McCurdy
McLaughlin
Mitchell
Murphy
Nicholson
Nystrom
Parent
Peterson
Pickard
Riis
Robinson
Rodriguez
Samson
Skelly (North Island—Powell River)
Stewart
Taylor
Vanclief
Waddell
Wappel
Wood
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—114

Mr. Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

SITTING SUSPENDED

Mr. Speaker: Pursuant to order made Thursday, November 23, 1989, the sitting is suspended until three o'clock this afternoon.

The sitting was suspended at 1.42 p.m.

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 3 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

SEXUAL ABUSE

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, blaming the victim in Canada has reached a new level of insanity. In British Columbia, a County Court judge gave a suspended sentence to an adult male convicted of sexually assaulting a three-year old girl. Why? Because, according to the judge, the child was "sexually aggressive".

All Canadians join in revulsion at this perversion of our system of justice. If a three-year old child can be blamed, what hope do adult females have for justice and the protection of the law? While women have always been dubbed the seductresses in cases of rape, this incident brings the inequality of the sexes beyond the ridiculous.

All decent Canadians demand a judicial council inquiry into this matter immediately. For far too many years far too many judges in this country have failed to make

the distinction between victim and offender in cases of sexual assault.

Now it appears that we must also fight to prove that children, in addition to women, do not want to be assaulted and do not ask to be raped.

* * *

ABORTION

Mr. Gus Mitges (Bruce—Grey): Mr. Speaker, perhaps no professional group has as much at stake at the outcome of the abortion issue as do nurses across our land. They must deal with the issue of abortion directly and take part in an act most find abhorrent and repugnant.

I received during the past week petitions with the names of 4,417 nurses in Ontario alone who are Nurses for Life. Their specific request is for a conscience clause for nurses, assuring that they have the legal right to refuse to participate in abortions.

While such a clause would fall under the purview of the provincial government, the presentation of so many petitions from Nurses for Life at this most important time should not be ignored. It is a signal that there are some in the field of medicine who support life and abhor the idea of aiding and abetting the taking of an innocent life.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FOREST MANAGEMENT

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, the Quebec Government's policies on forestry are similar to those that are sapping the Third World of its resources. It is imperative that those policies be thoroughly revised, with public input to reflect the interest of the public.

That was the position taken by Monsignor Gérard Drainville, Bishop of Amos, in Abitibi, at the Quebec forum on sustainable development. The forum is a high level meeting, organized with the co-operation of the Government of Québec, to determine ways of reconciling economic interests with the imperatives of maintaining nature's balance.

He said, quite frankly, that because of clear cutting by the paper companies, people in many small towns and villages were being increasingly deprived of the benefits of their own forest resources.

* * *

[*English*]

NUCLEAR WASTE

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to draw to the attention of the government that a nuclear waste disposal site is being planned for the State of Michigan in the U.S. All three potential sites on the short list are in close proximity to and would drain into Lake Superior, the St. Clair River, or Lake Erie.

The United States Government which licenses nuclear power stations within the United States has turned the responsibility for disposal over to the various states as part of its deregulation process. As a result of this deregulation, seven mid-western states have grouped together to establish one site for the seven states. Michigan has been selected as the host state for the first 20 years.

A citizen of St. Clair County, Michigan, wrote to me to ask for help to stop this potential hazard to the world's largest supply of fresh water and our food chain. Fifteen nuclear reactors located across those seven states will use this disposal site. Of the six commercial radioactive waste dumps to date now in existence in the United States, he points out that four are already leaking.

I call on the government and the Minister of the Environment to contact the authorities responsible for this irresponsible environmentally disastrous planning and to ask them to stop the development of these new sites that will threaten millions of people on both sides of our border in the Great Lakes basin.

* * *

AUTISM WEEK

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to bring to the attention of the House the fact that the first week of December, December 3 to December 9, is Autism Week in Canada.

Autism was only relatively recently recognized as a separate disorder. Anyone who has seen the recent hit

movie *The Rain Man* might be left with the impression that autism is in some ways amusing. However, this would be false.

Autism is a serious and lifelong developmental disability. Canadians and their families who are affected by autism suffer heart-breaking difficulties.

People with autism suffer an inability to form social relationships and have severe communication and behaviour problems, but they can be helped to learn to relate to others and to communicate in many ways. Those with autism need our greater understanding and more assistance.

During Autism Week I ask my colleagues in the House of Commons to wear the autism lapel buttons that we have been provided with, to participate in local events, and to read the brochures that we have all received. Our greater awareness and involvement can only help.

* * *

LABOUR AND MANAGEMENT

Mr. Ken James (Sarnia—Lambton): Mr. Speaker, in our fast changing and restructuring economy a number of major companies and unions in my riding of Sarnia—Lambton have embarked upon an innovative and pragmatic approach to labour-management relations. It is one which promotes constructive and co-operative partnerships and is entitled "In Search of a Better Way".

Locally, this approach seeks to improve communications among labour and management, to improve the working relationship and quality of policy dialogue and in the end to improve organizational performance through employee involvement. It is not confrontational or short lived. Rather, it is part of an ongoing effort in which labour and management can now discuss actual principles and beliefs, not simply problems.

For example, their initial two-day session centred on defining common goals and common ground. Future efforts will likely focus on safety and the environment.

In the words of a local labour representative: "there is no limit to what we can achieve in the chemical valley if we are working together".

I commend this serious effort to develop an innovative and constructive response to all the members of this House and hope that this initiative in Sarnia—Lambton can be a useful model for company-union dialogue throughout the country.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE OF CANADA

Mr. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan): Mr. Speaker, this government is causing hundreds of families in Atlantic Canada and across this country undue stress. Federal ship crew workers have been on a legal strike for over two weeks. They have been without a contract for two years. They can barely make ends meet on the wages they earn now.

Worse still, the 90 ship crew workers on Prince Edward Island earn less than their counterparts on the west coast. Why does a level one steward on the east coast make $3,000 a year less than a level one steward on the west coast?

These workers provide fisheries surveillance and maintain a safe, ice-free link to the mainland for my province. The government must make a decent offer to these workers now and restore their vital service.

* * *

CANADA-U.S. FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, American farm policies and Conservative trade policies have claimed yet another Canadian victim. Next March St. Lawrence Starch Company will close the manufacturing end of its corn milling plant in Mississauga, shifting production to Decatur, Illinois, the home of A. E. Staley Company. Canada will become a distribution depot.

The 1985 U.S. farm bill dropped the U.S. loan rate for corn, and the U.S. promptly flooded Canadian markets with cheap corn. Corn producers countervailed to subsidize imports to reduce injury to themselves, but the corn processors did not exercise their right under Canadian trade law to put in a similar countervail. They decided instead to process in the U.S. market and use the new access to Canada guaranteed by the Conservatives in the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, just as we argued would happen during the debate on free trade.

Once again, Canadian farmers and Canadian workers will be worse off because of this government and this policy.

S. O. 31

ABORTION

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, I wish to put my views about abortion on record. I believe that life begins at conception.

I have three unique children, Michael, Holly and Alison. I believe that they were unique from conception. I do not believe they were simply a part of their mother until some time near or after birth, at which time they suddenly turned into the individuals they are now. I believe that their growth and development as individuals began at conception.

I am me now as I stand here. I know that. I believe I was me five months after birth. I believe I was me five months before birth. I believe that I was an individual from conception. I do not believe I was someone else or something else and then turned into me at birth.

To me, all unborn children are unique individuals just like Michael, Holly and Alison, and all unborn should be protected only unless the life or the health of the mother is at stake.

I voted for Bill C-43 on second reading, but it is my hope that at committee stage amendments will be made to reinforce this principle already stated and that recognition and protection can be given to all unborn children.

Although the bill does not do all I would wish, defeating the bill at this stage would not help the unborn either.

* * *

• (1510)

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Dave Worthy (Cariboo—Chilcotin): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to commend the Prime Minister and the Department of External Affairs following the Prime Minister's highly successful trip to the Soviet Union.

In particular, I commend the concept of including in the entourage some 200 Canadian business people, allowing them to establish many business contacts and opening new doors.

Lest Canadians think that only large corporations participated, I would like to point out that the entourage included several companies from western Canada and, I am very proud to say, one company from the Cariboo—Chilcotin. Artec Equipment, an asphalt recycling company based in Williams Lake, participated in the trip. It found it valuable. It expects immediate business results. It expects over the long term a good possibility of a joint venture.

I commend the Prime Minister for providing the leadership and Canadian industry for accepting the challenge.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE OF CANADA

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Mr. Speaker, the strike by the Public Service Alliance affecting Coast Guard employees has left 40 unionized ship crew workers in Prescott, a town in my riding, facing what could become a very bleak Christmas. The local Coast Guard ships remain at port, and the navigational buoys which are normally picked up at this time are likely to become frozen in shortly making recovery impossible.

Since these people have been without a contract for two years, would it not make sense for Treasury Board to try again to meet with the union personnel to show good will in bringing about an end to this strike which is starting to have adverse effects in the town of Prescott and the surrounding area?

* * *

ADVANCE PAYMENTS FOR CROPS ACT

Mr. Felix Holtmann (Portage—Interlake): Mr. Speaker, farmers across Canada who have used and want more money for advance payments for their grain would be denied this privilege if the NDP and Liberals had their way.

True to form, the opposition voted against Bill C-36 last night. Opposition members believe that either no payment or $30,000 interest-free is better than $250,000 charged at a nominal rate. They are wrong. Farmers need a cash flow. Farming is big business.

Opposition hold up of this bill has caused untold harm to many farmers. Farmers are proud Canadians. They do not want your hand-outs. They want fair consideration, and this government is delivering just that.

[*Translation*]

CANADA POST

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, yesterday one of my constituents told me that the lock on his super mailbox had been frozen for a week, and it was not the first time this fall.

According to spokespersons for the Orléans post office, about 200 residents had already complained about the same problem with their mail.

[*English*]

Supermailboxes, are they the kind of second-class service that Canada Post is offering to all citizens establishing themselves in new residential developments? Is this the quality foreseen by Canada Post privatization?

Whether you are an older or a new suburban resident you should be entitled to first-rate service when it comes to mail delivery. Seeing that Canada Post cannot comply with this fact, I firmly support the recommendation made by the government appointed federal postal review committee to scrap all supermailboxes and provide home delivery to every household instead.

* * *

HEART DISEASE

Mr. Ken Monteith (Elgin): Mr. Speaker, I want to commend you and the House of Commons Health Services Branch for the heartbeat check program that was conducted last week for members of Parliament and staff of the House of Commons.

Heart disease remains the number one killer of Canadians. Hospitalization for treatment of coronary disease is expensive and time consuming. Awareness programs, such as the one undertaken last week, are important tools in combating this killer.

We should all take the time to practise preventive medicine. We should take time to assess our lifestyles, eating habits, and exercise regimes.

The heartbeat check program of last week was simple and fast, yet it gave us an excellent analysis of where improvements in our lives could be made.

Mr. Speaker, please extend my appreciation to the House of Commons employees who conducted this excellent program.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, the government has called an agricultural conference on its Green Paper *Growing Together* because it says that it wants to consult with producers about the future of agriculture in this country. In the past this government has demonstrated that it has no intention of listening to the views of producers, particularly to those who happen to disagree with the government's position.

This was made very clear with respect to the removal of oats from the Canadian Wheat Board. They were removed despite the opposition of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, the advisory committee to the Canadian Wheat Board, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, and others. A Decima poll taken at the time indicated that well over two-thirds of producers in western Canada were opposed to this move as well.

With respect to its new discussion paper the government's idea of consultation is a conference in Ottawa dominated by bureaucrats. The number of actual real farmers in attendance will be a distinct minority.

If the government were truly interested in consultation, it would provide an opportunity for producers throughout the country to participate. Instead of honest consultation, the government is only interested in ramming its right wing agenda down Canadian's throats.

* * *

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Mr. Doug Fee (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, many of us have just completed our first anniversary as members of this House. During that time we have been impressed with the access to these chambers afforded to Canadians. We would like to thank you for protecting that right. I would like to thank you for improving the access to the building and the facilities by the handicapped.

We are also impressed with the competence and dedication of the staff of the House of Commons. We saw two very good examples today—the speed and dignity with which the security forces restored dignity to the gallery and, perhaps not as dramatic, how under difficult driving conditions our buses even continued running safely.

Throughout the building, Mr. Speaker, your staff supports us in all of our efforts. I would like to congratulate you on the quality of recruitment and through you commend them all for their professionalism and dedication to this House and to the country.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. We now have two forms of the Conservative goods and services tax, tweedledum and tweedledummer.

Canadians know that both Conservative proposals are attempts, to use the words of the chairman of the committee, to gouge them for more than $10 billion in new taxes. Canadians certainly do not believe that this government will not try to raise that tax, no matter what rate at which it is originally brought in.

The Prime Minister and his Conservative cohorts love to talk about other countries that brought in a goods and services tax. Let us look at some of those other countries.

Austria brought in a tax at 8 per cent and raised it to 20 per cent. Denmark brought in a tax at 10 per cent and raised it to 22 per cent. France brought in a tax at 13 per cent and raised it to 18 per cent. West Germany brought in a tax at 10 per cent and raised it to 14 per cent. Great Britain brought in a tax at 10 per cent and raised it to 15 per cent.

Some Hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): My question for the Prime Minister of Canada is this: Do Canadians seriously expect that this new tax, if brought in and approved in whatever form, will not lead to an ever increasing gouging of the taxpayers of Canada just as has already occurred in so many other countries?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that on this side of the House we were interested in the description of our policy as tweedledum and tweedledummer. I heard somebody outside describe the Liberal position on tax reform as tweedledummest.

In fact the Leader of the Opposition had a financial spokesman here, a tax expert seated next to him, as well as the present Whip, and other members of the Liberal party who strongly recommended the course of action that has generally been pursued by the government.

The Liberal party said for some years that the manufacturers' sales tax was very harmful to the interests of the country and that a goods and services tax would be beneficial to producers, to consumers and to economic growth in the regions of the nation. This is exactly what we have done.

We have brought in a goods and services tax which met not only the philosophy but the general objectives set out by the House and endorsed by the Liberal party. Now that it is in the process of being introduced, the Liberal party typically changes its mind and says that it will not support this progressive action.

The question is not to ask the government whether we will proceed with this, because we will. The question to ask members of the Liberal opposition again is: If they oppose this as they do, what do they stand for in terms of substantial sales tax reform? Or, do they want to stick Canada with the old manufacturers' sales tax?

• (1520)

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister in his usual fashion is historically inaccurate and despite the fact that he maligns the current manufacturer's sales tax, he raised that tax on four separate occasions from 9 to 10 to 11 to 12 to 13.5 per cent.

The alternative of the Liberal Party is set forth clearly in the minority report.

Mr. Mulroney: What is it? Tell us what it is.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): The alternative is to scrap the tax—

Mr. Mulroney: And?

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): —and scrap the minister.

In the world's greatest trading nation, the United States, there is no goods and services tax. In Japan, another trade giant, the taxpayers are in a revolt against a 3 per cent tax rather 9 per cent. In Switzerland, perhaps the most successful small economy in the world, there is no goods and services tax. In Australia, one of the world's most successful export economies, medium-sized, there is no goods and services tax.

Why does the Canadian Prime Minister keep insisting that Canadians need to have a goods and services tax in order to compete successfully around the world when the two greatest trading nations of the world do not have such a tax?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member can be quite selective with what he wants. The fact is that there are 48 countries in the world today that have a goods and services tax.

I want to draw to the attention of the Leader of the Opposition that in the 1940s the Rowell-Sirois report decided that there should be a change in the manufacturers' sales tax. In 1956, the Carter committee said that there should be a change in the manufacturers' sales tax. In 1966, the Carter royal commission made the same comment. In 1977, the commodity tax review group report and, just before he took office, in the 1980s the Goodman report, a report of the federal sales tax review committee, also recommended a change in the federal sales tax.

Each of these major independent groups made recommendations to the Liberal governments of the day in each of those years. The Liberal government did nothing during this period of time. I read the so-called minority report. It was not a report of recommendations or alternatives. There were no alternatives whatsoever. It was totally vapid in its response to a series of reports that said something should be done about the federal sales tax.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, I have read the reports the minister has cited. All those reports recommended to a government that if a government chose to have a goods and services tax or a value-added tax that the tax be visible, and this is not visible; insisted that the tax be in co-operation with the provinces, and this has no co-operation with the provinces; insisted that it be revenue-neutral and non-inflationary. The Minister of Finance has not met any of the criteria of the reports of the last 40 years.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, what makes the Prime Minister think that the provincial Premiers are wrong, that the arts community is wrong, that farm groups are wrong, that teachers' organizations are wrong, that senior citizens' groups are wrong, that labour unions are wrong, that representatives of small businesses are wrong, that spokespersons for the churches are wrong and that only the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance and the Conservative Party are right in this country?

Mr. Duhamel: Ninety per cent!

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I fail to understand the comment made by the Hon. Member for Saint-Boniface. As far as the question put by the Leader of the Opposition is concerned, he knows perfectly well that wide—ranging tax changes are always a major challenge for any government. There is always tremendous resistance to tax changes of this kind. He knows that perfectly well. But when we analyses for instance, the report from the Liberal minority on the committee, there are no constructive or positive recommendations. The Leader of the Opposition has just said that his party's policy boils down to this: Keep the old tax and ask for the resignation of the Minister of Finance.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mulroney: But that is what it boils down to. We on this side realize there are changes that are not popular but that are necessary. We want to make constructive and positive changes in the economy of this country, to make it more competitive in the future. We are prepared to do things that are not popular, aware that the national interest demands leadership, and we are providing that leadership.

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State (Housing). Yesterday, the Finance Committee submitted its report on the GST, which will have a dramatic and negative effect on housing. And flagrantly contradicting statements he made previously, the Minister of Finance has refused to say whether he will reject all these proposals. And now, to get to my question: First of all, was the minister consulted by the Chairman of the Finance Committee? If so, what was his reaction? Second, can the minister give the House the assurance that he will

fight to the bitter end to ensure these proposals are rejected by Cabinet?

[*English*]

Hon. Alan Redway (Minister of State (Housing)): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member is well aware, all the committees of the House proceed independently in accordance with normal procedure and in accordance with parliamentary reform which was introduced in this House in the last term by the Prime Minister.

The committee obviously heard a lot of evidence across the country, came to its own conclusions, wrote its own report. That report is now before the government. The government is studying that report and there will be a response in due course.

Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, the goods and services tax is a stupid, inept and incompetent tax. How this minister can accept it in general, and how this minister can refuse to defend the interests of those to whom he is supposed to give shelter is beyond the belief of any Canadian.

Since his appointment, the minister has given us a number of trial balloons, none of which have been lived up to. He has presided over the decimation of the housing—

Some Hon. Members: Question!

Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard): If these recommendations are accepted in whole or in part, will the minister announce his resignation?

Mr. Redway: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member is aware, all members of this House at one time or another, have condemned the existing federal sales tax. The federal sales tax generates, as we all know, some $18 billion of revenue for the government.

Realistically, if the federal sales tax is going to be scrapped there has to be a realistic alternative. We have not heard that from the opposition as yet. I am still waiting and I am still looking at the situation. I am certainly willing to hear from the hon. member with his viable alternatives at any time.

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Finance.

The Minister of Finance is aware that a number of Conservative back-benchers have been dumping on the chairman of the finance committee and indeed one of the members of the Conservative majority has also been dumping on his proposals.

• (1530)

I want to know whether the Minister of Finance will join the rest of the country and say no to the 7 per cent solution by taxing resale housing and whether in a rare moment of candour and frankness in this House he can acknowledge that as Minister of Finance, instead of following the chairman of the finance committee, he is going to impose an 8 per cent GST?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, if I might respond on behalf of the chairman of the finance committee, I know that he does appreciate the support of the New Democratic Party for the positions that he has set out in the report. I am sure he would want me to convey those thanks to you on his behalf.

The finance committee has done some good work. Unfortunately, the minority reports have not done credit to the whole process of consultation and involvement of many people in the private sector who came before the finance committee.

I hear mumblings from the House leader of the New Democrat—the Liberal Party. It is the same thing, I guess.

Mr. Gauthier: Michael, watch your mouth!

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): At least the New Democratic Party had some alternatives. The alternatives I totally disagree with, but at least they had the courage of their own convictions and came out with some recommendations as to what the changes might be. The Liberal Party had nothing to say. All they said was go back to the drawing board that we have been working on as a country for 50 years now and come up with something. Well, we have come up with something, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, once again the minister has not answered the question. I want to know whether or not he can confirm that he is about to propose an 8 per cent GST to the country.

I also want to know whether or not he agrees with and can confirm figures that were compiled in the Department of Finance that even with the tax credit for low-income people, a family earning $20,000 with two

children will pay 10 times as much through the GST as through the income tax system in order to raise $18.5 billion. Does he agree with this? Does he confirm those figures? If he does, why does he not withdraw the GST and introduce more progressive and fair ways to raise the money for the Government of Canada? Why does he not do that?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, with the proposal that we have brought forward in the technical paper, we have demonstrated a major shift in the progressivity of sales tax in this country.

When we came to office in 1984 there was no refundable sales tax credit at all. The result was that people in low-income brackets paid two or three percentage points more of their income in sales tax than those people in middle and upper-income brackets.

With the GST proposal, including the GST credit, which is a refundable rebate to low-income people, those people in low-income brackets will pay two percentage points less of their income in sales tax than those in upper-income brackets.

That is a major step forward in the progressivity of changing the whole nature of sales tax in this country. That is why the new sales tax system that we are proposing is far fairer than the old system.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nystrom: I notice the minister getting a very timid response from his own back-benchers, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nystrom: I am glad that they all agree with me. They will need all the help they can get to sell this proposition to the Canadian people since only 7 per cent of the people support it.

I wonder why the Minister of Finance does not start at the top and eliminate the deduction for meals and entertainment for the business community, which costs the Canadian taxpayers about $1 billion a year.

Can he explain to the House why he allows his buddy, Conrad Black, to deduct his champagne and caviar dinners while a truck driver will have to pay the GST on a bologna sandwich at a truck stop? Why does he not eliminate that deduction, make Conrad Black pay and give a break to the ordinary people in this country?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, first let me thank my hon. colleague for giving the cue to my friends on this side of the House. Possibly the next time he could lead the support from his own back benches. I would appreciate that.

The hon. member asks a valid question about the balance between sales tax and income tax and how progressive the two-tax system should be. I believe, and this government believes, that there should be a sales tax, partly for fiscal reasons because of the amount of money that that tax does raise, as my colleague has said $18 billion, but partly to get an appropriate balance between savings and investment on the one hand and consumption on the other.

The Leader of the Opposition said that the United States does not have a sales tax. One of the problems that it is suffering from is that its savings and investments are on the low side, and with a consumption tax and change in its income tax that could improve its savings and investment, which is very healthy for for an economy. That is why we believe that there should be a sales tax system in this country.

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FISHERIES

Mrs. Coline Campbell (South West Nova): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Prime Minister. Last week the United States Congress passed an amendment to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Act which restricts the size of lobster sold to the U.S. Congress passed the legislation, contrary to the undertaking given by the President to the Prime Minister last September that discussions would be carried out before this legislation became effective. No discussions have taken place between the two countries. The President now has 10 days to sign this legislation.

Will the Prime Minister, when he meets with President Bush, impress upon the President that this legislation is harsh, unfair and is not very good for friendly relations between Canada and the U.S?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend raises a very important question

and I thank the member for it. It is of course my intention, having raised it in Maine, to deal with it again in Washington tomorrow.

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): Mr. Speaker, I hope the Prime Minister will do more than deal with it tomorrow because this is what we did in September. I hope the Prime Minister will ask the President to veto this offensive legislation. It restricts the $130 million lobster industry on the east coast that started this week.

Will the Prime Minister ask President Bush to veto this legislation and have discussions?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada has already asked President Bush to veto this offensive legislation. If the President does not veto the legislation, then we will be taking the matter to a panel under the FTA and to the GATT as well. I have no doubt that the Prime Minister will add his weight to our representations tomorrow.

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the right hon. Prime Minister. On the same subject matter, the Prime Minister said in the House on October 6:

> The full weight and influence of the Canadian Government, provincial governments and Members of Parliament —will be brought to bear on the U.S. Congress and the U.S. administration, in an attempt to settle this very serious problem, in the interests of our fishermen in Eastern Canada.

I want to ask the right hon. Prime Minister what assurances he will give today to lobster fishermen in eastern Canada. What assurances will he give them that their livelihoods will not be put in jeopardy by the restrictive trade practices as a result of this amendment by Senator George Mitchell in Maine?

• (1540)

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have already given the member's colleague from South West Nova the assurance that I will raise it again tomorrow with the President of the United States.

The Minister for International Trade has been dealing on this matter with Ambassador Hills. Ambassador Burney has met on a number of occasions most recently with Senator Mitchell, a fact which can be confirmed by the right hon. Leader of the Opposition who was recently in Washington. I would be interested to know his views on whether he raised the question of lobsters with Senator Mitchell while he was there. I can assure you that if the Leader of the Opposition did not raise that in defence of the lobster producers, the Government of Canada has, and we will continue to fight for those producers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is for the right hon. Prime Minister. The issue is not the Leader of the Opposition. The issue is the leadership coming from the right hon. Prime Minister with regard to lobster fishermen in eastern Canada. That is the issue.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, presently in South West Nova and all throughout Atlantic Canada this legislation is causing great uncertainty among our lobster fishermen. It will drop the price for Canadian lobster fishermen and their sales, and it will restrict traditional markets of Canadian lobster fishermen into the United States.

Will the Prime Minister clearly and unequivocally undertake to ask specifically for a veto of this legislation to protect our lobster fishermen in eastern Canada?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, I do not know why my distinguished friend is getting so exercised. The answer had already been given by the Minister for International Trade.

The Minister for International Trade, the Secretary of State for External Affairs and I, as Prime Minister, have dealt with this at the highest levels of the American government. We view it as a most serious matter. It has been raised and pursued very vigorously as well, as I said, by Ambassador Burney and his colleagues in Washington. I will be visiting with President Bush tomorrow. I will deal as effectively as I can with the matter tomorrow and I will be happy to report to my hon. friend as quickly as I can.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Prime Minister. The recent Moscow visit of the Prime Minister produced a joint Canada-USSR declaration. It states that both signatories will undertake the following: "The renunciation of war as a means of national policy, respect for the rights of peoples to determine their own destinies on the basis of freedom of choice" and to " protect the environment, keeping in mind that the threat of an ecological catas-

trophe is next in its implication only to the threat of nuclear war itself".

In that light, will the Prime Minister help bury the cold war next week when he is at Brussels by cancelling Canada's bid for the tactical training centre at Goose Bay?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the member had asked that question earlier. He also has continually tried to convince Canadians that this government, particularly the Department of National Defence, has had no interest in bringing about understanding and peace in this world. Nothing could be further from the truth.

We have taken actions in the Department of National Defence. The Prime Minister in his trip to Moscow signed an agreement with the government of the Soviet Union. The reason this department was involved some two months ago in discussions with the Soviet military is that of confidence-building, reaching understandings with one another and being able to bring a climate of peace and security in the world. We will continue to do that.

At the same time, we should continue to have prudence. We should continue to work through the two alliances, NATO and the Warsaw Pact, to reduce the presence of arms in this world.

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is also for the Canadian Minister of National Defence. Surely he is aware that Poland's Minister of National Defence has been engaging in confidence-building measures very closely related to this point in that he has issued restrictions on low level flying, on supersonic flying, on firing and bombing exercises. Also the Soviet Air Force MIG-23 battalion has been withdrawn from the Baltic coast. This is according to Jane's *Defence Weekly*.

Will the minister consider responding to these confidence-building measures and peace moves by the Warsaw bloc and to the Canadian women's groups, native groups, church and other groups which today presented his office with a block from the Berlin wall, which is part of the same relaxation in the east? Will he do that by restricting the low level flights and other training over Goose Bay and Nitassinan instead of increasing them from 7,000 to 40,000 according to the outdated NATO plan?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member puts forward a suggestion that would mean that Canada would act unilaterally as a member of NATO.

Mr. Heap: Poland did it.

Mr. McKnight: The member says Poland did it. Poland has also done some other things I do not think Canadians would like to see this government or any other government do in this country. I would like the member to try to understand regardless of the half truths that were put forward by a group this morning that he associated himself with, including the Canadian Council of Churches.

The aggressive nature that they state in low-level training is not accurate. It is defensive training. It is training that all air forces throughout both the Warsaw Pact and the NATO Alliance continue to do and we will continue to do. Hopefully, through negotiations, both the Warsaw Pact and the NATO Alliance will be able to reduce the need for that low level flying. Until that time comes we, as members of NATO, will continue to take part.

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FINANCE

Mr. Ken Hughes (Macleod): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to direct my procedural question to the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Finance, specifically relating to future proceedings of the committee. As you know, the honourable chairman reported on behalf of the committee and that report in principle supported the goods and services tax. The people of Macleod would like to know when the finance committee will start listening to Canadians about cutting government spending. In short, when is this finance committee, the committee as a whole, going to do something other than recommend taxes?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Speaker: This answer is going to require great calm.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, the member may know, in the committee report filed yesterday, that the first recommendation of the committee is to conduct public hearings and an inquiry into government expense. After some consultation, we will be calling a meeting next week of the committee to determine how we should proceed. I am going to suggest to the committee that the Hon. Member from Ontario be the chairman of a subcommittee of the finance committee in this inquiry.

A number of briefs were presented in the last hearings on the goods and services tax detailing certain claims and I think it is important that the committee really follow those up to make a recommendation to the House.

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PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): Mr. Speaker, we know that the Minister of Finance speaks no evil, sees no evil and hears no evil with respect to his 9 per cent tax. So, let me ask a question of the minister responsible for housing who is supposed to represent home owners, home buyers, home providers, builders and others. How can the minister sit and watch while both the Minister of Finance and the chairman of the finance committee inflict such pain and hardship on Canadians who either own, rent or want to buy a home? Will this Minister categorically reject both GST proposals on housing?

• (1550)

Hon. Alan Redway (Minister of State (Housing)): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated before, the government is currently considering the report that was filed yesterday by the finance committee and will be taking it into consideration.

I think the hon. member should bear in mind that the present proposal for the GST includes a rebate in connection with new housing. That rebate has some characteristics to it which promote affordability in housing, one of them being that the rebate is not available for anyone who is not a Canadian resident, and a second one being that the rebate is not available except in the case of a principal residence. In effect, it provides an implicit land speculation tax to it. I think the hon. member should bear those factors in mind when considering affordability in housing.

Mr. Fontana: The Minister will know that that rebate is not worth the paper it is written on. He knows that full well.

A tax on housing is not a tax on consumption. It is a tax on a dream, on savings, on a basic essential of life and that is shelter. Both proposals will push the price of a home out of the reach of most Canadians. How does the government plan to redress this inequality? What will this minister do for the people who want to buy a home?

Mr. Redway: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member is well aware, there is a federal sales tax at the moment on new housing and on the existing housing it is included in that price. The impact of that tax is calculated to be some 4 per cent at the present time. The impact of the proposal of the finance department with the rebate has the total impact of a marginal increase in taxes with respect to housing.

It is indicated that housing prices would likely not increase generally by perhaps more than a figure that was less than 1 per cent.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Trade who will be meeting his counterpart, the U.S. trade representative, on Thursday in Washington, hopefully not to capitulate on Atlantic lobsters, as his government has done on west coast salmon and herring.

The government has accepted the decision of the binational panel which permits up to 20 per cent of west coast salmon and herring to be sold over the side to the United States, contrary to its previous insistence that landing requirements were necessary for the conservation and management of Canadian fish stocks. Yet the Americans are still not satisfied. They want more.

Will the trade minister assure this House that they will not get more? Will he commit to Canadians today, prior to his meeting, that Canada will not sell out Canadian fish processing jobs once again? Will he undertake that no more than 20 per cent of salmon and herring will be allowed to be sold over the side to the United States—

Mr. Speaker: I think the minister has the question.

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I believe I have the thrust of the question. There is a meeting between Mrs. Hills and myself on Thursday in Ottawa, not in Washington.

One of the issues that will be discussed is the B.C. salmon and herring situation. We announced that we are accepting the report. The report of the panel found that Canada's landing regulations were in truth and in essence conservation and management regulations, and that they were in order with the suggestion that from 10 to 20 per cent of any particular species of fish might not need to be landed to make the information obtained satisfactory and valid. So landing regulations have been found to be valid.

Mr. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands–Canso): Is the Minister for International Trade changing his government's interpretation of this panel ruling to suit the Americans on the eve of his meeting with the U.S. trade representative? Is that what the minister is telling this House? Is this how the dispute settlement panel under the free trade agreement is supposed to operate? Does it mean when Canada and the United States disagree on the interpretation of a panel ruling that Canada meekly accepts the American interpretation?

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker, apparently I am not speaking too clearly today, having just come from the dentist. I don't know where the greatest pain was, in the dentist's office or here.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Crosbie: Our interpretation of the panel report has not changed and will not change on Thursday, and we are prepared to implement the panel report. We will implement the panel report as we have said we will do.

* * *

FORESTRY

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of forests. The expiry of forest agreements between the federal government and a number of provinces is wreaking havoc across the country.

The New Brunswick forestry workers have lost their jobs. In Manitoba, emergency funding to plant six million rotting seedlings had to be approved this summer, all of this because of the failure of the minister to sign new agreements.

Will the minister announce, today, federal funds for a 10–year billion dollar agreement with British Columbia?

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of State (Forestry)): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately I won't be able to announce today a 10–year billion dollar agreement with British Columbia, but I can tell the hon. member and my friend that the new B.C. minister of forestry is in the city today. We have begun negotiations with the provinces. The member knows that particular agreement does not expire until the end of this fiscal year, which is the end of March.

I will also be able to tell the House in the very near future of the signing of a number of agreements with provinces that had expired earlier. Also, I want to tell the hon. member that I am not aware of any lay–off in the silviculture industry in the maritime provinces or anywhere else as a result of our negligence.

Mr. Gardiner: Mr. Speaker, the fact that the forestry minister from British Columbia is in town today is a perfect reason that the minister should announce a new agreement today.

In order to build on the work that was done by the first forest agreement in B.C., can the minister tell this House that he will guarantee that funds for a new forest agreement will help replant the backlog NSR lands in British Columbia by the year 2000?

Mr. Oberle: Mr. Speaker, what I can tell my hon. friend is that the people who would probably be best qualified to build on the foundation of the first FRDA agreement would be the architects of that agreement. We are beginning to build on that. in our negotiations and he will be very pleasantly surprised when it is all done.

* * *

EL SALVADOR

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. While the situation in east Europe has improved dramatically, Canadians have watched with horror the last two weeks increased violence in El Salvador.

Many hundreds of Canadians have visited Central America in recent years, not as tourists but out of concern for the political socio-economic plight of the region's majority population. They want a strong, independent Canadian voice in the region. They want the Canadian government to assure safety and justice in El Salvador to Canadian and other civilian volunteers.

Is this government committed to designating a permanent Canadian professional diplomat on the ground in San Salvador to guarantee these assurances?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, we have two Canadian representatives in San Salvador now. They will be staying in San Salvador for the duration of the conflict there which we hope will not endure long.

I had the opportunity earlier today, which I very much appreciated, to speak to the hon. member and other members of the House from all parties who are interested in trying to find a constructive way in which Canada can help bring peace to El Salvador. As she knows, I have been in touch with the foreign minister of Venezuela. We are in touch diplomatically with the Governments of Cuba, of Nicaragua and of other countries in Central America.

The Prime Minister and I will be meeting tomorrow with President Bush and Secretary Baker and will be discussing the question there. I will also be calling in various Canadians from church groups and others, including some who have recently been helped by the Government of Canada to leave El Salvador, to get their views on Thursday as to other actions which Canada might constructively take.

• (1600)

Mrs. Stewart: Mr. Speaker, I was asking if we would consider a permanent representative on the ground in El Salvador.

On Thursday, November 23, the El Salvadoran government enacted a penal code amendment, an anti-terrorist law which puts at risk all volunteers of any nationality, including the well-know American non-violent activist, Jennifer Cassolo who is currently detained under suspicious charges.

Will the Secretary of State for External Affairs assure us today in this House that he will inform the El Salvadoran government that this legislation is undemocratic and ask for its withdrawal? Also, will he press President Bush to convey the same message concerning this in his meeting tomorrow?

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member, on reconsideration, would understand that whatever we might think of laws in other countries, laws passed in those countries are theirs to decide and theirs to choose, just as laws passed in this country are ours to decide and ours to choose.

We are very much concerned about the law that has been passed. We are concerned about the implications it holds for Canadians. We are particularly concerned about the case of Jennifer Cassolo which the member has raised. Jennifer Cassolo has helped a number of Canadians, including parliamentarians, when they visited El Salvador.

It is the general view of church groups, parliamentarians and others to whom I have spoken, that it would be most surprising were she guilty of the charges that have been laid against her. I will be communicating that view directly to authorities in El Salvador with an eye to trying to ensure that for as long as she is in custody, she is as safe as can be and to try to have her out of custody as quickly as possible.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment, who I am sure is aware that the resolve to reduce acid rain in both Canada and the United States is weakening. The U.S. government has filed evidence with the U.S. Court of Appeal which claims that it is entirely speculative that a cut in U.S. emissions would reduce acid rain damage in Canada.

Here at home, Quebec Hydro is encouraging thousands of its industrial customers to switch from electricity to oil, meaning that Quebec will not meet its commitment to reduce acid rain emissions to 600,000 tonnes by next January.

Will the minister intervene and request that Quebec Hydro implement some of the billions of dollars in energy efficiency and conservation measures contained in its own March 1989 report, rather than blow the cap on acid rain, both in Canada and perhaps in our relations with the United States?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, my Department is indeed disturbed by the decision made recently by Hydro-Quebec, because we have reason to believe that this decision may compromise the objectives set by the government of Quebec in the agreement that was signed. We believe the timing was very poor, considering that we are now negotiating an agreement with the Americans that would enable us to meet the objectives we have in mind. However, on the basis of our discussions with the Quebec Department of the Environment, we have reason to hope that radical action will be taken by this department, vis-à-vis Hydro-Quebec, to reduce the sulfur content of heavy oil used in Quebec so that our objectives can nevertheless be met. We are monitoring the situation very closely, and we realize that intervention by the federal government may be necessary.

* * *

[*English*]

POINTS OF ORDER

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of State (Youth) and Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport)): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I rise to bring to the attention of members in this House an unusual presence today in the House of Commons. I rise as Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport to bring to the attention of members of the House of Commons the presence of people that Canadians know well but do not often have the opportunity to visit within this forum.

If you will be patient with me, Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce and bring to your attention the presence of Mr. Gordie and Colleen Howe—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Charest: —Mr. Ed and Norma Shack—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Charest: Lorne "Gump" and Doreen Worsley.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Mr. Charest: And finally, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Maurice «Rocket» Richard and Mrs. Richard.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear.

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas): As the co-critic for Fitness and Amateur Sports and a spokesperson for the Liberal party, it gives me great pleasure to see some of my former colleagues who I used to meet in hockey arenas, in our arena today, the House of Commons. We wish them a hearty welcome and it is a pleasure to see them among us.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): On behalf of our party, I would also like to welcome our guests to the gallery. Some of them go back almost as long as we do. It is too bad some of them are not members of the cabinet. Then we might have more money for sports in this country.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: I too would like to address our visitors in the gallery and advise them that this whole procedure was completely out of order but seems to have met with the universal consent of the House.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE—STATEMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I rise on another point of order totally unconnected with the last one. On Wednesday night last during the Adjournment Debate, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport was responding to a submission of mine in respect of the transportation of dangerous goods and emergency preparedness on the west coast.

The point I had been making included the fact that the government had failed to provide any enforcement of its regulations in respect of the carriage and shipment of dangerous goods on passenger ferries on the coast. In the course of his answer, the parliamentary secretary said and it is reported at the bottom of page 6065 of *Hansard* for the day, that the Auditor General has noted in his report that "we do investigate and conduct inspections on ferries when some specific concern exists and random inspections are also conducted".

This has been the first opportunity I have had to raise this point. I have checked not only with the Auditor General's report but with the Auditor General's office itself.

The Auditor General's office said that at best, someone is mixing up words. I do not suggest for a second that the parliamentary secretary himself was intentionally misleading the House, but rather that he had been wrongly briefed and as a result, the House was misled. He was in fact quoting from a different section of the report dealing with quite a different matter.

In respect of dangerous cargoes, the Auditor General's report says on page 474, Section 22.34:

> An example of a potentially hazardous situation is the illegal transportation of dangerous goods on passenger ferries. Ferry operators rely on declarations by transporters that dangerous goods are not among those being shipped on passenger ferries. The Ship Safety Branch does not have a program to monitor or inspect such shipments.

On the next page, in Section 22.48 on page 476 the report goes on to say:

> Although the Western Region each year does approximately 100 inspections of shipments of dangerous goods, it has no procedure for selecting a certain proportion of such shipments for random inspection, and it does no random inspection of ferries in the Region.

Inadvertently I am sure, the parliamentary secretary has incorrectly quoted the Auditor General on a very critical issue, one which has recently, over this last weekend, been resolved in part by the ferry union and the B.C. Ferry Corporation reaching agreement. We still have not had assurances from Transport Canada and from the parliamentary secretary that in fact the government is providing inspections to ensure that the regulations are being met and the travelling public protected.

Mr. Ross Belsher (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for bringing to our attention the statements that I made in the House this past Wednesday evening in the Adjournment Debate. I believe it focuses around paragraph 22.14 of the Auditor General's report which states that the examinations of ships' safety focused on the planning process used by the Coast Guard to allocate scarce resources to its regular activity and its mandatory and discretionary inspections, and I want to underline the word "discretionary".

• (1610)

Discretionary inspections, by their very nature, are conducted when specific concerns exist. The Auditor General further states, later on in his report, at paragraph 22.47, that in the maritime regions, the ships' safety branch reports that it inspects approximately 2 per cent of the containers used in the transportation of dangerous goods, and the region monitors the movement of dangerous goods in its area and uses the information to determine which containers to inspect; that is to say, discretionary inspection or inspections on the basis of specific concerns.

I want to say that there was no intent, on this member's part, to mislead the hon. member, and I want to apologize in this House for making statements that could be attributed as coming specifically out of the Auditor General's report. I want to thank the hon. member for bringing it to our attention.

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, when I made by maiden speech in this House in 1979, the then Speaker, Speaker Jerome, ruled me out of order because I recognized one of my students from my riding in the gallery. I have respected that ruling ever since.

Since I have returned to this House, there have been two occasions when the rule has been disregarded, once when a choir was recognized in the visitors' gallery and today. Visitors should be recognized, I agree with you, Mr. Speaker, but today visitors were recognized in the Speaker's gallery. If we want to recognize these visitors, maybe it is time that we looked at changing the rules of who can and who cannot be recognized in the gallery.

We are getting more and more very important visitors coming, sitting in the Speaker's gallery, or the visitors' gallery, and I think we should have a clear understanding of who should be recognized and who should not, so that we do not get into these embarrassing situations as we did today.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Prud'homme: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order. I think we could help the Chair determine how we should proceed in the future.

I think the hon. member did well to make this point, since I always understood, and this rule has always worked well in the past, that the Speaker is informed of the presence of visitors in the gallery and decides to recognize them on our behalf, at the appropriate time. It is rather embarrrassing for the other political parties when an important visitor is recognized by one political party and this leads to what we have seen today, namely that members of other parties feel obliged or rather are delighted to rise in the House, and this merely prolongs the proceedings.

Of course, we join in the applause, but I think the Chair should consider what was said by the Hon. Member from Toronto and advise all Members including cabinet ministers, that this rule should be inflexible and apply to everyone. It is up to the Chair to recognize the distinguished visitors we would like to recognize. However, we can inform the speaker or draw his attention to the various important visitors we can expect.

Mr. Charest: Mr. Speaker, with your leave, and especially to come to the defence of the Chair, I feel obliged to explain to my opposition friends that I was not personally informed of the fact that the people whose presence I mentioned a few minutes ago in our gallery would, in fact, be visiting the House. Like most members here in the House, when these people entered the gallery, I was surprised to see them, and I decided to take the initiative of rising on a point of order, after Question Period, to draw the attention of the House to their presence.

What I wish to say to hon. members, through you, Mr. Speaker, is that the Chair was not involved at all in this initiative taken by the Deputy House Leader. I want it to be quite clear that this decision, which I made personally, was well beyond any control the Chair might have.

So I want to make it quite clear to all members of this House that the person chairing the proceedings of this House today was not involved at all in the decision I made to draw the attention of the House to the presence of our visitors.

That being said, Mr. Speaker, I think we should also realize that from time to time, there may be situations when members of this House may decide to draw attention to the presence of distinguished citizens who may be in our galleries unannounced, and that from time to time we should offer some leeway to those who take this kind of initiative. I believe that is the case today.

So as far as I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, and in concluding, I would like to say that if you decide to give me a reprimand because I drew the attention of the House to the presence of Messrs. Howe, Shack, Worsely and Maurice "Rocket" Richard in our gallery today, I accept that reprimand with great pleasure.

[*English*]

Mr. Prud'homme: Mr. Speaker, I will not let this go by that easily. I think the hon. minister totally misrepresented what we are trying to do. I did not blame the Speaker and that was not our intention. We said it is a custom be informed, and the minister is trying to sidetrack the debate. Of course the Speaker is not going to blame the minister today, and I know the minister would like to say he was blamed for recognizing great people that we all want to applaud. That is not the point.

The point raised by my esteemed colleague from Toronto is that it has always been our practice, in order not to have this kind of debate, for Mr. Speaker to recognize visitors. hon. minister, the next time such an occasion arises, he can take a pen, and if he needs one I can lend him mine any time, to send a little distinguished note to Mr. Speaker saying, "Mr. Speaker, I see in the gallery distinguished people who should be recognized." Then Mr. Speaker will do so.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I think you have to be very careful here. I too along with all members of the House appreciated the minister so gallantly rising and pointing out some very distinguished guests. We all felt that was an appropriate act.

However, if this becomes any kind of open season, we all have distinguished guests to which we might draw attention. I observe, Mr. Speaker, that you have been very liberal in your efforts in the last while to recognize the people in our gallery, recognizing that that time comes out of Question Period, which is the only time we have to hold the government accountable. That can be problematic. On the other hand, I am sure others have noticed that you use the occasion from time to time to defuse the House when it perhaps becomes a little too

rambunctious, by focusing our attention on esteemed guests in the gallery.

I think it is important that we all have a clear understanding that it is the Speaker who recognizes guests on our behalf, because if we turn this into an open season situation, we will all be up on points of order at the end of Question Period pointing out various guests. I think that my hon. friend knows the rules and regulations and I simply would ask him, and not only his colleagues but all of us, to recognize the time honoured tradition that it is the Speaker who recognizes guests in the gallery on behalf of us all.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker: This may be the appropriate time for some comments by the Chair. I want to thank the Hon. Member for Saint-Denis and the minister for their comments, especially the hon. member for Saint-Denis, since he is an expert on the rules of the House of Commons and one of our veteran members. I listened carefully to the comments made by the hon. member, wise as always.

I believe the comments made by the Hon. Member for Parkdale—High Park were particularly apt.

[*English*]

Let me just point out to hon. members that after the House joined together in a happy demonstration of felicity and welcome to the distinguished visitors in the gallery, I pointed out that the entire procedure was, of course, highly out of order. I might have likened the situation to a hockey game, but I resisted that temptation. I can only say to the hon. member for Parkdale—High Park that under the circumstances I could not put all hon. members on both sides of the House in the penalty box.

• (1620)

But we have a procedure which I think ought to be followed, that is, that first of all there are some guidelines with regard to whom we recognize. The proper procedure is that at some time well in advance of the moment when the guests are expected notice is given to the Speaker.

I am always in the hands of hon. members. If the House wants, by consent, to change that on some special occasion, of course the House can do so. I think the consent that we saw this afternoon was one that sort of crept around the chamber and nobody, under the circumstances, wished to be other than gracious. I understand that.

The difficulty we have, though, is: as the hon. member for Kamloops pointed out, all hon. members have people of great distinction living in their ridings. After all, without the support of these people of great distinction, hon. members would not be here. There is a natural tendency and natural temptation to want to recognize these people. Sometimes the distinction they have as great Canadians has a great deal to do with how close they live to the hon. member back in the riding. But that is not a matter for me to concern myself with as long as the suggestion for recognition meets the guidelines. The guidelines are very clear and hon. members have them.

I would say to the hon. minister that I think there was some complicity on both sides of the House with the hon. minister's very generous use of a moment or two after Question Period. I want to assure the hon. minister that I am not taking any of these remarks as any kind of an attack on the Chair. I just want to advise hon. members and the public, of course, that I do not think this was quite the individual initiative that the minister may have indicated to the House it was, because an hon. member from this side of the House had come to me and said: "When are we going to recognize these special guests?"

This is one of those rare moments when the House expressed its unanimous wish to do something, but I think I should say that it is a rare moment and, unless I am advised differently by the House, I am going to stick to the rules and recognitions will not be made unless I have notice and unless they fit the guidelines.

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Speaker, I heard the comments of the parliamentary secretary on the point that I raised, and I am quite happy to accept his statement of apology. On that basis I would gladly withdraw my point of order.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the hon. member. In response, I think the hon. member for Victoria made it very clear that he appreciated the point being raised, and he was very courteous in his reply. In the best traditions of this place I thank the hon. member.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to several petitions.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

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ORDER IN COUNCIL

TABLING OF APPOINTMENTS

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of State (Youth) and Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport)): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, a number of Order in Council appointments which were made by the government.

Of course all this is pursuant to Section 110(1).

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[*Translation*]

ELECTIONS, PRIVILEGES, PROCEDURE AND PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

TABLING OF REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table in the House the Sixth Report of the Standing Committee on Elections, Privileges, Procedure and Private Members' Business. The Committee has designated a motion as a votable item, and it is motion No. 524, standing in the name of the Hon. Member for Scarborough Centre.

[*Editor's note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

* * *

[*English*]

PETITIONS

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, it is my delight to present a petition, pursuant to Standing Order 36, on behalf of a number of people from British Columbia who point out their concern for the government's goods and services tax.

While pointing out most of the shortcomings of the tax, the petitioners simply ask the government to reconsider proceeding, to go back to the drawing board and to start all over again.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, on a second item, again pursuant to Standing Order 36 and certified correct by the clerk of petitions, I wish to present a petition from 72 western Canadians who point out the need for the government to reconsider its decision on VIA Rail cut-backs and actually upgrade VIA Rail with new equipment and give VIA Rail a sufficient budget to maintain its national mandate for passenger service.

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to Standing Order 36 with three petitions, two of them with a total of 101 signatures, asking the government not to make any cuts on VIA Rail and to wait until a new transportation policy can be brought into effect.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Mr. Speaker, I have a third petition on a totally unrelated matter from many persons in my constituency from the cities of Brantford, Paris, Ontario and so on who are completely opposed to abortion.

BILL 178

Mr. Ken James (Sarnia—Lambton): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, it is my duty and obligation to present three separate groups of petitions to the House today, all of which have been certified correct as to form and content by the clerk.

First, some 37 signatories from my riding of Sarnia—Lambton call upon the Parliament of Canada to urge the Governor in Council to exercise his constitutional power of disallowance with respect to Bill 178 of the province of Quebec which they believe contravenes the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mr. Ken James (Sarnia—Lambton): Mr. Speaker, the second petition which contains approximately 200 signatures calls upon Parliament to amend the Young Offend-

ers Act to better protect the interests of society from violent offenders, no matter the age of the offender.

VIOLENT CRIMES

Mr. Ken James (Sarnia—Lambton): Finally, Mr. Speaker, I have received some 4,400 signatures from residents of Sarnia, Clearwater, Brights Grove, Point Edward, Corunna, Courtright and other communities throughout Ontario who humbly pray and call upon Parliament to pass legislation which establishes mandatory minimum sentences for all violent crimes that would apply uniformly to all regions of Canada.

RCMP DRESS CODE

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey—White Rock): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour as a member of Parliament to present several petitions from constituents in the lower mainland, but also from Vancouver Island. The list comprises several hundred names and their petition reads as follows:

The undersigned humbly pray and call upon Parliament to preserve the distinctive heritage and tradition of the RCMP by retaining uniformity of dress code with all the recognizable colour and trappings that have such great historical value for this country.

The pride and *esprit de corps* should not be jeopardized by any concession to religious or ethnic minorities which result in changes to this truly great police force and its proud traditions and uniform.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey—White Rock): Mr. Speaker, I have another petition of several pages on an entirely different subject which reads as follows:

The undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon Parliament to enact legislation which will effectively protect the life of the unborn without distinction as to stage of development.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour and duty, pursuant to Standing Order 36, to present to the House 10 petitions certified correct by the clerk of petitions.

They contain the signatures of hundreds of constituents in my riding of Hamilton West and surrounding ridings. They call on this Parliament to reject the proposed 9 per cent goods and services tax.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present a petition with some 51 names from Kincardine, Ontario, calling on the Parliament of Canada to restore VIA Rail service, to maintain it at its present level, to upgrade the rail service with new equipment, and to give VIA Rail sufficient budget to maintain its national mandate for passenger service.

• (1630)

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mrs. Diane Marleau (Sudbury): Mr. Speaker, for I do not know how many times I have done this now, but I am presenting again today a large number of petitions from people in my riding and adjacent ridings who are totally opposed to the proposed goods and services tax.

They are extremely worried about the effects this tax will have on inflation and on the cost of living. They humbly beg this Conservative government to withdraw its proposal.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Jack Whittaker (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure today to present a petition from 1,320 residents of Osoyoos and district in the riding of Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt with respect to a proposed storage site for PCBs at the port of entry of Osoyoos in the province of British Columbia. They say that this is inappropriate for an area such as Osoyoos which depends on agriculture and tourism for its economic survival.

They humbly pray and call upon Parliament to ensure that the environment of the Okanagan is not jeopardized by the potential for contamination by PCBs from such a storage site and ask the government to reconsider and reverse the decision by Public Works Canada to store PCBs at the port of entry in Osoyoos, British Columbia.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour and privilege today to present to this House four petitions, all of which deal with the subject of the proposed goods and services tax.

No doubt it will come as no surprise that the citizens of my riding who have signed these petitions humbly pray that Parliament scrap the tax.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, it is my duty and honour to present this petition signed by 41 petitioners. It has been certified by the clerk of petitions.

The petitioners say that the railway passenger service carried on by VIA Rail is an essential means of transportation for many Canadians and has been part of the basic Canadian infrastructure for over 100 years and that these cuts in subsidy to VIA Rail will result in serious reduction in railway passenger service.

Therefore the undersigned call upon Parliament to maintain VIA Rail, Canada's present national network; to upgrade VIA Rail with new equipment; and to give VIA Rail a sufficient budget to maintain its national mandate for passenger service.

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present two petitions. The first one is with respect to VIA Rail.

I have a petition with 32 names on it of Canadians who are concerned with the direction the government is taking with respect to VIA Rail.

They call upon the government to maintain VIA Rail's present national network, to upgrade VIA Rail with new equipment, and to give VIA Rail a sufficient budget to maintain its national mandate for passenger service.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I also have another petition which has been presented to me by a number of producers in Saskatchewan who are concerned about the direction this government is taking with respect to agriculture in this country.

Specifically they are concerned about oats being removed from the jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board, and they call upon this government to reinstate oats under the Wheat Board Act and to give barley the same protection that wheat has now.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to present another petition on behalf of my Cardigan constituents, particularly from the Souris area.

The petitioners pray that this government will bring forth legislation that will protect the foetus.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I have three sets of petitions to table this afternoon. The petitions have all been certified correct as to form and content by the clerk of petitions.

I would like to table a petition signed by approximately 97 residents of Toronto, Sault Ste. Marie and Beardmore, one from Scotland and two from New York City, who are concerned about the decisions of the government with regard to VIA Rail.

They point out that these reductions in budget and service will lead to the disappearance of one-third of Canada's national railway system, if not more. They call upon Parliament to upgrade VIA Rail with new equipment and to give VIA Rail a sufficient budget to maintain its national mandate for passenger service.

NATIONAL MARINE POLICY

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table in the House today petitions bearing the names of approximately 16,000 Canadians who work in and around the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway system.

They point out in this petition that the federal government has failed to establish a national marine policy and that that in itself has contributed to the reflagging of Canadian ships and offered Canadian shipping companies a loophole whereby they do not pay taxes.

The petitioners point out that this reflagging has cost Canadians thousands of jobs, both directly and indirectly, on board ships and in the related shore-side and ship building industries, and that this has a dramatic impact on the communities as well as the federal Treasury.

The petitioners call on Parliament to endorse the concept of a Canadian international shipping registry, also known as a second registry, for Canadian ships operating in international trade outside Canada as detailed in the discussion paper prepared by Transport Canada dated September 1988.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I also have a number of petitions with regard to the goods and services tax signed by citizens in my community who object to the proposed tax, whether it is 9, 8, 7, 6, or 5 per cent.

Some 71 customers of Wheeler's Lumber have petitioned me, as well as 26 from G. K. Sandwich Take-Out and 26 from McMillan Grocery. I would like to table those.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 151 and 157.

[*Text*]

CELEBRATIONS IN 1992

Question No. 151—**Mr. Gardiner:**

Has the government planned celebrations in 1992 for the one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of Confederation and, if so, in this regard, has the government (a) issued contracts to plan or help organize the events and, if so (i) what number (ii) for what amounts (b) set a budget and, if so, for what amount (c) assigned duties to departmental staff and, if so, by department, to what number of them (d) prepared a list of themes or possible events and, if so, what are they (e) prepared a study of funding provided to projects in the 1967 Centennial year and, if so, what is its title?

Hon. Gerry Weiner (Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Citizenship)): No, see footnote.

A national conference, entitled "Towards 1992", which was held in Ottawa from October 10 to 12, brought together some 400 representatives from all sectors of Canadian society including the private sector. The objective was to determine how best to co-ordinate efforts in commemorating a number of significant anniversaries being marked across the country, in 1992, including the 125th anniversary of Canadian Confederation.

DUNDEE RESORT

Question No. 157—**Mr. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso):**

Has the Dundee Resort been sold by Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation and, if so (a) to whom (b) for what amount (c) what conditions were attached to the sale (d) who were the alternative bidders?

Hon. Elmer MacIntosh MacKay (Minister of Public Works and Minister for the purposes of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency Act): In August 1987, the Cape Breton Development Corporation called proposals for the possible sale and future development of Dundee Resort. The Corporation received (5) requests for information and (3) proposals for development, from 1) Dundee Development Limited; 2) South Mountain Arm of Gold Community Association; and 3) Odyssey Cape Breton Limited. The Odyssey Cape Breton Limited concept was selected as the most promising project for consideration.

Dundee Resort has not yet been sold. Dundee's Board of Directors and ECBC's Board of Directors have approved the sale of Dundee Resort subject to satisfactory completion of negotiations with Odyssey Cape Breton Limited.

[*English*]

Mr. Cooper: I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

Mr. Speaker: The questions as enumerated by the parliamentary secretary have been answered. Shall the remaining questions be allowed to stand?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker: Pursuant to order made Thursday, November 23 1989, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 4.36 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, November 29, 1989

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

[*English*]

THE LATE JIM JEPSON

Mr. Speaker: It is my unhappy duty to announce to the House that our friend and colleague the former member from London East, Jim Jepson, died in London an hour ago. There will be tributes on Monday. I know that hon. members would want to have the weekend to consider the announcement and make the appropriate remarks, as is the custom in this place.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

FORESTRY

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the House in a non-answer to a question I raised with the Minister of State for Forests about job losses because of the lack of signed forest agreements, the minister said he was not aware of any problems. The minister had only to consult his own department's information to see that 43 silvicultural workers in New Brunswick have lost their jobs because of the lack of a forest agreement.

In British Columbia, the staff of Forestry Canada are approaching members of our caucus expressing concern about their jobs because of the confusion caused by the government's lack of action. Worse is that the trained staff in Forestry Canada have the skills that are needed in a renewed forest agreement. We cannot lose them.

The minister is obviously not aware of the concern in the forest community about these unsigned agreements. He should sign them now.

[*Translation*]

INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, on November 18, I visited the community of Mistissini, where I observed the deplorable condition of 141 homes built according to the standards of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development when the former Liberal government was in power.

Today, these homes are very unsanitary and have been condemned by the Department of Health. Nevertheless, these government-built slums, with no electricity, water or plumbing, still house nine families because other accommodation is lacking.

On many occasions Chief Henry Mianscum has demanded that these outdated, unhealthy, dangerous shacks be replaced.

Mr. Speaker, I repeat again that our Government must correct the errors of this department; otherwise, that community would be entitled to CIDA programs in the same way as the Third World.

* * *

[*English*]

VETERANS

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg—St. James): Mr. Speaker, in 1990 the Army, Navy and Air Force veterans in Canada will commemorate their 150th anniversary. It is the oldest veterans' organization in the country. The group's earliest members fought in the war of 1812.

Throughout its long history, the members of ANAF served their country with distinction. In recognition of its proud tradition, the ANAF last year asked Canada Post to issue a commemorative stamp in 1990. Just last month, the veterans learned, to their shock, that Canada Post had refused the request for a commemorative stamp. This is an insult to our veterans who sacrificed so much for our country. Surely they deserve more than the cursory rejection they received from Canada Post in light

of the contribution they have made to ensure our freedom.

I urge the government to reconsider this offensive snub to Canada's oldest veterans organization. I strongly urge the government to issue a stamp commemorating the 150th anniversary of ANAF.

* * *

• (1410)

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): Mr. Speaker, as the process of reform continues in eastern Europe, parliamentarians must remain aware of difficulties in other areas of the world, particularly the continuing problem of family reunification for Ethiopian Jews. Although some 17,000 Ethiopian Jews were airlifted to Israel in 1984–85, 12,000 to 15,000 are still separated from their families in Ethiopia.

The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights of which Ethiopia is a co–signatory, obliges nations to permit and assist in the reunification of families separated by migration. Given the Canadian people's generous assistance in aiding Ethiopia and the current downsizing of Soviet aid, Canada is in a strong position to exercise leadership on this vital human rights issue. Almost 1,500 Ethiopian Jewish children remain separated from their families, an injustice entering its fifth year.

I ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs to place this issue high on the agenda in our relations with Ethiopia.

* * *

[*Translation*]

EXPULSION OF HAITIAN CITIZENS

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint–Michel): Mr. Speaker, since nine Haitians who were to be deported yesterday did not go to Mirabel (Airport) and it is becoming increasingly obvious that the reign of terror continues in Haiti under President Avril, I ask the Minister of Employment and Immigration and the Conservative government to go back on their decision concerning the moratorium and to stop all planned expulsions immediately.

I make this request for all those poor people who fear persecution in Haiti, in particular, for Gertrude Nazaire and her daughter Minerve and for Lucienne Oscar, her husband and two children, who made representations at my riding office in Montreal.

I do not understand why the minister does not use her discretionary powers and take humanitarian action, as requested by the Montreal Rights and Freedoms League, among others.

What game is the Conservative Party playing with the Montreal Haitian community?

Last week, the Conservative ministers from Montreal undertook to ask their immigration colleague to change her position. However, the minister's secretary told the press that they made no such request. This hypocrisy is unacceptable. The inhuman deportations must stop right now.

* * *

[*English*]

BOWATER MERSEY PAPER COMPANY

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, this week marks the sixtieth anniversary of the Bowater Mersey Paper Company Ltd. Established by Isaac Walton Killam in 1929, Bowater Mersey has become the economic backbone of Queens County, Nova Scotia employing some 800 people directly and another 2,100 indirectly.

Under the leadership of general manager Harold Dobson and his predecessors, Bowater Mersey is a model of corporate commitment to the community and a company that values its employees and sees their interests as important as those of the company.

This year Bowater Mersey is completing a $150 million modernization that will not only improve the efficiency of the plant but enable it to meet the highest environmental standards, ensuring that Bowater Mersey will continue to be internationally competitive for years to come.

Congratulations to the Bowater Mersey Paper Company and all associated with it.

[*Translation*]

MONTREAL SOUTHWEST COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, last week, the Montreal southwest committee on economic recovery and employment released a major report on the economic and social development of our region.

The report's main recommendations are to create a community development corporation that would co-ordinate the activities of all parties and to invest $200 million, part of which would be new money, over a three-year period.

In Montreal, the southwest region has a very high unemployment and welfare rate. Forty per cent of the population lives below the poverty line.

The government has chosen to ignore the many instances of plants closing down.

[*English*]

The situation in Montreal southwest is serious. The committee's report is very well done. It should be acted upon immediately.

[*Translation*]

The government should now show that it means business and indicate right away that it intends to give these recommendations its unqualified support. People are tired of waiting.

* * *

[*English*]

RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, it is symbolic and sad that there are currently reports of sexual abuse of children from each end of our country. From Vancouver we heard that a judge has incredibly commented that a three year old girl shares responsibility in a sexual abuse case against a 33 year old man. In St. John's, Newfoundland it was just announced that Mount Cashel orphanage will be closed. We all know why.

I call on the Solicitor General and the Attorney General to do all in their power to protect children from sexual abuse through strong legislation and strong law enforcement. I call on all Canadians to protect children in any way possible and report any sexual abuse to authorities.

Today's children and youth have many hurdles and challenges that we adults have placed in their way. They do not need this one and every effort must be made to eradicate sexual abuse of children from Canada.

* * *

POLLUTION

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, the federal government claims to support sustainable development. The Prime Minister signs declarations abroad to this end. The Minister of the Environment bravely promises action. But when it comes to the crunch, as with the closing of the B.C. fisheries because of pollution, we hear a different story.

The Minister of Fisheries says the government is not prepared to prosecute pulp and paper companies discharging toxins into coastal waters. He uses the pathetic excuse that the minute quantities of toxins contained in the effluents are difficult to measure, even though the accumulation in fish can be measured. His logic defies logic.

Should we expect more from this government which has an abysmal record in prosecuting polluters? It gives the Department of the Environment less than 1 per cent of the federal budget and does not ratify the law of the sea. Either this government does not mean what it says or it does not understand what sustainable development means.

* * *

SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, most Canadians were delighted last June when this House passed legislation providing that the pensions of widows and veterans would continue to be received until their death.

Prior to this bill, if a widow who had been receiving a pension as a result of her husband's death was to remarry, she would lose that pension. All parties supported this bill that was to provide up to a total of $28 million annually in pensions to approximately 4,500 widows and widowers. Unfortunately, to date, of those eligible only 700 have applied. The reality is that there has not been much of an effort to locate these people.

The Minister of Veterans Affairs says that they simply do not have the budget to extensively advertise this legislative change.

If this government has the funds to take out full-page ads in every major newspaper across the country promoting the Conservative position on the GST bill before it is even tabled in the House, then surely it can increase the Veterans Affairs budget to allow for a similar ad to be placed to reach these worth while Canadians.

* * *

[*Translation*]

SITUATION IN ROMANIA

Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue (Outremont): Mr. Speaker, today we heard the news that the well-known Romanian gymnast, Nadia Comaneci, had to flee her country because she prefers to live in freedom outside her native country instead of under the repressive regime of Nicolae Ceausescu. I think it is sad that even those who are privileged under the system are no longer satisfied with their life in Romania.

Not long ago, I met a number of my constituents who reminded me of the suffering of the Romanian people: severe economic hardship as a result of misguided economic policies, a total lack of freedom and human rights, and repression of national and religious minorities. Canadians hope they will soon see the following changes in Romania: free elections, respect for human rights and a complete renewal of the government, leading to the return of genuine democracy.

I appreciate the fact that the Secretary of State for External Affairs issued a press release on November 24, condemning the treatment of Mr. Mazilu by the Romanian authorities, and that Canada's ambassador to the United Nations raised the same issue that day. I strongly urge the government to renew its efforts to help improve the situation in Romania.

* * *

[*English*]

FOOD ADDITIVES

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, young athletes would be horrified if their parents suggested that they take anabolic steroids. Yet parents may be giving their children daily fixes of a far more harmful hormone. Vitamin D, routinely added to milk, baby food and breakfast cereal has been found to be one of the most potent steroid hormones available, and a very toxic food additive.

Scientists at Simon Fraser University say people should be avoiding it unless there is a clear medical reason for its use. Vitamin D has been found to increase aging in vital organs such as arteries, kidneys and bones leading to cardiovascular disease and osteoporosis. The vitamin may also increase the body's retention of toxic metals such as lead, cadmium and aluminum, a suspected culprit in Alzheimer's disease.

Federal regulations require its addition to milk, margarine and infant formula and may be responsible for unintentional infant poisonings. The Minister of National Health and Welfare should undertake a detailed study of the health risks of vitamin D in the interests of Canadians who because of government regulation may be exposing themselves to excessive levels of consumption.

* * *

• (1420)

HEALTH

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, the World Health Organization has designated December 1 as World AIDS Day. The Ontario provincial government is commemorating the day by giving substantial financial support to four clinics for AIDS victims and to the University of Toronto for research. The federal government should commemorate AIDS Day by acting on the recommendations of the report on AIDS commissioned by the Minister of Health last June and released recently.

The report calls on the government to establish a new agency to oversee an increased fight against AIDS; to establish appropriate mechanisms for surveillance, prevention and control; as well, to address and eliminate high risk behaviour; and to help develop a vaccine for prevention as well as treatment modalities to control the disease and to ensure that the human rights of those affected are respected and their families and care givers receive adequate support.

I urge the government to accelerate the development of a national strategy on HIV infection and AIDS and make a commitment now to spend more time and money combating this most serious global disease.

* * *

TRIBUTE TO MR. JAMES F. COOKE

Mr. Speaker: I wish to advise hon. members that Mr. James Cooke, Deputy Principal Clerk in the Journals Branch is retiring today after 35 years of combined service to the Government of Canada and to the House of Commons.

Mr. Cooke began his career at the House in 1963 in the Index and Reference Branch and from there moved on to the Journals Branch where he has served in the position of Deputy Principal Clerk since 1975. I am sure the House will want to join with me in wishing him all the very best in his retirement and our very great thanks for his years of service to all of us.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance. In his absence I will put it to the Deputy Prime Minister. All the senior citizen groups in this country and an overwhelming number of the social service agencies, including the government's own National Advisory Council on Welfare, stated that the Conservative proposal to claw back seniors' pensions and family allowances is an attack on the universality of our social programs. It is also an attack so far as our pensioners are concerned on what they consider to be a right of citizenship in this country.

Yesterday, the Conservative members on the parliamentary committee set up to study that clawback rammed through a vote to hear only four witnesses on this tremendously important income tax change. The Minister of Finance will not even appear personally before the committee to give it an explanation. I cannot remember in my parliamentary career where an income tax change of this importance has been done by stifling the witnesses in this country who want to appear before the committee.

Can the Deputy Prime Minister tell us why the government is afraid to let senior citizens appear before the parliamentary committee to give their views on this grossly unfair change to the income tax, the clawback of senior citizens' pensions?

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the Hon. Leader of the Opposition that it was with great pleasure that I appeared in front of the committee and answered all the questions that were put to me during that period.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): One hour.

Mr. Loiselle: The hon. member must be aware that this government has been faced over the last year with a major problem, which is largely of his making, and that no part of government spending can be left out.

As far as the Old Age Security benefits are concerned, I would like to state that during the pre-budget consultation representatives of various groups came to us, a member of One Voice for example, and said: " We agree with the economic council that people with over $50,000 of income should have their OAS taxed back". These benefits are, of course, important. Universality has been protected. Every Canadian entitled to it will receive his or her cheque. They were taxed before and they will continue to be so that the lower income people are well protected.

[*Translation*]

M. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance should have appeared personally before the committee. The Minister of State excused himself after one hour, in order to listen to the Prime Minister's speech on abortion. That is all very well. But he should appear again before the committee, this time with his Minister of Finance, and allow witnesses across the country to testify before the commitee. That is the problem.

[*English*]

I will again direct my question to the Deputy Prime Minister. Just as with the goods and services tax, the Minister of Finance maintains that on this issue of the clawback of the senior citizens' pensions, he is right and everybody else in the country is wrong.

I will say to the Deputy Prime Minister, a man who appreciates Parliament, I guess the Conservatives are coming to a point where democracy is becoming a bit of a nuisance to them and they want to cut off some of this debate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Why will the government not at least put into the legislation a guarantee that the clawback on senior citizens' pensions will be indexed against inflation. Given the government's track record, given the personal record of the Minister of Finance, why should senior citizens, or anyone else, trust the minister? Why should anyone trust his word that he will review the situation in a few years. If the government is serious, put that indexation clause in the legislation.

Mr. Loiselle: I was in the position to indicate to the committee yesterday—and I would remind the right hon. Leader of the Opposition that it is for the committee to set its agenda, and not for me—that this government will stand on its record.

Look at the various programs we have set and reviewed every year in a positive manner. We have said repeatedly that for the old age security benefits, we would do the same every year.

* * *

[*Translation*]

SENIOR CITIZENS

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my next question is directed to the Minister of State (Seniors). I wonder why the Minister is getting a cabinet minister's salary and has such a large staff, considering the circumstances. If the minister is supposed to represent Canada's seniors, why has she failed to defend their cause in Cabinet? Since all senior citizens' groups in this country are opposed to the pension clawback for seniors, why didn't the minister insist on letting these groups appear before the parliamentary committee? She is supposed to speak for our seniors but they have no voice before the comittee. I suggest that the minister immediately ask the Deputy Prime Minister or the Prime Minister to intervene so that her Tory colleagues will let Canada's senior citizens' groups express their views before the committee.

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): Mr. Speaker, I repeat that it is up to the committee to decide how it intends to proceed. However, I can give this House and Canada's seniors the assurance that I am the Minister who defends their interests in Cabinet. Whenever a government project, initiative or program is proposed, we make sure that the rights and benefits of Canada's seniors are protected. We have maintained the universality of our programs. We intend to improve our social programs, and what we are now asking 4 per cent of Canada's seniors to do is to help us reduce the deficit so that we will have the flexibility we need to improve our social programs.

* * *

[*English*]

RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice who I believe is in the Chamber. It involves the remarks made by a county court judge in British Columbia that a three-year old girl, herself sexually assaulted, was sexually aggressive.

Has the minister used his specific power under Section 63 of the Judges Act to require the Judicial Council of Canada to commence an inquiry immediately into this horrific situation?

• (1430)

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the case in question. I have to tell my hon. friend that the case is presently under appeal. Until the appeal period is over and all court actions are finished, I think it would be inappropriate to take any action or to comment on it in this place.

Ms. Clancy: Mr. Speaker, all Canadians stand appalled at this situation. If the minister has not and will not use his Section 63 authority, can he tell this House what is being done to ensure that attitudes such as this do not continue to be voiced in Canadian courts?

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, any comment that I might make in response to that could be taken as affecting the case in question. While I sympathize with the point of view of my hon. friend in a general way, I point out to her that it is a matter of public record that a complaint is being made to the Canadian Judicial Council. I am sure if that is the case and it follows through, the council will address itself to the complaint received.

* * *

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister who is no doubt aware of the existence of Conservative Party documents which outline a strategy of linking government contracts, grants or policies to corporate donations.

In at least the case of the Royal Bank in 1987, the targeted hit was made by the PC Canada Fund chairman, David Angus, a close friend of the Prime Minister. He succeeded in a $40,000 hit when an earlier bagman had failed.

Since political favours for cash leads to the corruption of democratic institutions, will the Deputy Prime Minister take steps to amend Canada's election laws to ensure that such activity is made illegal?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I think that what is important is that issues of this matter be properly conducted in accordance with the Elections Act.

I think the hon. member is referring to an internal document or memo that has never really been put in place. It is the substance of a story that goes back to November 19 and November 20, 1986. It is interesting to note that Broadcast News Toronto indicated that it did not want any further use of the story because it was outdated and is really old news that is being rehashed.

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Minister of Justice. Perhaps the Minister of Justice can clarify this for those corporations which may have felt that they were put under a similar kind of pressure to that of the Royal Bank.

Will the minister tell Canadians, Canadian businesses and members of this Chamber whether the soliciting of donations from donors by reminding them of government business they have received is illegal or is in his view just improper?

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, what is important is that under the Elections Act there is full public disclosure of contributions received, whether from individuals, corporations or unions. As long as this is conducted in compliance with the provisions of that act, that is the most important element. If the hon member has any evidence to the effect that there is a violation of that act, then he should take appropriate action.

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Speaker, what we are talking about here is signals between government and big business. Canadians are skeptical about the benefits of the donation connection between big business and the Tories.

Does the Deputy Prime Minister really expect Canadians to believe that there is no connection between the $660 million aviation radar contract awarded to Hughes Aircraft Company and the wink-wink, nudge-nudge, you-know-what-I-mean promise of Hughes to locate in the ridings of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the Minister of Science and Technology or—

Mr. Speaker: I think the Chair has been patient, but the hon. member is straying into an area where he ought not to be. The minister may want to respond. I certainly will not call upon him to do that if he does not want to.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member talks about signals. If he has any evidence of signals, let him take the appropriate action.

If the hon. member wants to open up the bidding process, let him do that. There is an appropriate place for that to be done in committee or he can raise it specifically on the floor of the House of Commons.

My understanding is that the procedures were closely followed. If he has something against a contract being awarded to British Columbia, Alberta and western Canada, Ontario and other parts of the country, but specifically a good portion of it going to his home province and to the province of Alberta, let him say so

and not hide behind that sort of silhouette of purity that he sometimes suggests but does not always purvey.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Deputy Prime Minister. Is it the practice of the government to provide to any political party and specifically to the PC Canada fund lists of government contracts awarded and, if so, will he make these lists available to all members of this House?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is referring to a story which was discredited three or four years ago. I am sure that even when he was not in the House he was probably aware of that. This is a story that has been rehashed and the memo that the hon. member refers to has never been adopted.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, I note the Deputy Prime Minister did not answer my question. I asked if he would make the lists available, not whether the story was discredited. I will go on with a supplementary question.

The government has established a commission to study the means by which political parties are funded. Will the Deputy Prime Minister instruct his bagmen to appear before this commission and reveal their practices and their lists?

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, I am glad that there was one positive element in that particular question, the fact that there is a commission that was established to study the elections procedure, the fund-raising activities. This issue has been debated in the House and outside the House. I hope if the hon. member wants to make reference to the commission about who should appear or who should not appear, he can make that representation directly to the commission.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Prime Minister, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister.

Last week the Deputy Prime Minister and the Solicitor General, both in response to questions in this House, refused to release the contents of the November 7 Peter White letter relative to the RCMP conduct of the Richard Grisé affair. This morning those contents were leaked by RCMP sources through the press. That leak process, after refusal to release it here, is contemptuous to the members of this House and demands to be called such.

Will the Prime Minister, now that the contents of the letter are on the street, immediately release the contents of the letter from his office and put an end to the speculation about the letter's purpose?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Solicitor General of Canada and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, there is nothing new in what I saw this morning, except that some information seems to have appeared in the press. The situation has not changed since last week, which means we still have a case before the courts in connection with the document that was discussed last week. I believe it was the RCMP's decision not to release it. It was not the government's. This document is part of an RCMP investigation on the situation. And since the case is already before the courts, I think it would be inappropriate for us to release it. If it ever is released, the RCMP will decide to do so, not the government.

[*English*]

Mr. Lee: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Solicitor General. I have to remind him that RCMP sources are quoted in the article of this morning.

The public has real concern over possible politicization of the RCMP by this government and there are many public questions which are going unanswered. Now, as if to confirm the suspicion that there really does exist a political faction inside the RCMP, we have this perfectly timed leak this morning to take the pressure off the government.

When will the Solicitor General take action to locate this suspected political connection and stop the erosion of public confidence in the RCMP, and what will those steps be?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Blais: Mr. Speaker, I believe that the best way to stop, as the hon. member said, the erosion of confidence in the RCMP would be to stop asking questions and levelling accusations or making allegations against the RCMP.

I will repeat, as I have said many times, that we must respect the work being done by the RCMP in the course of its investigation. I believe the RCMP Commissioner has already answered all these questions and will appear before the Justice Committee as soon as he is back from Interpol, within the next few days.

* * *

• (1440)

[*English*]

SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, I wish to return to the work of the legislative committee on the clawback bill. I must say I was surprised at the comments that I heard earlier from the government benches. Surely Canadians who are concerned about the cuts in VIA Rail should be happy to know that there is still a railroad running in Canada. It is called the legislative committee on Bill C–28.

My question to the Deputy Prime Minister on this important issue of government policy is this: the government in Bill C–28 is doing one of two things, it is either ending universality or it is introducing a discriminatory tax based on age and family size. Now, which is it?

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to give the hon. member information that I did not have when I last rose in this House. The committee apparently has asked the clerk to invite some of the groups which asked to be heard. Therefore, that should at least—

Some Hon. Members: Only four.

Mr. Loiselle: Well, a little while ago it was none.

I would also like to remind the hon. member that this measure was introduced in the budget some months ago and has been debated and discussed on many occasions. It was also discussed in this House in the debate on the budget. It will be discussed again in committee and will come back to the House.

Therefore, I remind the hon. member that the threat to our social programs, and this one in particular which is extremely important to our seniors, does not come from any measure that we take on this side, but from the growing deficit and from the debt we inherited. We should be concerned that next year we will be paying interest in the range of $40 billion. This is something that has to be tackled and no program of this government can escape scrutiny. So this is my answer.

Mr. Manley: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear that the minister sounds like he wants to invite more groups to the committee but the record will show that he did not answer the question.

[*Translation*]

Since the pension and family allowance clawback constitutes the most sweeping change in Canada's social policy in 20 years, is the Deputy Prime Minister prepared to inform the House that the Minister of Finance will appear before the Committee to answer questions about this tax which discriminates against seniors and families?

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I repeat, this is not a discriminatory tax. A number of seniors receive additional benefits, and in line with our general program review, these measures must apply to all programs.

I think we should also remember that, for instance, when the system is fully operational, only 50,000 people on high incomes will have to pay back all part of their benefits; 74,000 will pay a part: in all, 130,000 seniors out of three million will be partially affected by these measures.

* * *

[*English*]

INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Prime Minister, I have a question for the Deputy Prime Minister.

During last year's federal election, the Prime Minister met in Edmonton with the Lubicon Band Chief, Bernard Ominayak, ostensibly to get negotiations back on track after 50 years of on–again but mostly off–again attempts to reach a settlement.

In January, the government presented its formal offer, which even Premier Getty tells us is "deficient", declaring the Lubicons could take it or leave it, and any consideration of compensation would have to go to court.

With the Lubicon people shutting down Crown–owned oil and gas operations on their traditional lands and with

federal officials meeting on this matter with Alberta officials in Calgary tomorrow and Friday, will the government direct its officials to make clear, and announce, the government's willingness now to resume negotiations with the Lubicon on all aspects of their claim, including a compensation package?

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, ever since we made this offer last January, we have been prepared to go back to the table to discuss the fair and comprehensive offer that was made to the Lubicons. Unfortunately, the Lubicons have been refusing to come back to the table.

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): Will the minister not agree that what he calls a fair offer is a pastiche of things that the band might do. It in no way comes close to dealing with the question of compensation. In fact, government negotiators ruled out compensation in their September 8 letter: "On the question of compensation, we invite the band to pursue this claim in the Canadian courts". Will he agree that in fact he is willing to negotiate nothing? Agreeing to that, will he now announce that the government has changed its policy and will negotiate?

Mr. Cadieux: Mr. Speaker, the government has not changed its policy but is prepared to negotiate, has been prepared to go back to the table and is still prepared to go back to the table. It has directed the negotiators to meet with the provincial—

An Hon. Member: Listen to the Lubicon.

Mr. Cadieux: Perhaps I can be permitted to answer, since a valid question has been put.

We have directed our negotiators to speak with the provincial negotiators because the Lubicons have voiced concerns to the provincial negotiators about our offer, but not to us. We are analysing those concerns. We are prepared to go back to the table and discuss those concerns and address them in an offer that is comparable to any other claim settlement that has been made in Canada since.

[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for International Trade.

On November 21, Quebec farmers demonstrated on Parliament Hill, and after talking to farmers from Abitibi, I want our joint programs, marketing boards and quotas to be protected 100 per cent.

My question is as follows: Could the Minister confirm in the House today that Quebec farmers will not be ignored or abandoned by his department, more specifically in connection with GATT Article 11, and that the Quebec government will have its say in the talks?

[*English*]

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to assure the hon. member that neither the farmers of Quebec nor the farmers of Canada will be forgotten by the government at any time, whether it is in the MTN negotiations or otherwise.

With respect to those negotiations, I made it clear to the Cairns Group when I was in Bangkok last week dealing with a comprehensive agriculture proposal what Canada's position is in the matter of supply-management boards. I noted there that the techniques for achieving trade liberalization have to take full account of the outcome on the rule side, and that on the rule side we will be looking for a new GATT Article 11 that will be more effective and clearer. The existing GATT rules under Article 11 permit import restrictions and support effective domestic production control programs. We have those in our supply management programs now. We want to see that continued.

I explained to them that we did not think the new GATT Article 11 would be subject to tariffication with reference to those new rules and how they worked. In other words, the Mazankowski-Blais position was put clearly to the Cairns Group and put clearly to the world on behalf of the Quebec farmers.

• (1450)

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

Mr. Speaker: I wish to draw to the members' attention the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Walter Carter, Minister of Fisheries for Newfoundland, and the Hon. Pat Cowan, Minister of Employment and Labour for Newfoundland.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Last week in the native community of Kingfisher Lake, located in northwestern Ontario, a 16-year-old boy took his life. This is the fourth suicide in that community of 300 in the past two years.

There have been 40 suicides in six communities in the Shibogama Tribal Council area in the past two and a half years. The suicide rate in native communities located in northwestern Ontario is seven times the national average.

My question to the minister is this: Will the minister request immediately a judicial inquiry into the increasing suicides in northwestern Ontario with a view to finding solutions to this very disturbing crisis in the native communities?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. gentleman raising this very serious question. The whole issue of suicide, particularly suicide among Canada's native peoples, is of particular concern to me.

The department is commissioning studies to be done on issues related to suicide to get a better understanding of the reasons for it, particularly among young Canadians. Additionally, we have programs in place that are designed to help with native problems on reserves and to try to deal particularly with problems related to alcoholism and drug abuse.

The success in cutting the suicide rates in a number of instances has been quite good. For example, I had the privilege recently of visiting one reserve in western Canada, outside of Edmonton, where there was a significant improvement in terms of reduction of the suicide rate. We will continue to do everything we can to be helpful in terms of assisting in that.

Mr. Nault: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the same minister. The minister did not listen to my question. Obviously he and the government are not listening. It has been two and a half years since we brought this particular situation to the attention of this government. There have been 40 suicides in these small areas of northwestern Ontario, with a population of only 1,800. It is time that we act and not just listen.

My supplementary question relates to the 21 aboriginal communities in my riding in which there are only three mental health workers. That is what I am talking about when I talk about the fact that there is nothing being done. There are only three mental health workers in a large geographic area to try to discuss those matters of interest to the people of those communities.

I would ask the minister if he would look into holding a full departmental review of social services available to Canada's aboriginal peoples and assure this House that such a review will include the full and meaningful participation of aboriginal peoples.

Mr. Beatty: Mr. Speaker, the provision of medical services to Canada's aboriginal peoples is constantly under review in our department. Discussions constantly take place with the native peoples themselves because we recognize the fact that to be successful, the provision of services has to be responsive to the needs and to the concerns of the people who are most affected.

Any input the hon. gentleman wants to make in terms of suggestions I would be glad to receive from him. But I can tell him that the department puts a high priority on the improvement of services in native communities, it puts a high priority on consultations with native groups and certainly we are taking whatever measures that we can to try to ensure that the problem of suicide among Canada's native peoples is dealt with. The rate is too high in Canada and it certainly is a concern to us. There has been success, as I indicated to him earlier, in some communities in dealing with that, and we want to do everything that we can to be helpful.

Oral Questions

PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

Mr. Brian White (Dauphin—Swan River): Mr. Speaker, I direct my question to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Bill C–22, which was passed in the last Parliament, made changes to Canada's drug patent legislation. Most of the opposition to the bill was, and still is, focused on the bill's effect on industry research and on consumer prices.

Can the parliamentary secretary explain to the House what the impact of Bill C–22 has been to date on pharmaceutical research and development and on drug prices in Canada?

Mr. Blaine A. Thacker (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, you will follow this answer with great interest as will members of the House because in fact the cost of drugs has dropped some 1.7 per cent, saving our senior citizens some $60 million.

The second aspect is that research and development is up to $164.5 million which is a sales to R and D ratio of 6 point some as compared to 4 point some. The only regrettable thing is that the tactics of the opposition parties delayed this for many months and cost people hundreds of millions of dollars and hundreds of jobs.

* * *

SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister, who will be aware that when this House moved to the concept of legislative committees, it did so in order to free up the standing committees to pursue general policy matters and not to provide a quick process for legislation.

What happened in the Bill C–28 committee yesterday is similar to what happened in the Bill C–13 committee on Nordion and the Bill C–15 committee on plant breeders' rights, the government using its majority to move things through very quickly without public hearings.

My question is to the Deputy Prime Minister, who knows full well that this House only operates on co–operation. Will he now instruct the Conservative members on the Bill C–28 committee to reopen the question of hearing more witnesses, to allow for at least 20 witnesses who have asked to appear to talk about the clawback provisions?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, in past days, and I think from that party, there have been false accusations about me and other cabinet ministers interfering with the committee process. Far be it from me to ever undertake to that, Sir.

I would only tell the hon. member that he has been around here long enough to know how the committee process operates. The committee is in charge of its own destiny.

He suggested that the plant breeders' rights bill was rammed through. It seems to me that it has been before the House of Commons and committee more or less continuously since September. I do not know. If that is ramming something through, then he will have to give me a better example.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Speaker, with regard to Bill C–28, we have heard only four witnesses. The government has tabled 125 amendments to an 85–page bill, providing just a few hours of consideration of the knowledge of Canadian people. I, personally, in the transport committee had to have the government whip's assistant removed from the committee as she was trying to instruct the members of the transport committee on the Conservative side how to vote, so do not tell me there is no interference.

Will the Deputy Prime Minister kindly suggest then to the government members that it is appropriate to hold full public hearings here in Ottawa so all those people who represent seniors groups, teachers—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. minister has the floor.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, I would think that is an appropriate issue to raise at the steering committee level. I invite the hon. member to do that.

Just to correct a previous answer, plant breeders' rights has been before the committee since June 27. I made a slight error, I said September. The member used that as an example of this government ramming through legislation. I ask him to reconsider that charge.

INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. I remind the minister that over 600 children are still out of school on the Six Nations Reserve.

Results of the independent air assessment done on the schools show airborne asbestos in four of the 10 schools. While this asbestos is said to be presently at safe levels, it was recommended that the air be monitored every three months.

Why should these parents be forced to send their children to schools that have asbestos particles in the air? Why should five, six and seven-year-old children be learning in fear? What kind of learning environment is the minister providing for these children?

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, as the House knows, this issue has been ongoing for a while. Following certain questions in the House by my hon. colleague, there have been some meetings and discussions with the band council and chief of Six Nations on a number of occasions. A proposal was made by myself to the chief and council. That proposal was presented to council, accepted by council. We have acted upon that proposal since. I am informed that as of Wednesday, November 29, 47 out of 48 classrooms on the reserve are open, that 60 per cent of the students are attending, and that as of Monday there will be other classrooms prepared to receive the other children.

• (1500)

Mr. Speller: Mr. Speaker, I do not know where the minister gets his figures because we have been told in the riding by the parents themselves that clearly not even half of the students are back in school.

On a supplementary question, the parents of the Six Nations have repeatedly asked the minister to remove the asbestos. The minister has repeatedly said no, because he does not think it poses a health risk.

How can the minister make such a decision when there are no legal guidelines in Canada for acceptable levels in Canadian schools?

Given that the levels found in several of these schools are higher than acceptable levels in the United States, and given that it is going to cost the minister as much money to monitor the air as it would to remove the asbestos, will the minister agree that this asbestos must be removed now?

Mr. Cadieux: As I have indicated, Mr. Speaker, there were some discussions with the chief and council. A proposal was made and was accepted by the council and the chief.

We have acted upon the recommendations. We had three experts there with respect to the asbestos, and the asbestos that was removable has been removed. The other has been encapsulated and all the experts agree that it is safe.

* * *

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Hon. William Rompkey (Labrador): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the right hon. Secretary of State for External Affairs. John Lamb of the Canadian Centre for Arms and Disarmament has said that the Prime Minister's trip to the Soviet Union, in terms of defence and disarmament, was: "a missed opportunity and a washout". He suggested that Canada should have put forward an initiative leading to a multilateral approach to disarmament in the Arctic.

I want to know why Canada, of all countries, missed the opportunity to put forward an initiative leading to a regime which would see demilitarization of the Arctic, a zone which is so important to all Canadians.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the reason Mr. Lamb might have made that statement is that he was not there. He does not know what happened during the visit by the Prime Minister to the Soviet Union.

But there were some people who were there who have been heard from. Mr. Gorbachev has been heard from. He said that he found the discussions to be particularly helpful. He thought it was an important step forward, that there was an agreement that the foreign minister of the Soviet Union and I would meet to discuss actions we might take in the Arctic.

The foreign minister of the Soviet Union has been heard from. Mr. Shevardnadze described the visit of the Prime Minister to the Soviet Union as being a very

important step forward in the relations between Canada and the Soviet Union, and also important in terms of the possibility of making progress on our joint concerns and interests in the Arctic.

Mr. Rompkey: Mr. Speaker, there may have been progress, but in terms of demilitarization there is no response to the initiative offered by the President of the Soviet Union in his Murmansk speech some time ago. Canada should have gone prepared to advise other NATO countries such as Norway and Denmark which would be quite prepared to take part in a multilateral approach to demilitarization of the Arctic.

I want to ask again: Why is Canada not ready to offer an initiative which Canada of all countries is in the best position to take?

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, once again the hon. member is dead wrong. The Murmansk proposal was made by Mr. Gorbachev in 1987. I responded to it in the fall of 1987. We then wrote the Soviet Union asking for specific proposals that they might make. We received none.

When Mr. Gorbachev and the Prime Minister of Canada met in Moscow a week ago, the Prime Minister of Canada said: "We are interested in the Murmansk proposal. What specifically are you proposing? Is there anything you want us to follow up?" Mr. Gorbachev said then: "We think it would be very valuable for Mr. Shevardnadze and the Canadian foreign minister to meet to pursue issues that Canada might propose or that the Soviet Union might propose". That is substantial progress by any fair judgment.

Members of the Liberal party should recognize that this trip has allowed Canada to make very substantial steps forward including in terms of establishing progress and agreed regimes in the Arctic. Instead of seeking every occasion to make narrow, partisan attacks, they should recognize a national accomplishment.

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PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE OF CANADA

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board. We have a strike in progress by the government ships' crews, fishery patrol boats and the Coast Guard, and a threatened strike by the hospital services employees.

The two main issues are pay equity with regard to women in the hospital services and regional pay disparity in the other issues.

Will the government now give the House a commitment that it will live up to court decisions against it as far as pay equity is concerned, a commitment to regional pay equality, and a commitment that it will return to the bargaining table to negotiate the other outstanding issues?

We want an answer now on pay equity and regional disparities.

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I would like to answer first the question dealing with regional rates of pay. I can assure my hon. colleague that even before the ships' crews group began its strike, the government had put on the table a proposal to reach regional pay equality between the east coast and the west coast, so that is on the table.

I am happy to tell my colleague that in that case we resumed negotiations this morning by mutual consent and hopefully we can resolve the other issues that are outstanding.

In terms of the hospital services group, I would like first of all to correct my colleague's claim that this is a women's group. It is a group that is roughly 50–50, and there is no discrimination in that group on the basis of sex.

We had in that case a consent order issued by the Human Rights Tribunal on July 15, 1987, and all three phases of that consent order have been fulfilled.

The issue here is that even after meeting this question of pay equity in the group, the group is asking for an increase of 49.2 per cent. I must say that we take some exception to that. We feel that it is not quite in keeping with what other public servants in this country at all levels of government have been receiving in terms of compensation over the last few years, so there is a lot of discussion to be had on that one.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

WEEKLY STATEMENT

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, since we are not sitting tomorrow and Friday I would like to ask the government House leader the standard question about government business he intends to call over the coming week.

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, since the House, by order, will not be sitting tomorrow or Friday I will indicate the business for the week of December 4.

On Monday, December 4, we will call Bill C-34, the Canadian Centre for Management Development bill, for second reading. In the afternoon we would hope to be able to proceed through report stage of Bill C-13, known as the Nordion bill.

On Tuesday, December 5, we will call Bill C-13, the Nordion bill, for third reading. In the afternoon on Tuesday, December 5, we would call Bill C-15, the plant breeders' rights bill, at report stage.

Wednesday, December 6, will be the last allotted day for the supply period ending December 19 and there will be votes on that supply bill.

On Thursday, December 7, the intention is to continue with Bill C-15.

That is all for the present time.

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POINTS OF ORDER

REQUEST FOR TABLING OF DOCUMENT

Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, I have been around the House for only a year now, but I understand when a minister of the Crown responds to a question by reading from a document that the minister tables the document.

I understand the Minister of State for International Trade read from a document today in answer to a question from one of my colleagues from the NDP. I am just wondering when he will be tabling that document.

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, all ministers normally bring into the House briefing notes to which they refer from time to time in answering questions. I am sure that that was the case with the hon. minister in question.

Mr. Speller: The Minister of State for International Trade quoted from a document, and I ask that the minister table the document in the House.

• (1510)

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, it might be helpful to note that the point being made by the hon. member is supported in fact at citation 327 on page 115 of Beauchesne's. Subsection 1 of that citation states:

> A Minister of the Crown is not at liberty to read or quote from a despatch or other state paper not before the House, unless he be prepared to lay it upon the table. This restraint is similar to the rule of evidence in courts of law, which prevent counsel from citing documents which have not been produced in evidence. The principle is so reasonable that it has not been contested; and when the objection has been made in time, it has been generally acquiesced in.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I would at times gladly have all of Beauchesne's applied in all instances. I think it would spruce up Question Period considerably if it were. My hon. friend used the words "despatch or state paper", and neither of those were used in this instance.

MULTICULTURALISM

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a different point of order. I think you would find agreement for the Minister of Justice and House leader to put a motion to the House of Commons.

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I was prepared to do this under motions, but I am prepared to do it now on behalf of the House.

Mr. Speaker, you will remember that on November 22, 1989, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, the member for Duvernay, raised a question of privilege.

As a result of the discussions which flowed from the question of privilege raised by the member for Duvernay there has been agreement among members that the following motion will be jointly moved and seconded by the members from Duvernay, York West, and Kootenay West—Revelstoke:

> That this House, following the publication of the Montreal Yellow Pages (July '89 to July '90 edition) by Tele Direct Inc., a subsidiary of Bell Canada, wherein on page 453, an advertisement for College Platon contains the word "Mafia" in place of the appropriate term, "Italian", strongly condemns this act, which offends the integrity of the Canadian/Italian community and undermines the viability of our national multiculturalism policy; and the House urges Tele Direct Inc., to immediately recall the publication in question and directs the Speaker to communicate this resolution to the president of Tele Direct Inc.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker: Does the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion of the hon. Minister of Justice.

[*Translation*]

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt this motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

[*English*]

FIRE SAFETY

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I want to raise on a point of order an issue with the Chair very briefly.

Your Honour will know that a little earlier today fire bells rang in the Centre Block of the Parliament Buildings. I would like to alert the Chair, and perhaps hon. members, to the fact that I believe it is about time we started to take fire precautions a little bit more seriously. Fire doors in the Centre Block were actually jammed open with wooden wedges, and the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier and I were busy removing them so as to close the fire doors.

In fact we are making considerable investment in terms of protecting this Chamber and this building by constructing these fire doors, under the authority of Your Honour I believe, and some of the work is actually still going on. I do feel that it should be incumbent on all of us and on the staff of the House of Commons to ensure that we take all appropriate precautions and never leave such fire doors open and, obviously and more important, quickly vacate the building using fire doors rather than elevators, which was in fact being done at the time when the fire bells were ringing. In fact there was actually a line-up of people standing at the doors of elevators when no one should even have been using an elevator.

The point I am making is that perhaps better instructions should be going out to all people, including members of Parliament, in order to ensure that the safety of members and indeed of all individuals in this House is better protected in the future.

Mr. Speaker: I have listened with care to the representation of the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

I can assure hon. members that I take the intervention seriously. I will attend to any steps that have to be taken to rectify the situation that has been brought to our attention.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to several petitions.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

BILL C-15—REPORT OF LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Mr. Brian White (Dauphin—Swan River): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the report of the legislative committee on Bill C-15, an act respecting plant breeders' rights, with amendments.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

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CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): moved for leave to introduce Bill C-279, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act and the Parliament of Canada Act.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Shall the hon. member shall have leave to introduce the bill?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this bill is to amend the Canada Elections Act to require the government to call a by-election within a stated time from the issue of the Speaker's warrant when a vacancy occurs in this chamber.

The purpose of the bill is to ensure that the by-election is held promptly—I believe 80 days is provided from the date of issue of the warrant—so that the government cannot sit around as it has done for the last six months and do nothing while the people of Chambly are deprived of representation in the House.

The purpose of the bill is to ensure that we do not wait six months from the time the warrant is addressed to the Chief Electoral Officer and the government gets around to announcing a date for an election. In fact it requires the election to be held within a specified time as well so that we do not have an election two or three years off as is permitted under the existing legislation.

Motion agreed to, bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

* * *

PETITIONS

FISHERIES

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from more than 800 fixed gear fishermen on the southwest coast of Newfoundland.

The prayer of their petition is that the Government of Canada takes the necessary steps to restrict auto trawl fishing vessels not based in 3PN and 4RD from entering into the 3PN and 4RD winter fishery until such time as the cod stock has recovered to the extent as to allow fixed gear fishermen a reasonable level of landings so as to provide a reasonable standard of living for their families.

The fixed gear fishermen have always been the backbone of the fishing industry in Newfoundland. Their livelihoods are being threatened by vessels not based in 3PN and 4RD. I have the pleasure to present this petition.

• (1520)

I ask the minister to respond to the prayer of the petition so ably put down by the fishermen in Cape Anguille, Codroy, Cape Ray, Red Rocks, Port aux Basques, Margaree, Fox Roost, Burnt Island, Isle aux Morts, Rose Blanche, Diamond Cove, Harbour Le Cou, Petites, and three other communities: St. Fintan's, McKay's and Jeffrey's, all of whom would like to have the prayer of their petition heard.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, while I am on my feet, I have a separate petition on a totally different issue. Some 2,600 people from various parts of Newfoundland and elsewhere in Canada have forwarded this petition to me to be tabled in the House.

Their prayer is that Parliament be called upon to formulate and legislate a law to protect life from conception, a law which seeks to save the life of both mother and child.

I am sure those signatories will watch with interest the progress of the abortion bill through committee in the next few days. I table this petition as well.

BILL 178

Mr. Bill Domm (Peterborough): Mr. Speaker, I have a number of petitions to present.

The first one that I would like to present contains the signatures of 145 people. It calls on the Governor General in Council to fully enforce the Charter of Rights and Freedoms by the exercise of its constitutional power of disallowance with respect to Bill 178 of the province of Quebec.

These petitions have been signed by residents in my riding, along with people in other regions of the province of Nova Scotia, including such areas as New Glasgow, Pictou County, and the surrounding area.

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mr. Bill Domm (Peterborough): Mr. Speaker, the next petition I have is on the issue of the Young Offenders Act. It contains 1,242 signatures calling on the Government of Canada to revise the laws dealing with young offenders, specifically relating to age, sentencing, housing and rehabilitation of these young criminals.

This petition was organized by the Nova Scotia chapter of the group Citizens United for Safety and Justice which gathered signatures from people all across the province of Nova Scotia.

I thank this organization for its hard work and dedication.

REVISION OF EXTRADITION LAWS

Mr. Bill Domm (Peterborough): Mr. Speaker, the third and final petition I have is getting near the end of the petitions that have come in from across Canada which now total over 97,714 signatures. Unlike my colleague on the opposite side of the House, I do not intend to read the names of all the cities, villages, hamlets, townships, counties and regions from which these 97,714 signatures have come.

However, I would like to point out that this petition contains an additional 100 signatures and calls on the Government of Canada to revise the extradition laws to allow the Minister of Justice to order the extradition of fugitives, either immediately or after they have been dealt with fully by the Canadian penal system.

As I said, these 100 signatures bring the total to 97,714.

[*Translation*]

OPPOSITION TO GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I have the duty to table some 25 petitions signed by constituents in Ottawa—Vanier who want to let this Government know that they are firmly opposed to the Conservative Government's proposal to inflict a new goods and services tax on Canadian taxpayers. We know that this same Government has increased the present sales tax on manufactured products by some 50 per cent, from 9 per cent in 1984 to 13.5 per cent today, and that this tax proposed by the Conservative Government will be unfair to small and medium-sized businesses; that Canadians will be faced with a sales tax hidden in the selling price and that it will apply to nearly all the goods and services they buy; that the tax, applied across the board to goods and services, will cause serious hardship for families on low and moderate incomes; that it is a regressive tax and that it absolutely must be rejected by the Canadian Parliament.

[*English*]

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour and privilege to table in this House petitions against the GST, which means the goods and services tax should be renamed "the grief and suffering tax".

This petition is signed by 2,604 residents of the great riding of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell. These citizens are opposed to the tax in general and in addition they are opposed to the fact that figure skating lessons and other such educational services will be taxed because of the lust for receiving funds from the constituents of Canada of the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present four certified petitions in this House on behalf of the constituents of Lambton—Middlesex from the towns of Strathroy, Oil City, Oil Springs, Petrolia, Wyoming Forest and Watford.

These petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to reject the proposed goods and services tax.

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, I have more petitions from the residents of Parkdale—High Park objecting to the government's proposed 9 per cent goods and services tax.

Their arguments are that this GST will be an unprecedented tax grab from the pockets of Canadians and will hit them not only with higher taxes but with higher inflation, higher interest rates, and higher unemployment. They humbly pray and call upon this Parliament to reject the proposed goods and services tax.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 36, the enclosed petition is deemed correct as to form and content.

[*English*]

NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, I rise to table two groups of petitions pursuant to Standing Order 36. The first group is the balance of petitions which I have received with respect to the National Arts Centre orchestra.

I am pleased to note that that strike has now been settled. I hope that the board will agree to the conditions and the terms so that I will no longer have to table further petitions in the interest of the National Arts

Centre orchestra here in the capital city. It is with much pleasure that I deposit, in the name of 100 people, their concerns with respect to the National Arts Centre and its orchestra.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have a series of petitions, signed in proper form, announcing once again the petitioners' serious concern that this government is not listening to Canadians with respect to the 9 per cent goods and services tax which will come on top of the provincial tax.

They call on the government to go back to the drawing board and restructure a tax that will be fair and equitable for all Canadians and will remove the regressivity one finds in this tax.

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Mr. Speaker, I have a number of petitions on two subjects to present.

The first two are from my own constituency of Saskatoon—Humboldt and the third is from the consistency of the minister of defence.

They call upon the government to reject the current proposed goods and services tax, to reform the tax system so that it does not fall so heavily on ordinary Canadians, and to put through a tax system which is not regressive but is real tax reform.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Mr. Speaker, I also have a petition which is signed by a group of citizens from Toronto who call upon Parliament to maintain VIA Rail Canada's present national rhetoric, to upgrade VIA Rail with new equipment, and to give VIA Rail a sufficient budget to maintain its national mandate to passenger service.

• (1530)

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I have two groups of petitions to table today. The first one has been signed by 35 residents of the metropolitan Toronto area, from Markham, Stoufville, Richmond Hill, et cetera.

The petition is from people who support our rail passenger service called VIA Rail. They call upon Parliament to maintain VIA Rail, Canada's present national network, to upgrade VIA Rail with new equipment and to give VIA Rail a sufficient budget to maintain its national mandate for passenger service.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I have another group of petitions from citizens in my riding who vehemently object to the manufacturers' sales tax. They do not want a 9 per cent, 8 per cent, 7 per cent, 6 per cent, 5 per cent, or any per cent goods and services tax.

I have petitions signed by 25 visitors to Franchie's Confectionery, 25 visitors to Walsh Variety, 25 visitors to Accents and the Whitefish general store in Nolalu.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East): Mr. Speaker, I rise today under Standing Order 36 regarding a petition against cuts to VIA Rail. It has been approved by the clerk of petitions.

The 27 petitioners call upon the government to maintain VIA Rail, Canada's present national network, to upgrade VIA Rail with new equipment and to give VIA Rail a sufficient budget to maintain its national mandate on passenger service in Canada.

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today. The first one is with respect to VIA Rail. It is signed by a number of Canadians, 35 to be exact, who are concerned over the loss of VIA Rail in this country. They are concerned over the fact that VIA Rail cuts are going to cause problems and difficulties for Canadians. They ask the government to reconsider the cuts to VIA Rail.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is with respect to agriculture in this country. I have a petition signed by a number of producers from Saskatchewan who are concerned over the removal of oats from the Canadian Wheat Board. They call on this government to reinstate oats under the Canadian Wheat Board Act and to give it and barley the same protection that wheat presently now enjoys.

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Mr. Jack Whittaker (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure today to present petitions from various places in Canada.

The first petition is in respect of the cut-backs to the CBC. The petitioners, in particular from my riding and from various parts of the interior of the province of British Columbia, 150 to be exact, are somewhat concerned that the government understand that the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation plays a vital role in allowing Canadians from all of the vast regions of our country to share experiences. It is crucial to the maintenance of a truly distinctive Canadian society.

They petition the government to restore sufficient funds to the CBC parliamentary allocation to allow the corporation to fulfil its historic mandate, and to maintain a distinctive and dynamic public broadcasting system in Canada.

SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Mr. Jack Whittaker (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Mr. Speaker, in addition, I have a petition signed by people from the province of British Columbia in respect of the old age security clawback. These petitioners request Parliament to reject the government's policy to initiate an inequitable and unjust clawback of Old Age Security benefits. They point out that this clawback is a direct threat to the principle of universality which is the core of Canada's social system.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Jack Whittaker (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by a number of people from throughout Canada but mostly from Ontario, who petition Parliament to maintain VIA Rail, Canada's national rail network, to upgrade VIA Rail with new equipment and to give VIA Rail a sufficient budget to maintain its national mandate for passenger service.

RCMP DRESS CODE

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour, pursuant to Standing Order 36, to present petitions containing some 11,000 signatures. These people are mainly from Alberta, but also from B.C. and Saskatchewan as well.

These petitioners see a distinct danger in future wholesale changes to dress and tradition by allowing turbans and ceremonial daggers to become part of the RCMP uniform. They suspect that other religious or ethnic minorities will then argue for equal rights to incorporate minor or major aberrations resulting in the eventual loss of a distinctive, recognizable and proud tradition.

These petitioners, Your Honour, some 11,000 of them, are humbly praying and calling upon Parliament to preserve the distinctive heritage and tradition of the RCMP by retaining the uniformity of dress code which the RCMP so proudly holds up now.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege today to present petitions from my riding of Northumberland which have been duly certified as required. They represent the concerns of many of my constituents with regard to the proposed goods and services tax.

I have spoken personally to many in my riding who represent amateur sports and recreation interests, music and dance, teachers' interests, professional groups' interests, small business groups, seniors and disadvantaged on low and fixed incomes, farmers and ordinary citizens. They ask and appeal that this government repeal any proposed goods and services tax.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure to rise today to present two petitions on different subjects. The first points out that since 1984 the government has introduced at least 31 new taxes or tax increases. The latest proposal for a goods and services tax will cause serious and unfair hardship to low and middle-income Canadians and place an onerous burden on small businesses. The effects will be higher inflation, higher interest rates and higher unemployment for Canadians.

The petitioners therefore call upon Parliament to reject the goods and services tax. This petition is signed by over 200 residents, in addition to the petitions I have already tabled.

FREEDOM OF CHOICE

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, the second petition comes from a group of petitioners who point out that a pregnant woman has the right to determine the best medical treatment for herself or the

foetus she is carrying; that no woman should be penalized for making a decision which she believes furthers her physical and mental health, the health of her children and the health of her family as a whole.

The petitioners urge the government to ensure women equal access to reproductive health care under the Canada Health Act in a way that would be consistent with the equality provisions contained in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Therefore, they oppose any recriminalization of abortion.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Jerry Pickard (Essex—Kent): Mr. Speaker, I too, as well as my colleagues, stand pursuant to Standing Order 36, with several petitions concerning the goods and services tax. Many people from Essex and Kent counties have signed these petitions objecting to the inflationary costs and the difficulties that they will have when this tax is enforced.

They ask the government to withdraw the tax, and submit that the tax is not good for Canadians.

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise pursuant to Standing Order 36, to present petitions from my riding, Cape Breton Highlands—Canso, containing the names and addresses of over 2,200 concerned citizens who express their profound opposition to the proposed goods and services tax.

The citizens have signed the petitions in local business places, such as service stations, retail and manufacturing outlets in places like Mabou, Margaree, Middle River, Cheticamp, Louisdale and Guysborough. They call upon the government to withdraw this unfair tax which will cause serious and undue hardship to low and middle-income Canadians and will impose an onerous burden of administration on small businesses throughout my riding.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour and duty in accordance with Standing Order 36 to present a petition from about 100 residents of many towns in Ontario who are concerned with the government's intention of reducing the VIA Rail service. They point out that it is essential to many small towns and to many elderly people and people of low income.

Therefore, they ask this Parliament to reject any proposed reduction or elimination of VIA Rail services, to modernize the existing equipment so that VIA Rail can provide a world-class service to Canadians and to implement a high-speed passenger train service between Montreal and Windsor.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, I have a further petition, also from several hundred residents of Canada, mostly from Ontario, who are concerned about the goods and services tax. The petitioners point out how unfair it is, particularly to low-income people.

• (1540)

Therefore they call on Parliament to reject the current proposal for a goods and services tax, to cancel the tax breaks for rich individuals and corporations, to apply the present tax on goods manufactured in Canada equally to imported manufactured goods, and to reduce the need for a sales tax by reducing the bank interest rate and by increasing employment in useful work.

LOW-LEVEL FLIGHTS

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, I also have a petition from residents of Canada who are concerned about the low-level flight training in Goose Bay, Labrador. The petitioners point out that it is driving the aboriginal people out of their homes and driving the local hunting game out of their territories. They ask Parliament to join with the Assembly of First Nations in opposing low-level flight training anywhere in Canada, but especially near Indian reserves, and to oppose the establishment of NATO operations in Canada at places like Goose Bay, to redirect the funding for that to the improvement of the life of Canada's aboriginal people enabling them to regain control of their lands and also to promote sustainable development for all Canadians.

RCMP DRESS CODE

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, today I have the honour and privilege to present to this House, pursuant to Standing Order 36, three very large petitions containing the names of over 16,779 concerned citizens from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

These petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to preserve the distinctive heritage and tradition of the RCMP by retaining the uniformity of the dress code with all the recognizable colour and trappings that have such great historical value to this country. The pride and

esprit de corps should not be jeopardized by any concessions to religious or ethnic minorities which result in changes to this truly great police force and its proud traditions and uniforms.

These petitions have all been duly certified according to content and form. The the total number of petitioners whose petitions I have presented in this House is well over 120,000 names.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, Question No. 159 will be answered today.

[*Text*]

MINISTERS—TRIPS

Question No. 159—**Mr. Rodriguez:**

Since November 21, 1988, has any Minister of the Crown travelled at public expense and, if so, were the costs assumed by government departments and, if so (a) for each Minister (b) for each member of any accompanying staff (i) on what dates did the travel occur (ii) what was the purpose of the trip (iii) what were the total costs associated with the trip (iv) what percentage of those costs represented the cost of air fare or the use of government aircraft?

Hon. Robert R. de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): 1. As the President of the Treasury Board stated in the House on October 24, 1989, the present practice of reporting Ministerial travel expenses was established by a Cabinet decision in 1963 and has been followed by every successive government.

2. The travel expenditures for each Minister is reported in Public Accounts for each fiscal year.

3. Under new guidelines, announced by the President of the Treasury Board in the House of Commons on October 24, the Comptroller General of Canada will make available on a regular basis:

a) Travel expenses of each Minister;

b) The number of times that each Minister used the government aircraft;

c) The date, the itinerary, and the names of all passengers on each trip in a government aircraft;

d) The reason for the use of the government aircraft;

e) The cost of the use of the government aircraft.

The Comptroller General has been directed by the President of the Treasury Board to establish this new reporting system as soon as possible.

4. Regarding the use of government aircraft during the period from November 1988 to August 1989, 220 trips* were made totalling 1,413.2 hours of flight.

*Figures include Prime Minister, all Ministers, Governor General, and visiting Foreign Heads of State.

[*English*]

M. Cooper: I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question as enumerated by the parliamentary secretary has been answered. Shall the remaining questions be allowed to stand?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S. O. 81—AGRICULTURE

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma) moved:

That this House condemns the government for its insensitivity to the tremendous difficulties being faced by Canada's farmers and other rural Canadians which are the direct result of the government's failure to respond adequately to the pressing and specific needs of Canadian farmers in financial, trade, marketing and other areas, which are creating a dangerous level of anger and frustration, as was seen in the recent massive demonstration by thousands of farmers on Parliament Hill; and further, that the government be condemned for not supporting producer-controlled marketing agencies and boards.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to have this motion before the House today because it was exactly a week ago yesterday that we saw the largest farm protest rally on Parliament Hill in a decade.

The motion tries to express the feelings of those thousands and thousands of farmers from Ontario and

Quebec who are extremely concerned with where the government is going with its trade policies, with its income support policies and with its farm programs.

We only have to look at the press clippings from last Wednesday, exactly a week ago, to see the incredible concern that is expressed. I look at a clipping from *The Toronto Star* which reads, "Quit harming agriculture Tories told". It shows a picture of effigies of the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister which were subsequently burned on the lawns of Parliament. It points out the views of the president of the Quebec farmers, the UPA group, who stated that the government is bargaining away farm support schemes and subsidies in international trade.

The article goes on to state, "Farmers say the government is adopting an American view at General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade talks by calling for the removal of agricultural market controls." It goes on to state, "As a kite depicting an American eagle clutching a pig hovered over his head," the Deputy Prime Minister spoke.

That protest rally is just the tip of the iceberg. Farm groups across the country feel betrayed, especially in light of the policies which the government has adopted in the past year.

You will recall that during the free trade debate the Prime Minister was interviewed by *The Wall Street Journal* on April 3, 1987. He said, "U.S. trade remedy laws cannot apply to Canada, period".

He went on to say in that same interview, "You can't have a free trade arrangement and expect the traditional laws of countervail to apply".

Those words spoken by the Prime Minister were echoed as well by the Minister for International Trade in July of 1987 when he spoke at the St. John's Board of Trade meeting. He said, "Unless we get out from under the threat of countervail and other U.S. trade remedy laws and unless there is an effective dispute settlement resolution to bind the Americans to their commitments, a free trade agreement with the United States would not be a good deal for Canada".

That is the kind of commitment which farmers felt had been made on their behalf. Of course, no such commitment was made. We only have to look at the Canadian pork producers who have had imposed since early September a countervail of 3.6 cents a pound, or eight cents a kilo, on pork coming from Canada.

The distressing part is that it was not imposed because of some pre-existing law, it was imposed because the Americans changed the law after they signed the free trade deal, after they implemented the legislation for the free trade deal. They immediately passed an amendment to their countervail law which enabled them to launch a countervail duty case against pork, as had been done with hogs for the past year and a half.

Surely everybody, even the people on this side of the House, thought that when we signed the free trade deal, we were in a free trade area and that there was going to be some good will, an understanding that there would be less adversarial kind of activity. Yet Congress passed legislation to extend the countervail duty law.

I think people were concerned that the government did not appeal it. It did not go to the GATT when those amendments to the countervail duty law were passed over a year ago. So we have a situation now where beyond the countervail duty which applies to pork, which has been in place since about 1985, we have a new countervail on hogs. However, we expect that within the next year, in March sometime, there will be a review of the subsidy levels in Canada. The tripartite hog stabilization program has been singled out, and countervail duty on pork which is 3.6 cents a pound now may well become 11 cents or 12 cents a pound later. We had a situation where the pork processing plants in this country said, "Look, if we are going to have a retroactive countervail imposed on us of that magnitude, we are going to stop sending pork to the United States". The Canadian Pork Council had to take the initiative of imposing a $2 per hog levy for every hog marketed in this country, whether it is consumed in Canada, or whether it is consumed in Japan or other importing countries from Canada.

• (1550)

In effect, the only way that we are going to get access to the U.S. market that the Prime Minister promised he would deliver—for the 25 per cent or so of Canadian hogs that go to the United States—is to impose a levy of $2 on every hog sold in the country. That is what it costs under the FTA, or the CUSTA, which is the new name. I think the government was just so embarrassed by having something called an FTA, a free trade agreement, that it changed it to Canada-U.S. Trade Agreement. Obviously, if pork producers in this country have to buy access by paying $2 for every hog marketed, it does not sound very free to them. That is one of the tremendous concerns which has been expressed by the UPA, by the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and by the representatives

from New Brunswick who were here a week ago yesterday.

Just as important was the concern expressed by the UPA and the OFA in regard to the situation of the dairy industry. A year ago last January the Minister of Agriculture said that there was no problem with the tariff being reduced under the free trade deal for processed agriculture products, such as yoghurt and ice-cream, because he was going to put them over on to the import control list. I think most farmers in the country believed that there was some security in what he was doing, but in fact there was none.

It is obvious now and it was pretty obvious at the time that there was no agreement with the Americans to accept that kind of an import control on yoghurt and ice cream. Immediately those import controls were imposed in late December of last year the United States Government demanded a GATT panel. That panel reviewed the situation and struck down the placing of import controls on yoghurt and ice-cream, as well as a half dozen other novelty dairy products.

This is perhaps the most damaging part of the whole free trade fiasco, as I would call it. The government has not accepted the decision by the GATT panel, but I am sure if the Deputy Prime Minister wanted to be totally honest he would admit that within a week the government will accept it but perhaps not implement it for a year. That decision states that import controls under Article 11 of the GATT can only be applied to raw, unprocessed agriculture commodities such as milk. That decision, to me, means that if the kind of import controls we are talking about can be placed on milk, they can be placed on 2 per cent milk, on chocolate milk and perhaps even buttermilk, something that can be drunk, but not on something like yoghurt, ice-cream, cheese, butter or skim milk powder which are processed products.

That is the kind of thing that drives the OFA, the Ontario Milk Marketing Board, the UPA—every supply management producer in this country—wild. Because if it applies only to yoghurt and ice-cream, then it applies to all these other commodities. In the dairy industry we are talking about 60 per cent of our production, that is all the industrially produced processed milk.

Clearly, the government deceived Canadian farmers when it said that their supply management systems were protected. The minister says we want to negotiate a better description of Article 11, and I am sure that he does. I do not know of any Canadian who is interested in supply management in the agriculture industry who does not. But I think we should look back at those negotiations because it was not as if this decision by the GATT panel came out of the air in September. It was a deliberate decision by the United States. This comes back to the whole question of whether there is any goodwill in the free trade deal. I maintain there is not any. You have to look across the whole range of products, but as far as I can see there has been no great outpouring of such in agriculture or in other commodities for trade.

The Government of Canada through the Department of Agriculture negotiated all summer trying to get the Americans to accept a larger quota. I think our quota was set at something like 340 tonnes or so. The government offered to go to around to 1,000 or 1,500, but the Americans were not buying. Clearly, that is not going to be a decision that will be easily overturned.

I have a copy of a speech that was given just today by the Ontario Minister of Agriculture and Food who was speaking to the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. He has just returned from meetings with the United States minister of agriculture, the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary for Trade. In his speech to the Ontario Federation of Agriculture in Toronto today he said that according to Ambassador Hills every internal domestic program has to be on the table. They object to any system that restricts a market, and at present they see U.S. farmers as having no opportunity to put their milk into Ontario.

He went on to say that the Americans are determined to aggressively access our market. The Milk Industry Foundation is particularly unabashed in stating that they want our market.

Clearly, from the negotiations that went on last summer, the United States is absolutely determined that it will have full access to the Canadian market. Clearly,

no provision was made for this in the free trade deal, and the results will be devastating for our supply management. What applies to the dairy industry could well apply to the poultry industry as well.

Those are two of the major concerns which the 10,000 or 12,000 farmers from across Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick were expressing to members of Parliament and to the government a week ago yesterday.

• (1600)

Another great concern is that we are part of two trading groups negotiating at the GATT. One is our Canada–U.S. CUSTA free trade group. Unfortunately, as I have already said, they do not agree with our position. They want to have full access. They want to get rid of our supply–management system. They have always been open about that, but it was up to our government in negotiating the CUSTA agreement to ensure that.

The second group of which we are a part is the Cairns group. Clearly from the statements made by the Australians and some others in the Cairns Group they likewise are opposed to our position. How strong can our position be? I will not say that there are no supporting countries, because I hope some of the Scandinavian and some of the European countries will support us in the GATT to strengthen our position with regard to Article 11, and hopefully to recover what has been lost in the GATT panel decision.

We have to be especially concerned when the two trading groups that we are going to the GATT with, the Americans and the Cairns Group, are opposed to our position. One sometimes wonders whether the position that the minister puts here in the House of Commons is exactly the position that he is putting in the Cairns Group, or that the Minister for International Trade or our negotiators are putting.

An article in the October 27 edition of *The Globe and Mail* quoted a federal agricultural trade official who stated, when talking about the GATT negotiations, that the division in the agricultural community over supply–management has caused Canadian negotiators to adopt a Jekyll and Hyde approach at the multilateral trade negotiations.

As the Australians say, we speak with a forked tongue on these issues. When officials in the Department of Agriculture are saying that, we tend to become nervous. We like what the minister is saying here, that he wants to maintain supply management, but we are concerned with the position he has been put in, not only by the free trade deal which did not secure the import control side, but because of the removal of the tariffs our whole food processing industry is putting great pressure on our supply management system as well.

Those are two very important issues that the thousands and thousands of farmers on the lawns of Parliament were concerned with.

The third issue which is very important is the fact that the government is making dramatic cut–backs in its farm support programs. The minister talks about the billions and billions of dollars, but what the farmers are concerned about is the $500 million that he cut back last spring. There is no western grain stabilization payment. There is no special grains program.

Clearly, the government did not make adequate provision in the free trade deal for marketing boards. They are in the greatest jeopardy they have ever felt. Pork producers are being saddled with a $2 fee just to buy access to the U.S. market. Our support programs are being unilaterally dismantled, while some time during the next five or six years we supposedly will be negotiating a subsidy code. Our Durum wheat producers are being threatened with a countervail.

Never in my memory has the viability of Canadian agriculture been so threatened as it has been this past year by the government's actions and lack of action.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On questions and comments, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre.

Mr. Walker: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank our critic on agriculture for leading off this debate with some very insightful comments on Canadian farming.

I was wondering if I could ask him a question dealing with some particular problems in the west. As he knows full well, because of his research and his consultations throughout the Canadian agricultural community, there has been a tremendous amount of debt created by the current policies of this government.

The Minister of Agriculture is very fond of coming to us and telling us how much more money he is spending each year in the west. He never tells us the number of farmers who are going broke and increasing debt load.

For example, there has been a 48 per cent increase in foreclosures in Manitoba in the last seven months. That comes before the tough season, the November to May season when farmers really get into a lot of difficulty. There are 108 foreclosures that have been initiated in the last few weeks in Manitoba alone. This sort of activity is what makes the Manitoba farmer so insecure under the present regime.

We have a minister responsible for the Wheat Board in our province and a Minister of Agriculture from the west. They seem to have walked away from the problems in our region and do not respond to the farmers when they are going through this debt crisis. It is anticipated that this is just the beginning and that Manitoba is headed for a very, very trying year.

I wonder if our critic could respond and comment as to whether or not there is any hope under the present policy. Is there any hope under the new policy given to us by the Minister of Agriculture a few weeks ago and can we expect the farmers to receive any more help? I am not very optimistic, and I was wondering if he is.

Mr. Foster: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the question from the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. It is impossible to say what the government is going to do. It is capable of doing anything, as I outlined in my earlier remarks. Clearly the direction seems to be, if you read the document "Freedom to Grow" or "Growing Together" or freedom to go, as some people call it, that the whole mood is toward reducing government expenditures.

If you look at the budget of the Minister of Finance last spring, the only comment with regard to the Farm Credit Corporation was to remove the commodity-based mortgage which did provide some concessional funding.

The agriculture committee of the House of Commons did a major report in the spring of 1988. It put forward a number of innovative and worth-while suggestions about directions we might take to improve the farm debt situation. In the Speech from the Throne, in the budget, in the Minister's statement, there was no mention or specific proposal with regard to how the government might provide new and innovative arrangements.

Many other programs were cut, and there were about seven or eight in the budget. For example, the advance payment which we fought very hard to save provided farmers with very worth-while cash flow assistance, perhaps only for three or four months, or in some cases for six months or a year, but it provided interest-free cash advances which were very important. That is going to cause very great pressure this winter. I do not think the farm debt crisis is over. The report of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities states that the number of farms that have been taken over by municipalities or are being attached by municipalities is growing at an alarming rate.

Garth Stevenson, president of the Saskatchewan Pool, states that farmers are going to require assistance in the magnitude of $500 million before cropping time next spring. Clearly there is financial assistance needed. It is being cut back unilaterally, even though our American counterparts are continuing their new farm bill. All reports say that it is going to be as generous and supportive as the 1985 farm bill. Yet, we are cutting back many programs on a unilateral basis.

• (1610)

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Algoma for bringing forth this motion. While I do not agree with it, it does provide an opportunity to outline some of the things this government has done for agriculture, the tremendous record of support that this government has had with respect to agriculture and also to outline some of the things that we propose to do in the future, a new vision and some new directions.

I am disappointed that the hon. member did not propose anything new. It is basically the same old litany of gloom and doom and a repetition of what we have heard before. He ignores in his comments the reality of trade laws, the reality of GATT rules, the reality of what the free trade agreement really is and that trade remedies apply equally to all participating countries.

We get the impression that the Liberals are still fighting the last election. They attempt to strike fear and anxiety into the hearts and minds of the producers. Every problem that arises with respect to agriculture is blamed on the free trade agreement. That reminds me of the

statement that was made by the former finance critic, the hon. member for Etobicoke North, I believe, when he said something to the effect that every sparrow that falls is going to be blamed on the Canada–U.S. trade agreement.

The hon. member also said that we are part of two negotiating groups, the Canada–U.S. negotiating group and the Cairns Group. I do not know where he got that nonsense. We are part of the Cairns Group and we certainly support many of the objectives of the Cairns Group because it does provide us with an opportunity to deal with the debilitating situation that has affected our export–oriented agriculture industry. But we have carved out our own position and that was clearly outlined in a comment made by the Australian trade minister, Mr. Duffy, when he told local journalists that Canada's insistence on maintaining protection for its dairy industry could be a problem in reaching a final consensus.

As we heard from the Minister for International Trade today, Canada has staked out a very clear position with respect to Article 11, with respect to supply–management systems and the fact that we intend to pursue this issue in an attempt to clarify and strengthen Article 11, something which the hon. members opposite forbid us to do. They have suggested not touching Article 11 because we are going to tamper with it. Now they are saying that we have to do something about it. That has always been our position, to clarify and strengthen, because we foresaw some of the difficulties that came down with respect to the ice cream and yoghurt decision.

The motion condemns the government for its insensitivity to the difficulties facing Canada's farmers. I will be the first one to acknowledge that there are problems in the agriculture industry. There always have been problems in the agriculture industry and there probably always will be in some area or another. I will acknowledge the difficulties that the grain and oilseed sector has gone through with depressed prices as a result of the trade war between the United States and the European community with its common agricultural policy, the United States with its Export Enhancement Program, and of course Canada was caught in the cross–fire. We saw incomes drop from an average of $2.4 billion in market receipts in that period 1981–84 to a low of $475 million in 1987, which is a drop of about 75 per cent.

It was for that reason that the Prime Minister provided the leadership in bringing this issue before the GATT. We could not withstand this debilitating exercise that was destroying our farmers and also placing a very heavy burden on the federal treasury. It was because of the Prime Minister's leadership that we were able to raise the agriculture issue to the top of the agenda at the GATT proceedings. That is really, in the final analysis, the only long–term solution to this very serious problem.

We have to recognize that 50 per cent of our agriculture receipts come from the export market. We must restore order in the international market–place if our industry is going to survive. That is very fundamental and very basic, and hon. members opposite tend to forget that.

In this particular case, because of the debilitating impact that the trade war had upon the grains and oilseeds sector, we did respond. We responded in an unprecedented fashion. I will get into that a little later.

We also had a drought situation that was as serious or perhaps more serious, and statistics will bear me out on this, as it was during the dirty thirties in terms of precipitation and in terms of the extent of heat. Over the last four–year period, as recorded at our stations in Swift Current and in Lethbridge, precipitation was less and the intensity of the heat was greater. We have also had other disasters. In other areas we have had floods. In other areas we have had grasshoppers. You name it, and they have been afflicted with it. On each and every one of these occasions this government has responded.

With respect to the drought in 1988–1989, a $850 million program was initiated with some sharing from the provinces. Most of the cheques have been mailed out. Some are still in the process of being mailed out. There are still some appeals left to be settled. It is very difficult to design these programs to ensure that there is fairness and equity right across the board. I challenge hon. members opposite to consider that. We tried to devise a program in consultation with the agriculture community with representatives of the various farm organizations, and it is not as easy as one would like. There are always areas of unfairness and discrimination and inequities. That is why we want to try to bring about

substantive change to our crop insurance programs and our safety net programs so that we can better deal in a more fair and equitable manner with these.

In 1984 and 1985 there was $200 million provided for drought. In 1988, $100 million for drought.

The hon. member across the way mentioned the Special Canadian Grains Program, $2.1 billion was paid out in lieu of the trade war to try to meet that gap, that deficiency between what we considered to be a fair market value, as compared to what the producers received in the grains and oilseeds sector, $2.1 billion. In addition to that, some $300 million in losses were covered in the Canadian Wheat Board account.

Under the Western Grain Stabilization program, some $4 billion was paid out over 1985—1989, and the vast majority of that money was provided for by the federal government. There were record payments under the Agricultural Stabilization Program. With respect to crop insurance, about $200 million annually is paid by the federal government. The Crop Re-insurance program has cost the federal government something in the order of $700 million over the last three or four years.

In addition, there were special Farm Credit Corporation programs such as moratoriums, shared risk mortgages, and other initiatives and innovative programs to reduce interest rates. During this period of time in the last four or five years we have had some of the lowest rates we have had in five years.

We injected $600 million of new equity into the Farm Credit Program. In other words, we transferred debt into equity. We came forth with a rural transition program. We established Farm Debt Review Boards. I must say this has been a very successful initiative, because for something in the order of 77 to 80 per cent of the people who came before the Farm Debt Review Boards, while there have been difficulties in this particular area, there have been satisfactory arrangements made to provide ways and means where they may stay on the farm and maintain farming as a lifestyle. There have been over 10,000 applications under this program; some $360 million has been provided. Basically, through practical common sense, we have been able to bring the creditors and the farmer together in such a way that they have been able to sort out their difficulties.

• (1620)

Farm credit arrears have been reduced by about 50 per cent. Fuel price relief was provided at $200 million per year. Under the Western Grain Transportation Act, freight rate relief was provided. We provided a stabilization program for red meats and additional livestock feed assistance for the Atlantic region was provided.

We provided help for the tobacco farmers. Some $62 million has been committed for that program. We provided help for the apple growers, a $6 million stabilization fund, and initiated a countervail against the cheap imports coming in from the United States. We provided help for the grape growers in terms of their adjustment, a $128 million program. We provided help for the sour cherry industry, again another countervail action by Canada.

We helped the onion sector, again another countervail action by Canada. We provided assistance to the potato industry, again another countervail action against cheap imports coming into the country. We provided help for the corn producers, again through the actions of a countervail. We are providing help for the pork producers, both in terms of fighting a countervail action and in terms of providing food relief in the form of pork products to Poland.

There have been agri-food subagreements signed with literally every province. There may be one or two that are still in the final stages of negotiation, but basically there have been programs in place and programs renewed.

The federal-provincial soil conservation programs have been signed with most of the provinces. There may be one or two that are still remaining. When that is completed, that will constitute a $150 million joint shared program.

We provided assistance to the honey producers. We provided assistance to the white bean producers. We have helped the dairy producers in their price adjustments. We are defending their interests at the GATT. We established a long-term five-year dairy policy, something that the Liberals never thought of, never dreamed of. They left the dairy farmers hanging in thin air from

year to year. Again, we established a dairy task force to help deal with all the problems that exist with regard to trade negotiations and pricing, et cetera.

We defended the beef producers against subsidized imports from the European Community. Again, with respect to the poultry industry, we are establishing a task force so that they can take full advantage in exploiting the market opportunities and adjusting their production patterns to ensure that that industry can grow.

There have been industries that have gone through painful adjustments such as the tobacco industry, the grape industry, the honey industry and the Canola producing industry.

However, Mr. Speaker, this so-called insensitive government provided unprecedented support for agriculture since it has been in office. If you look at the Public Accounts of Canada you will find that very clear between the years 1984–85 and 1987–88. In the 1984–85 fiscal year, $3,224.8 million; 1985–86, $3,210.1 million; 1986–87, $4,501.9 million; 1987–88, $6,124.4 million; 1988–89, $4.6 billion, a total of $21,700 million, well in excess of $4 billion a year, compared to about $2 billion under the previous administration.

If we look at the grain and oilseeds industry, we find that in the period 1981–84 the federal government of the day provided about $350 million in support. In that period, 1984–85 to 1988–89, some $11.7 billion, almost $12 billion, has been provided, or an average of $2.3 billion per year, as compared to $350 million per year under the Liberals.

That is what this insensitive government has done. This insensitive government has provided major increases in net farm income. Under the Liberals, net farm income averaged $3.7 billion annually between the period 1981–84. Under our government, farm income reached $5.2 billion in 1988 on the basis of preliminary statistics. That average between 1985 and 1988 is $4.5 billion. That is a 25 per cent increase over the period 1981 and 1984 when the Liberals were in office.

Under the Liberals, the agriculture industry was stagnant. It was depressed. It was despondent. There was human misery. The industry was troubled, but no one listened, no one cared. Farm bankruptcies, to answer my hon. friend from Winnipeg, achieved an all-time high in 1984 of 551 bankruptcies.

Mr. Walker: The year you took over.

Mr. Mazankowski: Yes, that is the mess we took over then, as we took over the mess of debt that we inherited from the Liberal party as well.

Farm bankruptcies have been reduced by some 50 per cent. Projected bankruptcies are at a level of 240 this year, still too high.

However, Mr. Speaker, the 551 bankruptcies were simply the tip of the iceberg because there were many other farmers who voluntarily left the farm or were foreclosed. It does not tell the whole story about the human misery that that government and party inflicted upon the farmers: 23 per cent and 24 per cent interest rates; 13 per cent and 14 per cent inflation; land values soared, and when they dropped there was a problem. Money was easy to get, and 97 per cent of the people who found themselves in financial difficulty traced their problems right back to that period.

It is the same thing that the Liberals did when the leader of their party said: "Why should I sell your wheat?". Well, we provided leadership to the Canadian Wheat Board. Wheat sales increased from 17 per cent to 22 per cent. It is slipping somewhat because of the drought situation, but nonetheless we demonstrated that we were interested in selling farmers' wheat.

In the livestock industry, receipts have been up by about 10 per cent. Exports are up from $620 million in 1981 to $1 billion in 1988. It is interesting to note that while these people across the way badmouth the Americans, 95 per cent of our exports of cattle go to the United States, and 93 per cent of our fresh and frozen beef and veal exports go to the United States of America. We have taken our agriculture trade balance from $2.8 billion in 1985 to $4 billion in 1988.

There are many more opportunities. The bilateral trade agreement provides many opportunities in Ontario, western Canada and in Quebec. I will quote a couple of headlines: "Fruitbelt Reaps FTA Profit". We know as well that in terms of the vegetable industry, there is an expectation that the demand for vegetables shipped to the United States will increase by some 80 per cent.

The Ontario wine producers: "Woo Upscale New York Citizens. Roll over Bordeaux and California, the Niagara region of Ontario is breaking into the New York wine

market". This clearly establishes that they can compete with the best in the world.

Here is another headline from the Calgary *Herald*. "Huge U.S. Market Offers Big Gains". In an article from the *World of Beef* in September, a Bank of Montreal senior economist says: "The FTA is the best assurance we can get against sideswiped protectionism". It goes on to say that the market-driven economies of most industrialized countries position Canada very well in terms of taking advantage of new trading opportunities. Food processing investment is up by 15 per cent over the previous year. With the GST, that situation will improve further still.

The hon. member for Algoma quoted the Minister of Agriculture for the province of Ontario. I was interested in noting as well, as reported in the *Globe and Mail* of November 27, 1989, this minister stated: "Canadian farmers are going to have to realize that farming is a business, so we are going to have to be flexible, we are going to have to adapt to the globalization, the liberalization of trade".

• (1630)

I think that is a very important observation because it is the reality of the situation. The world is changing out there. New trading patterns are developing and political revolutions are ongoing.

The European Community, for example, has increased its yield in grain and oilseeds by 100 per cent since the 1950s and the 1960s, at which time it was the largest importer of grain. Today it is the third largest exporter.

It is also interesting to note that Japan has become Canada's top grain buyer. The United States has become our most important customer for agricultural products including grain. In 1986 our exports of grain and oilseeds to the United States was $388 million versus $514 million. In terms of tonnes, 1,175,000 tonnes in 1986; 1,733,600 tonnes in 1988. There are markets of which we must take advantage.

This is why it is incumbent upon us to review our agricultural policies and programs. We have put our agricultural programs and policies to the supreme test with the turbulent years we have just gone through. It is important and it is wise to evaluate them.

We see the changing political landscape, particularly in the eastern European countries. We see changing trading patterns. We see changing demands and consumer habits. We see the enhancement of further technology. We a see new emphasis on food safety and on environmental considerations. It is only natural that we have to evaluate our programs.

We do so with the approach of offering hope and optimism for the future and eager to tackle the challenges of change. One thing is a constant about agriculture: change has been constant from day one. We have been successful as an agricultural community because we have been able to adapt to change.

If we are to maintain our leadership and our leading edge in the agriculture communities of the world, we must adapt to change. We must be more responsive to consumer needs. We must be more market oriented. We must take advantage of the changing trade environment. We must take advantage of the changing political scene. It is for these reasons that we must seek to devise the best programs and policies in consultation with the agriculture community, with consumers and with everyone in the food chain to engage in the most comprehensive review that has ever been embarked upon by this government.

This initiative speaks to the future, not to the past. It speaks to opportunity and success, not to failure. It is about building confidence. It is about providing the appropriate tools. It is about leadership. It is about vision and it is about new direction. It is about talking about our strengths. It is about taking stock of what we have and what we need. It is about building for the future and building an agricultural industry that is sound, that is viable, that is durable.

I invite all hon. members to assist in that challenge because to cry gloom and doom without offering anything positive or constructive is not the way farmers will respond to the reality of the situation. Farmers will tackle the challenge and will turn that challenge into an opportunity. That is what we are talking about here. Let us not turn the clock back; let us turn it ahead. We give you the opportunity to participate in that process.

Mr. Ferguson: Mr. Speaker, I have some comments I want to make at this point. First of all I would like to put into correct context a statement he attributed to a former Prime Minister.

"Why should I sell your wheat?", is not the whole statement that was made. He said: "Why should I sell your wheat? You already have two government agencies selling your wheat for you. I couldn't sell it if I wanted to. I do not have the jurisdiction to do that."

The jurisdiction was with the Canadian Wheat Board and the other government marketing agencies.

I must also take the minister to task a bit because he indicated that farm income was up. Does that farm income include, for example, the off-farm income that is so essential to the effective operation of a farm today when the farmer himself and probably his wife have to go out and take a job?

I would also like to draw to his attention that it was in the last quarter of 1984 that grain prices dropped dramatically. Consequently it was under his administration. Certainly there should have been some compensation to producers when this happened.

I would also like to point out that there were droughts in 1985, 1987 and 1988 in many areas of Canada. As a result of those droughts as much as anything, a lot of farmers find themselves in difficult financial situations.

I had a phone call from one farmer from Saskatchewan just last week. The minister talks about the great policies of the government. I want to just to draw to the attention of the House one of those policies. Under this policy—and I believe it must have been a commodity based loan—a farmer had taken out a mortgage a few years ago. He has made 65 consecutive monthly payments on that mortgage and never missed one. Now his principal is actually more than it was at the start.

That is the kind of program we have had from this government and that is why that program was discontinued last summer.

A neighbour came to me in frustration last winter because it was suggested to him by the Farm Credit Corporation that he should take out a commodity based loan. By running all the figures through his computer, going back to 1972, using monthly records of prices of grain, corn, wheat and soybeans, and forecasting to the year 2008, he found it simply would not work. This is the type of program we have seen.

I am very disappointed. I have asked on a couple of occasions for a directive from the Farm Credit Corporation to the government in order that we could have a look at it. I was assured by the chairman of the Farm Credit Corporation back in late September or early October that I would get it, but I have not received it.

When I look at page 5 of the corporate plan, I read: "The acquisition of properties is expected to increase over the next three years". It goes on: "The inventory of real properties will increase dramatically over the short term". Still further I read: "Collections, recovery actions, debt review actions, debt review process, property management and marketing will continue to exceed the available staff".

This is not quite the same glowing picture that we heard about just a few minutes ago. In fact there were more properties on hand at the time the annual report was tabled than there were actual loans made last year. If the 702 staff members of the Farm Credit Corporation each made two loans a year, it would have been the total that was actually made under the Farm Credit Corporation.

There are actually more properties on hand, and I am very disturbed that this sort of thing would happen. When we look at the Farm Credit Corporation Act, Section 11(1)(e) states that it is intended that concessions and moratoriums or rewriting of mortgages, compositions, schemes, and arrangements can be made under the objects and powers of the act. It states that the corporation may do these various things. Consequently, that is the responsibility of the government in power when we come through three years of drought and difficult times and particularly the low prices that occurred shortly after it came to office. I am sure it must have been the steady hand of the previous Minister of Agriculture, the tiller of the agricultural sector, that kept things up where they were. Immediately this government came to power, look what happened. Everything started to fall apart.

There are also some other things that I am very concerned about. We talk about the restructured cases that come through the Farm Debt Review Board's reports. I think there are some 2,000. How many of these cases have actually been restructured? What is the average land base by province left owned by the farmer in these cases? Are they actually viable units, or have farmers been stripped of their land base and of their assets? Can they make a living on these farms?

We estimate that perhaps as many as 15 per cent or 20 per cent of cases are not getting restructured type concessions. We believe that the land base being left to these people is very, very small. What we have is the Farm Credit Corporation recycling these concessions back into its own corporation.

• (1640)

Another thing that concerns me very deeply is the fact that about 17 per cent of the Farm Credit Corporation accounts in Ontario are in arrears. Of greater significance is the province of Saskatchewan where about 47 per cent of the cases are in serious arrears.

I would call on the government today to take positive steps, to look at the hardships being created across this nation, and to step in with even more funding at the present time to make the agricultural industry an economic industry with a standard of living commensurate with that of the rest of society, rather than having to face the hardships that are being forced on the people today.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member made representations more than asked questions, but I will comment on the reference that he made to the Farm Credit Corporation properties on hand.

This is a direct result of the Farm Credit Corporation sitting down with the farmer and working out an arrangement where he could stay on the land and re-establish himself. He is taking issue with that, and I suppose by taking issue with it he is suggesting that we should unload this property at fire sale prices and kick the farmers off the land. Maybe that is the policy of the Liberal party. It is certainly not our policy.

We have tried with the help of the Farm Debt Review Board to work with farmers to provide extreme latitude and accommodation through the farm debt review process, properly funded. I think the losses that the Farm Credit Corporation has endured as a result of the high interest rate policy of the former government of which he was a member was something in the order of $1.3 billion. That is what happens when you let interest rates go to 23 and 24 per cent and let inflation go to 13 and 14 per cent.

What really strikes me rather funny is that they would want us to do the same thing again. We know that there are inflationary problems in this country. We are trying to deal with that as best we can, in a balanced way. When I hear the representations across the way, if we followed their advice we would end up in the same situation as we did in the 1981–82 period when we saw those soaring interest rates.

The reason the Farm Credit Corporation has land and inventory is that it worked out lease arrangements and other arrangements with the producers who have found themselves in difficulty. There has been an attempt to keep them there, to accommodate them, and to work with them during this very difficult period.

Mr. Laporte: Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister made quite a few comments with respect to how much his government has done for agriculture. Despite that, there is no doubt that there is a lot of concern in rural Canada over the future of agriculture.

I would like to ask the minister a question with respect to transportation. As the minister will know, there is about to be or will be soon some rationalization on rail lines. That is a nice word for saying abandonment.

Some studies have been done with respect to rail abandonments. Certainly in my own riding there is a rail line known as the Central Butte branch line subdivision which was studied by the senior grain transportation committee. The result of that study recommended not to have it abandoned nor to have it retained. The committee indicated that it was a marginal line and perhaps, if it had more goods carried on that line, it would become more viable.

As the minister will be aware there are some major irrigation projects taking place on the South Saskatchewan River near Riverhurst, which presumably is going to increase production in that area. There are some farmers, as the minister indicated, who are taking the initiative. They are attempting to take the opportunity to create some more wealth and jobs in that area. They want to create an alfalfa plant. They have looked at investors, conducted studies and produced reports. However one of their concerns is the future of the rail line in that area. If the rail line is gone then the alfalfa plant is going to be no good. Their concern is the future of that line.

These people have gone to a lot of work. There are two spokespersons for them: Gordon Kent who is an agricultural engineer and Art Heshey who is a consultant for Heshey Management. As spokespeople for the Riverhurst Water Users Association they are prepared to spend their own money to come to Ottawa to put their case before the minister. If the minister will find some time to meet with them, whether it be a half hour or an

hour sometime before Christmas or at any other time, they would certainly be glad to meet him.

These farmers in Saskatchewan are trying to take agriculture in a new direction. If the minister will have time to hear them, I would certainly assist his office in helping to arrange this appointment and this meeting. Perhaps the minister could find the time in the near future.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, the issue of branch lines is one that has always been very sensitive and has involved a lot of emotion.

At the same time because of the way the freight rate structure is applied now, because of the fact that many of the branch lines are the most expensive lines to operate in terms of cost benefit, and because the costs of those lines under the new freight rate formula apply to the total system for which all farmers end up having to pay, we endeavour to try to find the most efficient transportation system available for that purpose.

As a result we have used off-line elevator systems where you build a new elevator facility and the grain is trucked. That has reduced the costs rather substantially. There are short line operations, one of which is operating in the province of Alberta and has reduced line operating costs.

I am not totally familiar with the subdivision the hon. member refers to. It is called the Central Butte subdivision. I certainly would be pleased to make representations to the Minister of Transport. As he knows, this falls within the domain of the Minister of Transport. I would be pleased to make representations to him and also attempt to see whether we could arrange a suitable time for his people to meet with him. I think if he were to meet with the Minister of Transport it would probably be very useful. I would try to arrange that.

If I cannot arrange it I would be pleased to meet with him. Perhaps his office wants to contact my office. Hopefully, we could arrange a suitable time and place for that to occur. It may not even be necessary for them to come to Ottawa. Perhaps I could meet them in western Canada, but the hon. member is certainly free to contact my office. I would be glad to accommodate in any way I can.

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, despite the programs and the statements made by the minister with respect to agriculture in this country, I think it is very fair to say that it is clearly in serious difficulty.

To see that one need only look at figures from Statistics Canada. The number of farms in Canada is now well below 300,000, down significantly from even 10 years ago. Average sales for a Canadian farm in 1986 were some $71,000 while expenses were some $60,000. Over the past three years that $11,000 gap has in fact narrowed.

It is not surprising that the number of days worked off the farm continues to increase all the time from 148 in 1960 to 173 in 1985. The fact that there are fewer farmers with less money to spend means more pressure is placed on businesses and services in rural communities, which in turn results in a rural infrastructure that indeed is very fragile.

What is this government doing to reverse this unfortunate trend? When it comes to rhetoric the government is very good. In fact, it should receive an A-plus. The tragic fact is that that is all there is: rhetoric.

While the Progressive Conservatives espouse viable family farms, in practice they are promoting huge, corporate and industrial farms.

• (1650)

This lack of concern for the family farm is clear when one looks at some of the policies and programs the government has implemented.

The removal of oats from the Canadian Wheat Board proved to western Canadians that although the government may claim to consult with interested groups, it simply does not. The government said that it did extensive consultation with Canadians before removing oats. When asked in the House the Minister of Agriculture had the nerve to state that he had consulted with such groups as the Alberta Sheep and Wool Commission, various hog marketing boards, and various cattlemen's associations. These groups obviously had nothing to do with the production of oats. They did have one thing in

common; they happened to agree with the government's position on the oats issue.

What the minister failed to say was that the advisory committee to the Canadian Wheat Board, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, and the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool all opposed the government's removal of oats. As well a Decima poll, which is the same company that does polling for the Conservative party, concluded that two-thirds of farmers in western Canada wanted oats to remain under the jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board and three-quarters of farmers felt that they simply had not been consulted by the PC government.

Another group that was consulted, a group that the minister and others of his government are not apt to mention when discussing issues such as this one, was the international grain companies: Cargill, Continental and Elders. While the government sought no advice from the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, the advisory committee or others directly involved with the farm issue and actually growing oats in this country, it saw fit to consult with international grain traders. These companies have about as much concern for the future of family farms as does Burger King for the continued success of McDonald's.

A second program is the cash advance program. The idea behind the cash advance program was to help the family farmer receive an interest-free advance on his crop before he had an opportunity to take it to market. The government not only added an interest component to this program but increased the maximum amount that could be borrowed to $250,000.

Speaking on behalf of grain farmers from western Canada, one must either have an extremely good crop or have an awfully large farm in order to be able to borrow the $250,000 allowed under this program. The only advantage under this new program is to the very large farming operations.

I would ask this government to provide a list of those groups that have traditionally participated in this program and that support this change. Perhaps it consulted its traditional list, which includes the Canola growers, the Alberta Sheep and Wool Commission, the Hog Marketing Boards and the Cattlemen's Association.

Another program that has been put on the block is the At and East program. This is a program that impacts directly on the maritimes. At and East is a program that encourages grain and flour to be exported from the ports of Halifax and St. John. If that program is cut, it is certain that the grain facilities at St. John will close and very much jeopardize those grain facilities at Halifax. It will also put an increased pressure on Dover Flour Mills, the only flour mill in the maritimes.

The loss of the program which subsidizes grain and flour movement to those ports will be a major blow to both these communities. In Halifax, the city will lose annual income of some $16 million and several hundred employees will be laid off or have their hours drastically cut. These would include, train crews, longshoremen, stevedores and maintenance workers. It is something which Halifax can ill afford.

I am informed by Dover Mills that it will be completely and effectively moved from the private flour export market and will simply have to rely on government groups like CIDA for its export markets. Since the cost of transporting the flour will increase, and since these agencies are on a fixed budget, they will actually purchase less flour, which will hurt not only Dover Flour Mills but other mills throughout the country which produce this flour.

The port of St. John will lose some $8.5 million that presently flows into its economy and hundreds of workers will be affected. This is all because the government refused to listen to the Atlantic Transportation Committee which some four years ago proposed a new format for the At and East program that would save the government at least half the cost of that program.

This government, the government that consults with Canadians to promote a better Canadian society, refused to even consider the proposal put forth by the Atlantic Transportation Committee. Instead it simply cut the program.

It is the same government that refused to listen to the advisory committee of the Canadian Wheat Board, to the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, and to the Canadian Federation of Agriculture when considering whether or not to remove oats from the Canadian Wheat Board.

Instead it chose to consult with groups such as the Alberta Sheep and Wool Commission. It is the same government that has cut this program. I wonder if it

consulted with the Alberta Sheep and Wool Commission when it was deciding what to do with the At and East program, because it certainly paid no attention to the Atlantic Transportation Committee.

These are crucial times for agriculture in this country. The free trade agreement and the GATT talks now being carried on are both very critical to the future of agriculture. On these talks depend the future of orderly marketing and supply management. The very foundation of agriculture in this country depends on the outcome of these talks.

Of concern to myself and of concern to many Canadian producers are the mixed signals this government is sending with respect to this crucial area. The government indicated before the election that free trade would mean greater prosperity for all Canadians including farmers. That has turned out not to be the case; certainly not yet. The opposite appears to be the case, especially for small producers.

Before the election I recall a medium-sized hog producer telling me that he was going to vote for free trade because that was his guarantee into the U.S. market. He believed that by voting for the PCs they would create a level playing field allowing him to market more easily his hogs in the U.S. There may have been a level playing field created, but I have not seen it. If there is one it certainly is a level playing field that is decidedly tipped toward the United States and decidedly tipped toward the large hog producer.

The countervail duty that has been slapped on hogs has meant that the future of that particular hog producer in my riding is in real jeopardy. One thing that I have learned since being elected is that many of the problems facing Canadians in my riding of Moose Jaw—Lake Centre also face Canadians throughout this country.

I was recently in Prince Edward Island talking to farmers in that beautiful province. The most successful farmers are often the small mixed farmers who grow a combination of those famous P.E.I. potatoes, some hay and some grain and who raise some livestock.

While I was in P.E.I. I was told that a number of mixed farmers are simply going to stop producing hogs because it simply did not pay. The reality in P.E.I. or Saskatchewan is that the only way one can successfully raise hogs is to have a large operation because the margin of profit per hog is so small it only pays when producing them in large numbers. This is not the promise the Tories made to those people before the last election.

What of supply management? We have a system in this country that allows for a viable industry in dairy products, eggs, chickens, turkeys and broiler hatching eggs. This system ensures that Canadians control the market in these areas and ensures that fair competition continues to exist. The GATT talks that are now taking place may well force some compromise, and some altering of position in the area of supply management may be required. Certainly industries such as the dairy industry have recognized this fact and have put forth proposals in order to help their industry survive in a global market.

I am certain that there is much concern among Canadian diary producers. Certainly they have put a lot of effort into developing and bringing forth proposals. Nonetheless when they look at how much the advisory committee to the Canadian Wheat Board and the Atlantic Transportation Committee were ignored when they offered their expert advice in their particular area, what are the chances that the dairy commission is going to have any influence on the government's position on supply management? That is, of course, unless it happens to concur with its thinking.

There is certainly room to manoeuvre in these talks. Agricultural economists make it very clear that we do not have to turn to unbridled capitalism, that it is quite possible to have an effective and efficient trading of agricultural commodities while at the same time allowing individual governments to develop programs which will allow them to maintain viable, profitable and productive family farming units. The question is whether or not this government desires to reach that very worth-while objective.

• (1700)

The history of this government would indicate that concern over healthy, viable family farms and a viable rural economy is simply not part of this, its consideration. The government recently released its green paper on agriculture entitled *Growing Together*. It is a document that is filled with platitudes on the future of agriculture in this country. If there is one thing that Canadians have learned from the government over the past five years, it

is not to trust and not too put too much faith in PC promises.

I do not want to be mistaken with respect to this document. It is welcomed because it provides Canadians with a vehicle by which to discuss the future of agriculture in this country. A proper, full and effective dialogue would allow input from all sectors of the country that have an interest in agriculture, with the final result being new policy directions which represent the views, the desires and the needs of all Canadian producers, not just the large corporate conglomerates but all Canadians, from the potato farmer in Prince Edward Island to the apple grower in British Columbia.

I want to believe that the PCs are serious with this consultative process. I want to believe that they have the genuine interests of all Canadian producers at heart. I want to believe it but I am, unfortunately, simply skeptical. I am skeptical because when I look at the past record of this government, I see that that simply has not been the case.

Before I close, I want to focus on one more subject, policies for agriculture, we must remember that it is only part of the over-all world economy.

Today the rural infrastructure of this country is in tatters, whether it be in Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, Saskatchewan or British Columbia. The economic base of many communities is disappearing. Small businesses are closing their doors and services are simply being lost. The result is that seniors are leaving, not because they want to but rather because they are forced to. At the same time, young families are reluctant to move into these smaller centres, not only because of the scarce employment but also because of the fact that there is a lack of not only amenities but essential services as well.

Here again, the government must accept responsibility for the programs that exist in this area. There are many programs that are being cut and there are many problems that are being created.

The removal of VIA Rail takes away a necessary lifeline to many communities. What is even more disheartening is that this government is about to embark on a wholesale removal of track from large areas of this country. We all know that once the railway is gone, the death-knell is rung for many of these communities. While this may prove to be of benefit to Canadian Pacific, it certainly will not be of benefit to large areas of rural Canada.

As well, this government has a blind determination to eliminate hundreds of postal offices in this country, thereby putting a greater strain on rural communities. These are not just closures of post offices that have 50 and 75 boxes, the government is closing post offices in large communities of 2,000 to 3,000 people. This means that people in those communities, which are of a relatively stable size, are not going to be able to receive the same mail service that millions of other Canadians simply take for granted.

In closing, I would like to say that a vital and a vibrant rural Canada provides this country with a dimension that we simply cannot afford to lose. It is possible to have healthy family farms operating in a strong rural environment. It is possible if this government has the commitment. We in the New Democratic Party are willing to work toward that end. But the question is, is the Conservative Party? Looking at its past record, I would say that it is not. Our challenge in this party is to try to teach an old dog a new trick, and that trick would be one of compassion, concern and commitment to viable family farms in this country.

Mr. Ross Stevenson (Durham): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have an opportunity to take part in the debate this afternoon. I must say, however, that I am a little disappointed in the direction that the debate has taken because, quite frankly, the rhetoric flies in the face of the record.

The Minister of Agriculture has stated quite clearly in his earlier presentation the significance of the amount of funding that has been given by this government to agriculture and I am not going to take time at this point to review the significant increases in support to farmers put forward by this government in comparison with that put forward by previous administrations.

I think the government is very clear also in stating that the family farm is the essence of agriculture in Canada. Ninety-nine per cent of all the farms in this country are owned by farm families. Ninety-six per cent of the total production of agriculture in this country comes from family farms.

I think it is very significant that our support includes things like the dairy support policy, tripartite stabilization, all the various agricultural stabilization programs, drought support, crop insurance, and on we go through the great array of programs for Canadian agriculture, and each one of them put in place for the expressed reason of supporting family farms in Canada.

Looking at programs for the future, the document that the minister put forward just a week ago entitled *Growing Together* again is an indication of the significance of farm families to the future of this industry and the importance that the government places on those people. It clearly indicates the level of consultation that will go on in the future as we look for improvements in our agricultural policies.

I want to very briefly look at the direction of agricultural policy, particularly relating to trade. I think it is safe to say that this motion is brought forward today really to cover the disorganization which occurs in the opposition parties.

I would invite anyone to look closely at the presentations made by opposition speakers today, and look for positive alternatives that are being put forward in those presentations. I am sure that observers will find very few. It will be a continual carping and complaining about what is going on in the industry of agriculture today, but I can almost be assured that there will be very few positive alternatives put forward.

I think it is important to look at some of the accusations that are being made and see what the other side of the story is from what we may be hearing in the House today from various other people. The minister has stated that trade accounts for about 50 per cent of agricultural revenues. Clearly, this is very significant to our farmers and to the over-all economy of Canada.

We want to liberalize trade but we also want to protect important features in our agricultural system. One of those important features, of course, is supply management. Our critics will say that we have not supported supply management with enough vigour in recent discussions with the United States and particularly in international negotiations under GATT. I think the evidence flies in the face of the comments that are being made here today.

• (1710)

I would like to review a few of the statements put forward by spokespeople for the agricultural industry and in particular leaders of the various supply management sectors. I refer first of all to a press release put out by the dairy farmers of Canada in which there are statements by John Killoran, the president of the Dairy Farmers of Canada, who states, referring to the GATT panel ruling:

> "The ruling clearly illustrates the inability of the current GATT wording to safeguard effective supply management programs."

When the Minister of Agriculture formed the dairy task force, Mr. Killoran stated that they welcomed the opportunity to be involved in consultations with the Minister of Agriculture as well as officials of External Affairs regarding the strategy the Canadian Government should pursue in future negotiations.

Clearly the leaders of the supply management sector are involved in the discussions, they are meeting regularly with the Canadian negotiators and it is obvious from their press release that they are pleased with that involvement and that level of consultation.

In a report of October 27 in *The Globe and Mail*, Nelson Coyle, a spokesman for the Canadian Chicken Marketing Agency, refers to their opportunities to talk with Michael Gifford and he states that he is pleased with the stance of Michael Gifford, the Canadian agricultural negotiator, when they did not endorse various parts of the U.S. trade initiatives and their position at GATT. Again, the area which Canada did not endorse was the area which restricted imports, and of course, that is so important to protecting our supply management systems here in Canada.

A third reference relates to an open letter by Mr. Bill Mitchell, assistant director for the Ontario Milk Marketing Board, who comments on the ice cream and yoghurt situation:

> There is nothing fair about the U.S. move and the Canadian government has taken a strong stand against it.

Those are entirely different comments from the ones we have heard from the opposition critics today. It is clear that the government is very much in support of organized marketing in this country where it has become so much a part of the Canadian industry.

Today in the House the Minister for International Trade commented on the position that was reached and

recently taken in Bangkok, again in favour of supply management in the particular sectors where it applies.

I would like to refer again to a spokesman from Australia, a person who is outside Canada, outside whatever internal arguments and discussions that may be going on here relating to various trade initiatives. The article said that the Canadian delegation found itself under some criticism when the Australian trade minister, Michael Duffy, told local journalists that Canada's insistence on maintaining protection for its dairy industry could be a problem in reaching a final consensus.

Those are hardly the words that we are hearing here today, but out of that meeting, there was an agreement. Canada did sustain its arguments and the Cairns Group goes on in their leadership in trying to bring a truce in the international trade wars. Canada has maintained its position in support of supply management.

This is the sort of leadership that this government has been maintaining over the last many months and years. It is the sort of leadership that we will continue to put forward in the future. I think the evidence that I have produced here today from independent people not involved in the political razzmatazz that goes on in this House clearly shows the support of this government.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gaby Larrivée (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak to the motion moved by the Hon. Member for Algoma, a motion that is very negative about agriculture in this country.

In his preamble, the hon. member mentioned the farmers, mostly from Quebec and Ontario, who visited Ottawa last week, but he failed to mention the reasons behind their visit. If he had bothered to listen, he would have realized that our farmers came to ask us to protect their vested interests. Although the situation is not ideal, they know perfectly well they are protected by all kinds of measures put in place by the government, and they came to see us to make sure these measures would not be jeopardized by the current negotiations.

I will try to give en overview of the situation, and I think we will see it is not as dramatic and certainly more positive than the motion presented by the hon. member for Algoma would have us believe.

It is true that Canadian agriculture and the agri-food business generally have reached a turning point in their history. We will probably have to make some bold and innovative changes to be able to respond to new needs in the industry in the 90's and the 21st century.

First of all, I think I should explain the context in which such changes are being initiated. During the past five years we went through a period that in some ways was worse than the Depression. As a result of high interest rates at the beginning of this decade and poorly designed financing programs, we had many major problems which only now are beginning to subside.

The economy does of course have an impact, but to answer the Opposition's motion condemning this government, I think we should look at things in their proper perspective. Today, we are still suffering the consequences of the lack of foresight and economic vision that was typical of the beginning of this decade.

Mr. Speaker, our colleagues opposite are trying to play their role as the Opposition in this House, but perhaps they should first examine their own consciences.

We have to go back to the 70's and the then spiralling price of land to get to the root of the financing problems that ensued. People who bought land when prices reached all-time highs put themselves in a very vulnerable situation.

We received a legacy of loans with low collaterals and hign interest rates and land values that were going down. Low prices for farm products, the result of a number of complex economic factors, have led to major arrears in debt payments by farmers, to foreclosures, bankruptcies and a crisis of confidence in the industry.

• (1720)

Obviously, the droughts we experienced and the merciless trade war between the Americans and the European Economic Community have added to the many difficulties we already had.

That being said, we are pleased to note that the number of bankruptcies has declined since 1985, from 353 to 220 in 1988. This trend has continued in the first eight months of 1989 in Canada with another 2 per cent average decrease compared to the same period in 1988. The worst is over and we are at last beginning to see signs of improvement.

Not only is farm debt going down, but so is the amount of overdue debt. Moreover, interest charges are expected to account for 13 per cent of total operating expenses in 1989, which is 19 per cent less than in 1981 and hardly more than they were in the 1970s. Although interest rates have increased over the last year, it must be borne in mind that they only add slightly less than 2 per cent to farmers' operating costs.

The average farm family income is now nearly at the same level as that of other Canadian families. Family farms are all in all in pretty good shape at the end of the 1980s. In 1987, the average Canadian farmer had an 80 per cent equity, worth a sizable $373,000, in his farm. Average income, including off-farm earnings, was around $36,000. Furthermore, new farmers are waiting to take over and young people are still going into farming.

Before overcoming these difficulties, we learned some important lessons. We must now act on the basis of past experience and we are already well on the way. We must adjust to change if we want to remain competitive in a constantly changing, increasingly global market. That is why our government has adopted long-term planning. We are now reviewing all of our agricultural policies and programs to make them more effective and to adapt them to the issues facing us.

Obviously, farm finances are a key element in building a more competitive agri-food industry and they are therefore an important part of the review. Nevertheless, farm finances must not be limited to credit issues alone. They also involve the management and financing of agricultural enterprises, which are part of the larger farm income protection system.

Given the wrong ideas concerning the vitality of this industry, it is not surprising that opinions are so divided on setting a long-term financial policy for this sector. For example, are subsidized interest rates the solution to most farmers' financial problems or on the contrary, as some groups claim, are they not rather an incentive to excessive debt?

We know that extending credit in itself is not enough. As we look to the future, our goal must be to meet financial needs as we help farmers manage risks and avoid major financial problems.

Mr. Speaker, we do not claim to have solved all problems. The situation remains difficult in some sectors, particularly grains and oil seeds, as well as pork production. Some family farms still have trouble paying off their debt.

Nevertheless, the Government has made remarkable efforts in the past five years to rectify the situation. I can assure all hon. members of this House that this government will continue to give farmers all the help required for their farms to remain profitable and prosperous, even in the context of the objectives of responsible financial management it has set itself.

Mr. Speaker, you are indicating to me that I must conclude. We must deal with all these issues and more to help farmers prepare properly for the 1990s. As you can see, the present government cannot be blamed for farmers' problems. On the contrary, we are convinced that considerable efforts have been made to correct the situation and mechanisms are in place so that we can adjust rapidly to the new challenges presented by the globalization of markets, which has already begun.

[*English*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member. If the House would allow the Chair to make a proposal for the remainder of the debate, the Chair intends to recognize the member for Okanagan—Shuswap for five minutes and then the Official Opposition would get to close the debate. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the latitude, given the limited time available for the remaining members to make some comments.

I would like to reflect upon the previous speaker's comments regarding the government initiatives in agriculture. We on this side tend to think of them as being a lack of initiatives.

Certainly this concept of trying to create a level playing field is just simply unworkable in the light of the reality of Canadian agriculture. The fact is that we suffer significant disadvantages in Canada as a result of our shorter growing season, our lower levels of production because of the economy of scale, our greater transporta-

tion costs, our higher construction costs and, of course, higher energy costs because of our competitors to the south. So it is impossible to create this level playing field as the members on the government side seem wont to do. In fact, we feel that maintaining a viable agricultural industry in Canada is going to require some considerable and continued government input.

As a matter of fact, I would remind the House that the Macdonald Commission, when it tabled its extensive report, recommended that agriculture be excluded from the free trade agreement that we have now signed and in which we are involved. Although the commission recommended against it, this government has gone into a free trade agreement in agricultural commodities and the U.S. has won major concessions such as the reduction of the powers of the Wheat Board, the removal of transportation subsidies, and the eventual phase-out of agricultural tariffs. If that is not a capitulation to U.S. demands, I do not know what is. As a result of this, the whole concept of supply management and marketing boards and the stability that those boards give the agricultural industry in Canada is in fact severely jeopardized.

As a matter of fact, Article 703 of the free trade agreement that we have now signed, talks about market access for agriculture and states that in order to facilitate trade in agricultural goods, the parties, meaning Canada and the United States, shall work together to improve access to each other's market through the elimination and reduction of import barriers. That means those kinds of price structuring systems such as the marketing boards and the supply management boards that have come to be the stability of the industry. When they are gone, it is going to be very, very difficult for agriculturalists right across Canada to compete.

When referring to the free trade agreement, the American Farm Bureau concluded that once tariffs were removed, American grains, bakery goods, poultry, eggs and milk products would gain greater access to the Canadian market and undermine the power of marketing boards. In *Western Perspectives* an article written in April of 1988, there was actually a comment by the minister, and the minister himself had identified significant losses in jobs in British Columbia agriculture as a result of the implementation of that free trade agreement, as much as admitting that agriculture is going to take it on the chin as a result of the FTA.

The Okanagan and Shuswap area in British Columbia, with an agricultural industry that is concentrated in soft fruits, becomes virtually a region of sacrifice under this free trade agreement. It is going to be very, very difficult for those farmers to compete once those tariff structures come down.

• (1730)

I have talked with farmers in the Okanagan, grape growers who over the last year have torn out their vines. I have asked them what they are going to do with their land, what they are going to plant on that land. Their response is: "I am going to try to sell the land because no matter what I plant I am not going to be able to make it. It is as simple as that."

We are talking about the demise of an industry. It is beyond me to listen to the rhetoric that this government is giving from the other side of the House on how vibrant our agricultural industry is. Good heavens, if it was so vibrant, why did we have 7,000 farmers on the front lawn of the House of Commons here last week demanding some action by this minister because of the very, very deep concern that they have about the future of the agricultural industry in Canada?

I speak for the farmers throughout the Okanagan, throughout British Columbia, but more so for the farmers from the west coast to the east coast. We have a serious problem in terms of the future of our agricultural industry in Canada. We cannot compete on the concept of a level playing field simply because of the inequities in the geographic and climatic factors that face agriculture in this land. We have to recognize that and we have to protect it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by congratulating the hon. member for Algoma and the hon. member for Lambton—Middlesex, who today presented this motion of censure in the House, a motion that reads as follows:

That this House condemn the government for its insensitivity to the tremendous difficulties being faced by Canada's farmers and other rural Canadians—

Mr. Speaker, I believe Canadian agriculture is in a precarious state. On November 21, here on Parliament Hill, we saw one of the biggest demonstrations of discontent in the agricultural sector in the past ten years. Mr. Speaker, I believe that the only farmers' protest that may have been bigger than the one on November 21 was in 1973–74, when milk producers were demanding better ways of adjusting to the new supply management system, a system that today, those same farmers want to protect.

What is behind these demonstrations? Mr. Speaker, farmers are demonstrating because they are worried about the positions that are being taken, and the ones that are not being taken, by the present government at the GATT talks now being held. As you know, GATT Article 11 is threatened by positions being taken by many countries, including the Cairns Group and the United States. These countries want to weaken or repeal altogether the GATT measures that allow us here in Canada to have supply management systems.

Mr. Speaker, in recent months we saw that the United States had every intention of preventing us, and even appealed to GATT to prevent Canada from imposing quantitative restrictions on imports of ice cream and yogurt. Ironically, Mr. Speaker, the United States, thanks to a special GATT article, is exempt from the same measures it would impose on us. In other words, the United States wants to be able to export its yogurt and ice cream to Canada, while being able to invoke measures that would prevent exports of yogurt and ice cream from Canada to the United States. Of course, Canada does not, at this very moment, intend to export yogurt and ice cream to the United States, but the fact remains that there is a double standard here.

The consultation document provided by the Minister of Agriculture has also disturbed many farmers in Glengarry—Prescott—Russell. This document challenges our transport system, marketing and many support programs in Canada's agricultural industry. In fact, we could even say that, to a certain extent, this report threatens the very existence of our supply management systems.

The case of crop advance payments is another example of the careless attitude of this Conservative government towards Canada's farming community. Crop insurance reductions are yet another example. And, finally so is farm credit. We all know that the Farm Credit Corporation's current interest rate stands at about 13 per cent, which is nearly 9 per cent over and above the inflation rate in this country. I think we can safely say it has to be the highest rate ever in the history of the FCC, if we take into account the real interest rate.

Mr. Larrivée: It peaked at over 20 per cent in the past!

Mr. Boudria: I see some members across the aisle who do not agree with me. I would urge them to take a closer look at the file and, like me, they will realize I am telling the truth.

Mr. Speaker, I have here a table released by Statistics Canada which indicates, among other things, that in 1977 the prime rate and the Consumer Price Index were 8.5 and 7.9 per cent respectively, which means that the actual loan rate was then less than 1 per cent.

Referring to 1982— I see that a member opposite is talking about 1982 when the prime rate stood at 15 per cent and the CPI at 10.8 per cent. The real rate of interest therefore was 5 per cent. Now, in the fall of 1989, the CPI is under 5 per cent and, as I pointed out earlier, the prime rate is 13.5 per cent. We can see that the real interest rate right now is very high, I would even say it is undoubtedly the highest we have had in the past 10 years, notwithstanding the fact that we are neither in an economic recession nor in particularly trying times in terms of the over-all economy. I strongly urge, therefore, the Tory Members opposite to pressure the Minister of Finance into greatly reducing this interest rate.

How time flies, Mr. Speaker! There are a great many other issues I wish I could bring to the attention of my hon. colleagues. To conclude, I should like to emphasize the fact that the Tory government, in its last budget, inflicted some severe cuts on the Canadian farm industry. Here are a few examples of these cuts: advance payments for grain and crops: $54 million; dairy product export program: $12 million; Canadian Dairy Commission: $10 million; crop insurance: $200 million; grain and flour movement: $60 million; railway track rehabilitation: $48 million; farm product loan program: $15 million. Alltogether, Mr. Speaker, $399 million were cut from the farm budget during 1989. It goes without saying that

the farmers who came to demonstrate in front of Parliament these past few days had every reason to do so. They gave us a warning. The farmers promised in front of the media and the Canadian people that if things did not change, they intended to return and that they would be 30,000, 40,000, or even 50,000 to demonstrate on Parliament Hill, and not only 7,000, 8,000 or 10,000. I know that Canadian farmers are quite able to do so. But this is not the issue. The real issue is: Should farmers have to use such methods to get their fair share of the pie? The answer is no.

• (1740)

The Tory Government opposite should know by now that the Canadian people want our farm industry to get assistance. We want to maintain our farm industry alive and healthy. A country which loses its farm industry will eventually lose control over its economy.

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, these are serious times for rural Canada and our farmers. The insensitivity of this government to the plight of the agricultural industry is unforgivable.

To listen to this government and the part-time Minister of Agriculture here tonight, you would think that nothing was done for agriculture before this government came along. You would think that there had never been co-operation between the provinces and the federal government, or our trading partners for that matter. You would think the current programs that have built an agricultural industry that is envied the world over just happened by chance, not as an answer to problems in the agricultural sector.

The programs developed in the past by a Liberal government and, yes, by the minister's predecessor, may not have been perfect. But in a country in a northern hemisphere producing 60 per cent of its food further north than in any other nation in the world, we became the envy of other nations. We have become one of the most efficient, productive, quality-conscious agriculture producers anywhere in the world. Leaders from all across the world have indicated this to us.

Now we have a Green Paper *Growing Together*. The government is saying that former policies are wrong, that the Hon. John Wise was wrong and that farm income support programs must be changed, supply management reformed and farmers, in four words in that document, "are on their own". Quite frankly we have heard throughout the agricultural community, and everyone knows, that the former Minister of Agriculture, John Wise, resigned because he knew about the policies this government was going to bring in and that they would adversely affect the farmers for whom he worked so hard.

The part-time Minister of Agriculture, without ever consulting the agricultural sector, has come out with his salvation for agriculture. The report is full of rhetorical phrases like "global trade liberalization, self-reliance and self-sufficiency". Farmers who have had time to study the document have called it patronizing and insulting. They are telling farmers that from now on they are on their own. Comforting, do you not think?

The minister is now saying that he is the Messiah, that his predecessors, farm organizations and farmers do not understand the needs of agriculture, only he does.

As loudly demonstrated last week by thousands of farmers on Parliament Hill, the agricultural sector is asking why this government is throwing Canadian agriculture to the wolves. They asked: "Why are you abandoning us?"

The minister has admitted in *Growing Together* his willingness to abandon product lines or a sector of agriculture no longer in demand in the market. What does this mean? What happens if the market for a certain product declines this year and a decision from on high is made not to encourage or support this sector?

As most people realize, you just do not turn the agricultural sector and production on and off like a tap. Once you lose production it takes time to re-establish production. It takes time to re-establish these production lines and, if you need it in the future, you lose your historical market figures and your future markets. More important, you are now dependent on someone else to produce that product. This becomes a serious problem if you depend on another country for your food production. Is this where we are heading? I say to you, this is where

we are heading under this government and its policies on agriculture and trade.

More emphasis is to be put on marketing, yet Canagrex was established precisely for this purpose. This government killed this agricultural export program. Frankly, this government and this minister simply reject any suggestions from anyone simply as a matter of course. They do not listen to or care about what Canadian farmers are saying. Instead, it pushes ahead blindly, cutting up programs that have made our industry strong and made our industry the envy of the world over.

Let us look briefly at what the government has done and what it is planning to do to our agricultural industry. The record has been a long line of broken promises. Before the election the agriculture and trade ministers indicated that the free trade agreement would not adversely affect agriculture, that by putting ice cream and yoghurt on the import control list there would not be any repercussions, the industry would be protected.

Now we see the reality. Now we are being harassed by the United States over these commodities. A GATT panel has ruled that the restrictions limiting the quantity of ice cream and yoghurt allowed into Canada do not conform with Canada's GATT obligations. Quite frankly, this minister should have known that. He should not have gone across this country and told Canadian farmers that their industry would be protected.

The tobacco industry, an industry of prime importance in my riding, has also been destroyed by this government. During the election campaign the Minister of Agriculture said that Ottawa wanted to send a strong message to the tobacco industry that it will support tobacco producers in their time of adjustment. Well, shortly after the election was over this government cut back on programs to support tobacco farmers moving into other sectors. Quite a promise. The government cut them back by $6 million.

The government continued its attack on the agricultural community through this budget. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture estimated that the budget will cost Canadian farmers $120 million more in fuel and gasoline taxes this fiscal year. Some farm organizations estimate the budget will cost an individual farmer up to $2,000. Even the government's own officials have said that each farmer will be paying between $700 and $1,000 more. No other sector was so hard hit in this budget, no other sector was asked to give up so much.

Cutting the interest free payments in the Advance Payments for Crops Act will cost farmers an extra $27 million. In relative terms of the whole over-all budget this is not a great amount, a small amount for the value it was worth to Canadian farmers to allow a Canadian commodity group to market their products in such a way as to get a fair return for their work.

The government will also be cutting back $200 million in the crop insurance program, saying it is rebalancing the cost. Producers suggested a one-third tripartite funding proposal which was rejected. Without an equitable funding mechanism such as this, crop insurance premium costs will remain too expensive for many growers, especially in the poorer provinces, meaning a continuation of low participation percentages among producers of many farm commodities. Without a high participation percentage the economic and political need for *ad hoc* disaster relief programs will continue just as it has in the past.

• (1750)

The dairy industry was attacked once more. The budget eliminated $7 million from the special dairy export program and $7 million is to be cut for the Canadian Dairy Commission.

Agriculture is also unfairly treated by the GST. The Minister of Finance's technical paper on the new federal sales tax says sales of farmland will generally be subject to the normal GST rules. Sales or leases of farmland will be taxable. In other words, if one farmer sells a quarter section to another, it will be subject to the 9 per cent tax. Apparently, even land leased by a son from his father will be taxed. That is criminal.

I will conclude by saying that this government's programs with regard to agriculture, its promises during the election campaign to protect agriculture from the free trade agreement and from American harassment, and its budget cuts have all been devastating to our agricultural sector and our rural communities throughout Canada.

This side of the House will not stand for this. Let me make myself clear that in the next election the Canadian people will tell this government that they reject its agricultural policies and that there will not be one single

Conservative member from rural Canada on that side of the House.

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We agreed earlier that the last half hour would be given to the Official Opposition. I realize the parliamentary secretary was not here at the time, so I might suggest, with the co-operation of the hon. member from Winnipeg North Centre, that he leave a few minutes before six o'clock to the hon. parliamentary secretary. Would that be agreeable?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member from Winnipeg North Centre on debate.

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I would like to use this opportunity in addressing the House to again raise questions about the future of agriculture and the future of farming in western Canada.

First of all, I would like to thank my own party, and particularly the speaker before me, for helping Parliament realize the importance of this issue. As many of the members here today on the last day of this short week have listened, they have come to understand that the reality is that Canadians are gradually beginning to realize just how fragile the agriculture economy is.

I would like to use this occasion to put what is going on in western Canada in some political and historical context. One of the reasons why western Canada has been known as the country of political protest is that one political party after another has failed to respond to the needs of western Canadian farmers. The rise of the CCF and the rise of the Social Credit Party can both be attributed in part to the failure of the central government to respond to the needs of western Canadians.

Perhaps one of the most dramatic changes in western Canadian history was the rise of the Conservatives under John Diefenbaker. He symbolized the need of western Canadians to have a greater say in the government. That tradition has been going on since the late 1950s and in fact helped propel the current government into power.

What you see taking place in western Canada right now, gradually, but nevertheless in a very real form, is the rise of the Reform Party. Just as before, people have to consider what the state is right now of the western Canadian farmer that contributes to the rise of yet another party in western Canada. The reality is the failure of the central government, the failure of Ottawa, to respond to the needs of the western farmer.

This is a particularly bitter experience for western Canadian farmers because they thought they finally had a group of people who understood their needs. Instead, what they have right now is a minister who earlier this afternoon stood up and defended the fact that they had not been able to do anything for the farmer, saying: "What else can you expect? It is so expensive. There are too many international rules. There is a regime out there that we are not able to compete with". He is not able to say anything positive. He is only able to say: "We have done everything we can".

Well, that is not acceptable for the western Canadian farmer because we are putting at risk people who have staked their whole lives, their careers, their families, their communities on the success of their annual operations. We cannot stand by and simply say: "Well, we tried hard, but there is nothing we can do about it".

Our party, to its credit, has continually asked the House to increase activities on behalf of the Canadian farmer, particularly the western Canadian farmer. We have made proposals on financing farms, we have made proposals on GATT, we have made proposals under the free trade agreement. We have been the party of ideas. We have been the party that—

Mr. Cardiff: Oh come on.

Mr. Walker: You do not want to recognize it, because you had to listen to your minister and you are embarrassed. I do not blame you. Nevertheless, the reality is the Canadian farmer is not being served by this government.

In rural Canada right now there is an added complexity on which this government is very silent, and that is the future of the very communities that are there to serve the farmer. Communities as big as Winnipeg or as tiny as Carmen or some other small communities in the Interlake area of Manitoba are all at risk, in part because of the failure of the family farm to be maintained and to be

assisted by the federal government whether in marketing, finance, research or whatever.

This reality causes a tremendous anxiety among young people. At one time we used to boast that our biggest export was grain. Right now, as members on this side realize, the biggest export out of western Canada is young people. In fact, the Saskatchewan government has a clock ticking which shows how many people leave every hour. You can imagine what it does to a province to talk not about how it is contributing to the Gross National Product every hour but how it is losing people by the hour.

Similarly in Winnipeg our population has changed very significantly in the last 15 years because people do not see a future there, in part because of the decline of the agricultural sector.

Several people have come forward and asked the government to respond to what they call this frontier cancer; several associations and several small towns. It is interesting to note that even though the Minister of Agriculture stands up and talks about his own department, he never really addresses the question of what they are doing in the job creation branch of the Department of Employment.

What are they doing in the department of the Secretary of State to help small associations? What are they doing across the board to make sure that people realize that there is a life for them in small towns in Canada; that there is a communication system for them; that the road system, through federal-provincial agreements, will be maintained; that their education system will be maintained; that there is distance education for example? All these things are lacking in the approach of the federal government.

I suppose that one could argue that the Minister of Agriculture does not have the strength, as Deputy Prime Minister, to convince his colleagues, but I think there are other ministers who from time to time come out of the west who visit these communities and they should be able to reflect the interests of westerners in the national process.

I think that perhaps Parliament should take the opportunity to take a non-partisan approach to the problems of western farmers, that we should not be satisfied with Opposition Day debates, with unresponsive legislation, with a committee system that does not respond to their needs and international negotiating teams that do not quite understand what is going on in western Canada.

I think this is an opportunity for us to come together in an all-party sense, to join in and support resolutions such as this which, for once, says: "All right, we are making mistakes, we aren't doing enough, we've got to show some symbolic support".

Too often the western Canadian farmer picks up a newspaper and finds out the opposition is howling and the government is unresponsive. They become so cynical about this process that they turn around and go for yet another political party because they think that Parliament, as it is now structured, cannot respond. Why do you think that the concept of an elected Senate is so popular in the west? They want an elected Senate because they do not feel that the House of Commons can respond to them.

We are a land of producers, not just of people, and the Canadian system punishes producers because they do not have the support in the House of Commons. It is time that those people in the more populous areas turn to the west and understand, as consumers, that it is to the interest of everyone in this country to ensure the success of the western Canadian farmer. We cannot turn around and say that that is enough.

In keeping with the good will of the House I will do as you asked and stop early to allow the opposition to say a few words. I am sure we will hear everything they have to say in the next 30 seconds.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am sure the House would agree to give two or three minutes to the hon. member.

Mr. Murray Cardiff (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, to the last speaker, we are the government, that is the opposition.

I am prompted to rise by the remarks of the hon. member from Haldimand—Norfolk. Every time he rises in this House he condemns our federal Minister of Agriculture, a man who has devoted most of his time to that portfolio. If he had been in the House earlier today and listened to what that hon. gentleman had said—

Mr. Speller: I was in the House.

Mr. Cardiff: You should have listened when you were sitting there. Then you would know what this party and this government has done for agriculture in this country. Take heart and listen to it because it is something that is very, very good for all of us.

You talk about our Green Paper. What are we doing? Almost every day there are articles in the newspapers. Here is one which states: "Fed report welcome". You condemn that action as well.

There is another which states: "Canadian chicken and egg spokesmen are upbeat about Agriculture Minister Don Mazankowski's report on the future of agriculture".

"I find the paper to be extremely encouraging," said Ontario Chicken Board general manager Bill Doyle.

"You can agree with the basic thrust," said Canadian Egg Marketing Agency general manager Gerry Gartner.

I have all kinds of other ones in here.

Mr. Walker: Come on.

Mr. Cardiff: Okay, listen. I listened to you, you can listen to me.

Mr. Walker: I made sense.

Mr. Cardiff: This is from *The Ottawa Citizen*:

> Canadian producers would be wise to fret less about GATT and heed the wise advice of Agriculture Minister Don Mazankowski. Marketing boards should worry less about their own quotas and costs, he said, and more about their customers.

Another article in the paper quotes Roger Cram, general manager of the Canadian Chicken Marketing Agency in Ottawa. He said: "We reiterate our support for Mr. Mazankowski's initiative and will actively co-operate in any discussion that will lead—"

Mr. Walker: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

With good will we offered the parliamentary secretary an opportunity to speak, and I think it would be fair for him to make his comments. However, if we need press clippings we can send for them in the mail. If he has one very final and quick remark we would be happy to hear from him.

Mr. Cardiff: In any event, we have talked about consultation. This minister has provided consultation with commodity groups and the provincial ministers of agriculture from across this country.

There is a policy conference to be held December 11 and 12, and the hon. member is invited to take part. Rather than sit back and complain and criticize, why not take part and grow together? The minister has offered an invitation to the people of this country to take part in forming the direction and policies of agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, I see that it is six o'clock. Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It being 6 p.m., it is my duty to advise the House that, pursuant to Standing Order 81(17), the proceedings on this opposition motion have expired.

[*English*]

Pursuant to Order made Tuesday, November 7, 1989, this House stands adjourned until Monday, December 4, at 11 o'clock.

The House adjourned at 6.02 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, December 4, 1989

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

[*English*]

PRIVILEGE

GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a question of privilege to bring to the Speaker's attention a matter which I consider to be a serious contempt of Parliament. On Thursday last, November 30, the Governor in Council appointed John Bassett as the new chairman of the Security Intelligence Review Committee and also appointed Stewart McInnes as a member of that committee. In making those two appointments, the government failed to comply with a direct command of Parliament, in contempt of the authority of Parliament.

Section 34(1) of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act provides as follows:

> There is hereby established a committee, to be known as the Security Intelligence Review Committee, consisting of a Chairman and not less than two and not more than four other members, all of whom shall be appointed by the Governor in Council from among members of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada who are not members of the Senate or the House of Commons, after consultation by the Prime Minister of Canada with the Leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons and the leader in the House of Commons of each party having at least twelve members in that House.

There was no consultation with the then Leader of the New Democratic Party, the member for Oshawa, and he was of course leader in the House of Commons of a party having at least 12 members in that House. The appointment, I submit was in direct contravention of Section 34 on the facts and evidence I have, a summary of which I will submit to you.

The only communication was a letter from the Prime Minister to the hon. member for Oshawa dated November 28, 1989. I will read the full letter because it will not take very long and I want to make sure that it is fully in the record. It reads:

> Dear Ed,
>
> I am writing concerning the composition of the Security Intelligence Review Committee, whose members' terms expire on November 29, 1989. As you know, section 34(1) of the *Act* provides that SIRC members shall be appointed by the Governor in Council "after consultation by the Prime Minister of Canada with the Leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons of each party having at least twelve seats in that House".
>
> The current Chairman of the Committee, the Honourable Ronald Atkey, has indicated that he wishes to leave the Committee at the end of the current term. I would propose, therefore, to recommend the appointment of Mr. John White Hughes Bassett, Q.C. as Chairman. He is an outstanding Canadian citizen with distinguished military service and a long career of public service to Canada. I would also propose to recommend the Honourable Stewart D. McInnes as member, replacing the Honourable Frank McGee, who is also retiring. Both Messrs. Bassett and McInnis would be appointed for a three–year term. I would propose to recommend the reappointment of existing members, the Honourable Jean–Jacques Blais, the Honourable Saul Cherniack and the Honourable Paule Gauthier, each for a further term of two years.

And I underline the following, Mr. Speaker:

> I would like to know your views on these proposed appointments as I would propose to announce them shortly.
>
> Yours sincerely,
> Brian

There was no other communication with Mr. Broadbent's office other than the delivery of this letter to his office at 3.15 in the afternoon of Tuesday, November 28. Of course, as was well known to the government and to the Prime Minister's office, he had left for Winnipeg for the NDP convention. The timing of the debate on Bill C–43 was set with that in mind. The government and, as I say, the Prime Minister's Office were well aware of that.

The letter states at the end, and I repeat:

> I would like to know your views on these proposed appointments as I would propose to announce them shortly.

There was no deadline put for a reply and quite properly the office of the member for Oshawa assumed that this would be dealt with on his return from Winnipeg. There was no effort made by the Prime Minister's Office to contact Mr. Broadbent by phone, no effort made to contact Mr. Broadbent in Winnipeg, and certainly there were no views provided by Mr. Broadbent,

the member for Oshawa, in respect of the appointment before the appointment was made.

• (1110)

Mr. Speaker: I think the hon. member has put the situation very clearly. I also want to thank the hon. member for the fact that he has stuck strictly to the facts which are necessary for me to consider the matter on the basis of the letter and the alleged lack of response.

The hon. member has pointed out that this would seem to be, at least on the surface, inconsistent with the requirement of the act itself. It is a matter I will look at. I have heard the hon. member's point. It has been put very succinctly and I appreciate him for it. Does the hon. member have something further?

Mr. Brewin: If I may, very succinctly, Mr. Speaker, I want to emphasize the relationship of Section 34 to Parliament. This is not a mere breach of the act.

The CSIS Act provided Section 34 in order that Parliament indirectly, through the leaders, could be consulted in this very sensitive appointment. I would add this element. This is not a mere breach of a section of the act by the government that may happen from time to time, but given the structure of SIRC established to oversee CSIS, established by Parliament after consultation with the committees, I say there is a very special relationship, and I would like the Speaker to take that into account.

Mr. Speaker: I can assure the hon. member that the Speaker is very aware of the section, having had a lot to do with the section being there some years ago.

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I have just a few remarks, if I may, to assist Your Honour in coming to a decision as to whether or not there has been a prima facie breach of privilege.

The first submission I would have is that a privilege has to be pertinent to a particular member and surely, if there is any privilege here, it would be the hon. member for Oshawa who would be the aggrieved member. One cannot have a New Democratic Party or an Official Opposition privilege. One can only have a privilege pertinent to a particular member's privileges. Members can be aggrieved, I admit, in certain circumstances. I have not seen too many but have had lots of suggestions. Surely it has to be the hon. member for Oshawa who raises this point of privilege, if in fact there is one.

Second, the question here is: Was there any consultation? The letter is very clear. It was sent to the Leader of the New Democratic Party. A similar letter was sent to the Leader of the Liberal Party. I have a copy of that, too. The hon. member has read into the record parts of the letter, but the hon. member does not seem to place any emphasis on the fact that it states: "I would like to know your views on these proposed appointments as I would propose to announce them shortly". I point out that this was set up to include members from all political parties in order that there would be a balance there. There is no question that that has been met because there are members from other parties there. My hon. friend seems to claim that there was no consultation.

I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that there is no question of privilege pertinent to the hon. member who has raised it because it does not contemplate consulting with the hon. member for Victoria. It contemplates consulting with the leader of his party. That is the person who would have a privilege if in fact there was one.

I suggest that the Prime Minister has made it very clear when he states: "I would like to know your views on these proposed appointments as I would propose to announce them shortly". I also would suggest that theirs is the only party that feels aggrieved by this. I do not know if the Official Opposition is going to become engaged in this debate or not. We have the proof that the letter was received in Mr. Broadbent's office at 3.15 on the day it was sent. I do not know whether my hon. friend is claiming that Mr. Broadbent did not try to get back to the Prime Minister or not, but clearly the Prime Minister asked for comments, did not get any, and made the announcement.

I suggest that the government and the Prime Minister especially have complied with the law. I suggest if my friend has any difficulty with it he can claim that the appointment is invalid because it does not meet the law,

but he would have to argue that in another court or in another forum.

I suggest that there is absolutely no breach of the hon. member's privileges. I suggest that the government has acted in accordance with the act and that Your Honour should find there is no prima facie case of privilege.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding what the Minister of Justice has just said, I think there is in this case a breach of privilege and the hon. member for Victoria was quite correct in raising it.

I want to say at the outset that I do not think it is our place as members of this House, on this question of privilege, to comment on the appointment *per se*. It is to comment on whether or not the process has been followed as required by the act. I want to make clear that my comments are directed only to that aim.

The hon. member for Victoria quoted quite correctly Section 34 of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act. The act clearly requires that there be consultation with the Leader of the Opposition.

I want to say that the Minister of Justice has referred to the letter that was sent by the Prime Minister to the Leader of the Opposition. I understand he will now table those letters since he quoted from one of them in the course of his remarks. The letter that was sent to the Leader of the Opposition, although I do not have a copy, I understand was delivered at 3.30 on November 28 to his office and the appointment was made on November 30.

I was not in the House when this act was passed. However, a letter notifying of an intended appointment less than 48 hours before it is made can hardly be termed in my view consultation. It is certainly not within the spirit of the act, and I think the Minister of Justice is well aware of that. He is arguing from a position of weakness in this case trying to defend what in my view is the indefensible.

I could perhaps refer him to another act. There are two other instances of this which, in light of the minister's comments, I think I should draw to the attention of the House. On April 18 of this year in Question Period, in response to a question posed by me, the Deputy Prime Minister discussing the appointment of a commission to look into the electoral law gave the following answer. He said:

> Mr. Speaker, indeed, we have been waiting for the report of the Chief Electoral Officer to look at some of the recommendations that he has brought forth. I have discussed some of the proposed terms of reference with him. We are in the process of defining those terms of reference, and I would hope that we will be in a position to discuss this with members opposite in the very near future.

That was the answer he gave. We heard the week before last that a commission had been appointed by the government to look into the electoral laws of Canada. There was no consultation with us as to the terms of reference or as to the members of the commission. The Leader of the Opposition was not consulted. I understand the Leader of the New Democratic Party was not consulted. Our deputy leader was not consulted, and I as electoral critic on our side was not consulted.

This is a strange way to indicate in an answer that you are going to have discussions. But there were in fact no such discussions in spite of repeated requests on my part by letter for information.

In another act, the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development Act, Section 7(1) provides for a board of directors of the centre, consisting of a chairman of the board, the president of the centre, and 11 other directors.

Subsection 7(2) provides that all appointments made pursuant to this section shall be made after consultation by the minister with the Leader of the Opposition and with the leader of every other recognized party in the House of Commons.

I know from rumours in the press that there may soon be an appointment of a board and a chairman to this body. Again, there has been no consultation to date with the Leader of the Opposition. There may have been with the other party; I do not know, but there has not been any with the Leader of the Opposition.

Again I hope that when consultation is undertaken, it is not this 48-hour notice by letter kind of thing. I would have expected the Prime Minister to place a telephone call to the Leader of the Opposition and to say: "I would like to discuss the matter".

Mr. McDermid: Couldn't find him.

Mr. Milliken: The Leader of the Opposition was here last week. It is a well-known fact. The hon. Minister of State for Privatization is well aware of that fact. He was here in the House asking questions last week. A call could easily have been made and some discussion carried on. With respect, I think that is what is meant by consultation. If the Prime Minister chooses to do his consultation by letter, he has to give a reasonable time. In my submission 48 hours is totally unreasonable.

• (1120)

The question of whether or not the breach of privilege has been raised by the appropriate member, I submit, is not an argument that is relevant to the issue. Whether I raise it on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition, or the hon. member for Victoria raises it on behalf of the Leader of the New Democratic Party, is beside the point.

The fact is that breaches have occurred of the privileges of certain members of this House and, because the consultation was not there, the privileges of all members have been breached by this government and I suggest that Your Honour should so rule.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maurice Tremblay (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, when I heard the Hon. Member for Victoria and the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands who rose on a question of privilege, I thought it was rather odd. Unfortunately, I had no advance notice, so that I do not have the act with me. I understand that the act obliges the Prime Minister to consult, and according to the documents that were read and tabled, the Prime Minister has duly consulted.

I realize that all this was happening on what may seem relatively short notice. However, I still think it is distinctly odd that the two Members in question rose on behalf of their respective leaders, since although there is no evidence to that effect, the letters may have, and probably did follow conversations among the party leaders. I think if we could be logical and stop acting like outraged maiden aunts, it is quite likely that the former leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent) discussed this appointment when he himself was discussing his future with the Prime Minister.

An Hon. Member: He did not!

Mr. Tremblay (Lotbinière): Perhaps we can stop acting like those maiden aunts and consider that not only the letter but probably also the intent of the act was observed, unless we hear otherwise from the persons directly concerned.

On this point, I agree wholeheartedly with the Minister of Justice. If there is a question of privilege, it should be raised by the leaders of the two opposition parties, who should also let us know whether these letters came after previous private conversations.

[*English*]

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I want to deal with the point made by the government House leader that a question of privilege was not raised by the member of the House whose privileges have allegedly been offended.

I want to suggest that it is not necessary for a question of privilege to be raised by someone who feels personally harmed by the alleged breach of privilege. After all, citation 16 of Beauchesne's states:

> Parliamentary privilege is the sum of the peculiar rights enjoyed by each House collectively as a constituent part of the High Court of Parliament, and by Members of each House individually, without which they could not discharge their functions and which exceed those possessed by other bodies or individuals.

It quite often happens that members raise questions of privilege and the argument is accepted without any suggestion being made that the person raising the point of privilege has in some way been offended or harmed by the alleged breach.

An example I want to bring forward is the question of privilege raised by the Leader of the Official Opposition several months ago regarding the advertisements placed in newspapers by the government which conveyed the idea that this House had made a decision on the proposed goods and services tax when nothing of the sort had taken place.

Yes, there are occasions when a question of privilege is raised because of something that has happened or not happened with respect to the member of Parliament raising the point. In general I submit that this does not have to be done and, if the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Victoria is otherwise valid, the fact

that he raised it rather than the member for Oshawa does not undermine his case at all.

Second, I want to say something about the point raised by the Conservative member who has just spoken. As far as I am aware, there were no conversations between the Leader of the Opposition and the Prime Minister with respect to the appointments of members of the Security and Intelligence Review Committee. If he knows differently I would like him to tell the House, but I think that I am in a better position to inform the House on this score than the hon. member.

Where I see a problem is with the form of "consultation" in that the letter in question did not state clearly by which point in time a response had to be given. The letter, as I understand it, spoke only of getting back to the Prime Minister "shortly".

What is that supposed to mean? Is it supposed to mean a response in 24 hours, 48 hours, a week, two weeks, 10 minutes? What is it supposed to mean?

If the Prime Minister felt that he had to get a response within a certain point in time and if the Prime Minister intended to have meaningful consultation, that should have been clearly stated in the letter.

The heckling from the government side shows that they obviously think they have a weak case. They would not be prattling in this way if they thought they had a sound case. They obviously feel very ill at ease. I think they realize that the problem here is the way the government is ignoring not just the words but the spirit or intention of the law calling for consultation.

It may be that in a superficial technical way the sending of the letter with respect to the seeking of views on the appointment of the Security and Intelligence Review Committee may deal with or respond to what the act says.

I think we also have to look at its spirit, its intention. If the government really wanted to obey the law, it would have sent its letter in time to allow sufficient checking, reflection, and conversation, if necessary.

Furthermore, with respect to another aspect of this raised by the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, a letter from the Prime Minister inviting views on the appointment to the new International Human Rights Institute should have gone out well before now. This has not been done. The government House leader has been unable to give an explanation for this.

Mr. Lewis: I was not asked.

Mr. Speaker: I think that it is appropriate to confine the remarks to the point which the hon. member for Victoria has raised. It is a specific point. It is very clear. There may be other matters of discussion between the leader of the Official Opposition and the Minister of Justice, but that surely should be brought up at another time in another context.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): I want to conclude my remarks by making a correction in one thing I just said.

I think it is true that the hon. government House leader did not have a chance to respond to the point I was repeating that had been raised originally by the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, and to be fair I have to recognize that.

I want to sum up and conclude by saying that it is not necessary in this case for the point to be raised by the former Leader of the New Democratic Party. It is sufficient that it be raised in the way it was done by the member for Victoria.

Second, the real concern which underlies and supports the merits of the question of privilege is the lack of adherence not just to the superficial wording but to the spirit and intent of the legislation in question calling for consultation.

Mr. Speaker: Does the hon. Minister of Justice have any further remarks?

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, during the commentary earlier it was suggested that I table a copy of the letter from the Prime Minister to the Leader of the New Democratic Party, the letter in which it was stated that "I would like to know your views on these proposed appointments as I would propose to announce them shortly". I am naturally prepared to table a copy of that letter.

For the life of me, Mr. Speaker, I cannot understand why, if the Leader of the New Democratic Party had any views, he did not get back to the Prime Minister and still has not got back to him.

Mr. Milliken: Because he was in Winnipeg.

Mr. Lewis: I appreciate that he was in Winnipeg.

• (1130)

I would like very much when you render your judgment on this matter if you would spell out for the House whether or not this question of privilege should in fact have been raised by the hon. member for Oshawa. While I do not like to do it when he is not here, he is the hon. member who did not reply to the Prime Minister's letter.

Mr. Speaker: I will hear the hon. member for Victoria quickly because I have the point.

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to make two quick points. First, on the issue of whether I would be entitled to raise this, the government house leader has addressed that point as if he were dealing with the matter of a breach of the privileges of the member from Oshawa.

It is not a question of a breach of the particular privileges of the member for Oshawa that has been raised, but rather a question of contempt of Parliament and of the authority of Parliament. I submit that any member of Parliament can raise that question.

Second, and more particularly, the extent to which the member for Oshawa was given a particular role, he was given it in his capacity as leader in the House of Commons of our party. I am the spokesperson for our party on the issue of CSIS and in that capacity I raise it.

Third, on the question of conversations, I wish to repeat that the hon. member for Oshawa said to me personally that he received no personal communication, did not discuss this matter with the Prime Minister or anyone from his office. They did not have his views on the issue of Mr. Bassett. He was not aware that the Prime Minister had that in mind.

I would assume that the member for Lotbinière as well as the government House leader would accept my assurances on that point, at least for purposes of making a decision on the prima facie case. You do not have to make a final finding of fact on that but you have my assurances and the government has not offered any challenge to my statement in that respect. There is no evidence raised by the government House leader that there were in fact any consultations or communication other than the deliverance of a letter to his office after he left for Winnipeg and having heard nothing further from the government.

Mr. Speaker: I think I have heard sufficient. The hon. member for Kamloops is rising; he may have something additional that I should hear.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I do have a very short intervention. We want to get on to the business of the House but this, of course, is an important matter.

As the other interveners have indicated, consultation is required on the legislation. I thought it would be useful just to remind ourselves what consultation means. Referring to the *Collins' English Dictionary*, it defines "consultation" as a process where you confer with someone. "Confer" means that you must hold or take part in a conference together.

Obviously, as has been made clear, the Leader of the New Democratic Party at that time did not enter into consultation. He did not reply. In other words, what the Prime Minister did was notify the Leader of the New Democratic Party of his intentions, which is fine, and as the legislation is very explicit, it would require then a dialogue between two people.

This dialogue has not taken place and as the hon. members speaking before me made aptly clear, 48 hours is hardly an adequate time to arrange an interchange on such an important matter. I simply want to make that intervention.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Tremblay (Lotbinière): Very briefly, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much. I do not challenge the right of the hon. member for Victoria to raise a question of privilege, and I think the Leader of the Official Opposition was absolutely right. But as Speaker of this august assembly, you have a duty to consider the letter, not the intent of the law, unless the letter is not clear. In this case, the letter of the law is very clear. The documents tabled raise the question whether there was any consultation. Perhaps there was not enough time to your taste, but the fact is that the letter of the law was respected.

If the intent of the law was not respected, in that case Mr. Speaker, we must hear it from those directly concerned and not from persons speaking on their behalf. As for the letter of the law, documents were tabled to the effect that Section 34 of the act was observed. That's it. Oh, come on!

Mr. Speaker: Again, I wish to thank the Hon. Member for Lotbinière for his comments.

[*English*]

I have listened carefully to the discussions and I will consider the matter. I want to indicate that I see the distinction between privilege and contempt of the House and I will also accept the request of the hon. Minister of Justice to try to define if I can more particularly the question of what member, under certain circumstances, can raise a question of privilege.

I will consider the point and I shall return to the House. Again, in summary, this discussion has come about because the Prime Minister apparently sent letters to both the Leader of the Official Opposition and the then Leader of the New Democratic Party asking for views. For whatever reason, no views were sent back and the appointment was made several days later. That is the fact pattern. There is a statute that requires consultation. There has been some argument about what that means, but that is the issue I must decide.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's responses to several petitions.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*[

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DUTY REMISSION ORDERS

PRESENTATION OF REPORT

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Privatization and Regulatory Affairs)): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table copies, in both official languages, of the report to Parliament on new duty remission orders approved in the six months ending September 30, 1989.

[*Translation*]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

REPORT OF 22ND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CANADA–FRANCE INTERPARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

Mr. Jean-Guy Guilbault (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34, I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the 22nd annual meeting of the Canada–France Interparliamentary Association, which was held from October 21 to 29, 1989 in Paris and the Languedoc—Roussillon region.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

* * *

[*English*]

PETITIONS

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to present a petition pursuant to Standing Order 36 and certified correct by the Clerk of Petitions from a number of petitioners from Kamloops, British Columbia. These petitioners point out a whole variety of reasons why they are opposed to the government's goods and services tax and are calling upon the Parliament of Canada to encourage the government to not proceed with the goods and services tax but in fact go back to the drawing board and attempt an effort at real tax reform.

VIA RAIL

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege today to present petitions on behalf of Canadian citizens who are very concerned about the government proceeding with the cutting of VIA Rail services in this country. The constituents in my riding of Northumberland are particularly concerned because there are 400 to 500 trips out of my riding every day, mainly into Toronto, and on January 16 they will be left with only one possible trip into Toronto of a duration of four hours, which is totally inadequate for any of their purposes for going to Toronto.

They petition and ask this government to put a moratorium on the proposed cuts to VIA Rail.

• (1140)

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of a number of producers from Saskatchewan. These are farmers from Melville, Waldron, Yorkton, Neudorf, Kamsack, the town of Grayson, Langenburg, Melville, Kenora, Preeceville, Grayson, Unity Norquay, Duff and Esterhazy. These farmers are concerned about the fact that this government has removed oats from the Canadian Wheat Board and they call upon this government to amend the Wheat Board Act to give oats and barley the same protection as wheat presently has under the Wheat Board so that this government cannot again unilaterally remove oats and further deteriorate the effectiveness of the Canadian Wheat Board.

[*Translation*]

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, it is my duty today to present another petition on the goods and services tax proposed by this government.

Mr. Speaker, I remind the House that hundreds and thousands of people, in my riding and elsewhere, have signed these petitions to tell this government in no uncertain terms that they object to this unusual, exceptional form of taxation, which will hit Canadians with a new 9 per cent tax on all goods and services. These people maintain that this tax will be hidden in the selling price; that it will apply to practically everything Canadians buy; that imposing this new tax across the board on goods and services will cause serious, unfair hardships for Canadians on low and moderate incomes; that this tax will be a costly burden for small businesses. All these Canadians strongly oppose this new goods and services tax, which they say is an unprecedented assault on Canadians' pocketbooks and will not only force them to pay higher taxes but will bring them higher inflation, interest rates and unemployment.

Mr. Speaker, for these reasons, these people humbly ask Parliament to reject this new tax on goods and services.

[*English*]

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour and duty on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan, from my home community of Domremy and surrounding communities as well as other places in Saskatchewan to call upon the government to reject the current proposal for a goods and services tax, to reform the tax system so that it is an effective tax and does not penalize the ordinary Canadian.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to Standing Order 36 to present a petition to this House from hundreds of people from southwestern Ontario who are calling on this government to rescind its action on cut-backs to VIA. They see it as an essential and necessary service, important to to this country and especially to southwestern Ontario.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present another petition on behalf of hundreds of people from southwestern Ontario asking this government to scuttle its proposed goods and services tax. As they describe it, it surely will be a gouging and screwing tax.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to Standing Order 36 to present a petition duly complete and attested to as to content and form. The petition is another expression of alarm at this government's attempt to close rural Canada by closing down a good part of VIA Rail service. The petition comes from citizens in and around the London part of the province.

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, I too have a petition signed by residents of Ontario who call upon Parliament to urge the Government of Canada not to cancel in whole or in part rail passenger services in Canada. They argue that the elimination of these routes will cost thousands of jobs in Canada. They argue that the rail mode is the safest and most environmentally friendly mode of travel and that rural communities which exclusively rely on rail passenger service will be denied adequate transportation facilities.

[*Translation*]

This petition is certified correct as to form and content in accordance with Standing Order 36.

[*English*]

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, I have a second petition signed by Canadians who are objecting to the government's 9 per cent GST. The Council of Canadians are picketing the constituency office of the Minister of Finance and they, together with other Canadians, have signed this petition asking this Parliament to urge the government to scrap the GST.

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, I, too, stand here this morning to present petitions. The first petition is with regard to the goods and services tax and it is signed by members of the Ottawa and Nepean communities. Mostly it is signed by members beyond my community and riding: Manotick, Kars, North Gower, Richmond and Kemptville. These people are from the small towns and rural part of Canada. They are most concerned about the goods and services tax that is going to affect them very very seriously on just about everything that they will be buying.

They humbly pray and call upon Parliament to rescind the proposal to implement this goods and services tax in Canada.

VIA RAIL

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, I have petitions signed by 95 petitioners from the city of London, Ontario. These petitioners are most concerned that the Government of Canada has decided to eliminate many of the VIA Rail routes. Rail service does not have disproportionate subsidies in comparison to highway and airport infrastructure subsidies. Yet this appears to be the reason that the Government of Canada wishes to cut back on rail service.

These petitioners also humbly pray and call upon Parliament not to cancel in full or in part the rail services in Canada.

[*Translation*]

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour and the privilege of presenting a petition on behalf of a number of citizens in Carleton—Gloucester and the province of Ontario.

The petition is against the proposed goods and services tax. Your petitioners are radically opposed to the proposed tax on consumption. They are willing to pay their fair share of income tax but, Mr. Speaker, I believe this tax will be harmful to consumption and Canadian productivity.

[*English*]

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Ross Belsher (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, it is indeed my pleasure and privilege to present on behalf of petitioners from the Vernon and Armstrong area of British Columbia a petition in which they humbly pray and call upon Parliament to enact legislation which will protect the life of the pre-born child without distinction as to the stage of development.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by many constituents from the Pembroke, Chalk River and Petawawa area who oppose the 9 per cent goods and services tax. They look at the #31 increases in taxes that have already taken place under this government and they are saying that enough is enough.

Mr. Speaker, I also have another one here signed by many people from places like Eganville, Kormak, Palmer Rapids, Renfrew, Cobden and Golden Lake. You would have no trouble getting these petitions out, Mr. Speaker, because requests are coming into my office for them regularly every day. There is a great demand for them because the people of Canada on these petitions wish to express their feelings to the Government of Canada that they are absolutely opposed to this 9 per cent goods and services tax. After 31 tax increases to date by this government, they are saying to this government, enough is enough. These petitions are coming from small communities and large communities alike from all over Canada. I think it is something to which the government has to pay serious attention.

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to Standing Order 36 to present a petition from 100 of my constituents from Deep Bight, North West Brook, all of the southwest Durham, Sunnyside and Goobies. These constituents are very concerned. As Newfoundlanders they have the highest rate of income tax in the country, a provincial sales tax that is now 12 per cent and they are looking at another 9 per cent on top of that. They are looking at the dubious distinction of living in the only country in the world that will have a provincial and a federal sales tax, and are looking at all the other tax increases they have had to endure during the last four-plus years.

• (1150)

I think we can all agree that they have a problem. They do humbly pray and call upon Parliament to reject this goods and services tax.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa—Centre): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 36, it is my privilege to table in the House a petition on behalf of Canadians who are vigorously opposed to the government's proposed goods and services tax, because your petitioners believe the proposed legislation will encourage inflation. It is a regressive measure, and people on middle and low incomes will be particularly affected.

[*English*]

VIA RAIL

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, I also have another petition on behalf of Canadians who are also opposed to the cuts in VIA Rail as it pertains to jobs and the effect on the environment.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition with 11 pages of names from people who live in communities like Prince Albert, Shell Brook, Weyakwin, Denare Beach, Creighton and Flin Flon, Manitoba. These people are opposed to the goods and services tax. It is described as the grab and steal tax in that part of the country. They are particularly concerned with the effects on northern communities where the GST will have an even greater impact than it does on the rest of Canada. They are calling on Parliament to reject this tax and instead to introduce a fair tax system.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I would like to present this petition on behalf of 129 constituents of Kenora—Rainy River. They ask the government to consider in further debating the abortion bill that the sanctity of human life should commence at conception. They believe that faith in our future can only be guaranteed by our willingness to respect life from the pre-born to the aged.

I present this on behalf of the people of Kenora—Rainy River to enhance the debate on this very important issue.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present pursuant to Standing Order 36 a petition from people in my riding who are opposed to the changes to the Unemployment Insurance Act which would allow the government to withdraw its contribution of some $2.9 billion to the unemployment insurance fund. Instead, they ask that the government look at the regional disparities in this country, put in place meaningful reforms and form a labour force development strategy instead of cutting programs which would not be of any benefit to the unemployed at all.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition pursuant to Standing Order 36. It is signed by residents of London, Ontario concerning an issue that just will not go away. We have heard some petitions about it today, and that is the cuts to VIA Rail.

These petitioners fervently pray and ask Parliament to ensure that it not cancel, in whole or in part, rail passenger service in Canada. Of course, this petition reflects the views, not only of the petitioners in this petition, but many hundreds of thousands of Canadians.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions on the Order Paper be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Shall all questions be allowed to stand?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CANADIAN CENTRE FOR MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Tom Hockin (for the President of the Privy Council) moved that Bill C–34, an act to establish the Canadian Centre for Management Development and to amend certain acts in consequence thereof, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

Mr. Murray Cardiff (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to introduce Bill C–34, legislation for the establishment of the Canadian Centre for Management Development.

This bill embodies those principles stated by the Prime Minister in the announcement of the centre on April 14, 1988, and reflects the government's desire to build upon the tradition of excellence in management that characterizes the Canadian public service.

The centre's mission will be to strengthen the management capacity of the public sector, particularly the senior levels, with a view to improving the quality of government and to enhancing service to the people of Canada.

In accomplishing its mission the centre will co–operate fully with Canada's best in the public, private and academic sectors with a view to complementing, not competing with existing institutions. The centre will strive to become a national centre of excellence in public sector management, teaching and research while reflecting the strong traditions of the Canadian public service.

The objects of the centre, as stated in Bill C–34, focus on these issues critical to ensuring our public sector managers have the capabilities required to manage effectively today and in the future. These objects are: encouraging pride and excellence in the management of the public service and fostering among public service managers a sense of the purposes, values and traditions of the public service; helping to ensure that managers in the public service have the analytical, creative, advisory, administrative and other managerial skills and knowledge necessary to develop policy, and respond to change and manage government programs and services efficiently and effectively.

Other objects are: attracting through its programs and studies persons of high calibre to the public service and supporting their growth and development as public service sector managers committed to the service of Canada; formulating and providing training, orientation and development programs for managers in the public sector and particularly for senior managers in the public service; studying and conducting research into the theory and practice of the public sector management; encouraging a greater awareness in Canada of issues related to public sector management and the role and functions of government; and involving a broad range of individuals and institutions in the centre's pursuit of excellence in the public administration.

The independence necessary for an institution of this kind is assured in the legislation by the establishment of the centre as a departmental corporation under the direction of a board of governors. The board will be comprised of outstanding representatives from inside and outside the public service with the Clerk of the Privy Council and the Secretary to the Cabinet as chairmen of the board.

It is envisioned that the Canadian Centre for Management Development will be a place where highly motivated senior managers will come together to create and exchange knowledge and to learn from each other from top–flight academics and from the most effective practitioners working in the public and private sectors. As befits a first–class educational institution, the management centre will have the authority to consult widely and develop programs and publish the results of its research and case development activity.

The centre's headquarters will be in the historic De La Salle Academy in downtown Ottawa with a second residential facility in Touraine, Quebec. As a truly national centre it will also offer its courses in existing federal facilities across Canada.

In the current environment of rapid technological change, globalization and fiscal restraint, it is critical that our public sector managers have the capabilities to adapt quickly to these changes while continuing to effectively manage public programs and services. The Centre for Management Development will be a key factor in ensuring that this takes place.

As many members are aware, under Order in Council and Treasury Board authorities granted in the summer of 1988, the management centre has been producing teaching cases, conducting research into important public service management issues and developing and delivering effective programming to numerous senior level groups including federal executives, Governor in Council appointees and Members of Parliament.

While the centre's activities to date have been impressive, there is a need in the longer term to enact legislation which will set out specific objectives against which the centre can be held accountable. There is a need as well for the management centre to be provided with the required intellectual independence as conferred by Bill C-34.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity to introduce legislation which will have an important impact not only on the public sector but also on the quality of service provided to the people of Canada.

• (1200)

The Canadian public service has a long and distinguished tradition of dedicated and highly qualified service. Bill C-34 reflects the government's continued recognition and support of this tradition. I am confident that all members of this House recognize the need for a skilled public service and trust, therefore, that they will be able to support this most important legislation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak to Bill C-34, an act to establish the Canadian Centre for Management Development and to amend certains acts in consequence thereof. I am particularly pleased because the proposed legislation embodies a plan that has been on my mind ever since I first entered federal politics in 1972. First I want to thank my colleague, the Hon. Member for Ottawa West for her kindness in letting me make the speech on second reading. Being the official public service critic, she would normally have made the speech today, but she felt that I would appreciate this opportunity, and I must say that I appreciate this kindness on her part.

Mr. Speaker, in 1974, two years after I was first elected as the federal member for Ottawa—Vanier, I demonstrated my interest in a national administration school. I felt there was a need, and I have been reading the speeches that I made over the years. I quote:

"— to provide the public service with a staff that on the basis of its experience, knowledge and skills is able to take on management duties after a democratic recruitment process, resulting in an harmonious marriage of knowledge and experience".

At the time, the plan was that this school or institution would also be open to university graduates who wanted a career in the public service. After many hours of reflection and after consulting the various groups concerned, including unions, private citizens and retired public servants, I made this project the subject of an initial motion under Private Members' Business, tabled in the House on May 6, 1977. On October 31 that same year, I had the privilege of introducing Bill C-304, an act to establish a National Administration School in the National Capital Region, as well as a new motion on the same subject.

In January 1981, I decided to table another motion which was debated in the House. The purpose of this motion was to consider the feasibility of evaluating public service employee training and development programs in order to prepare a comprehensive policy in this respect.

Finally, in 1987 a motion was put on the order paper in my name, followed the year after by a government bill, Bill C-46. The House will recall that Bill C-46 was considered by the House of Commons, passed and subsequently considered by the Senate on second reading. However because of the election in November 1988, the bill died on the order paper, and that is why the government is trying a second time to pass the legislation required to establish this centre.

Mr. Speaker, for me, the bill before the House today represents the culmination of many years of hard work to ensure the development and growth of a public service of which Canada can be proud. Others before me were also aware of the importance of establishing an institution

that would provide for more effective management within the federal public service.

A number of commissions have examined this question. The Gordon Commission was asked to examine the administrative structure responsible for personnel; in 1954, the Heeney Commission was appointed to examine relations between the Public Service Commission and Treasury Board. In 1962, the Glassco Commission said it had to conclude that training and development had not, in general, received anything like appropriate attention in the public service.

During the past decade, Mr. Speaker, we had the Lambert report, the Royal Commission of Inquiry on Financial Management and Accountability, and the d'Avignon Commission, a committee that examined the merit principle and its application and dealt with accountability, effectiveness and efficiency in the federal public service.

Mr. Speaker, Bill C–34, an Act to establish the Canadian Centre for Management Development and to amend certain acts in consequence thereof, is merely a logical step, in line with previous attempts to improve the federal public service. The pressures on public servants are reflected in budget cut–backs, contracting out and reductions in government personnel, all of which have made it essential to improve management training and development and support management research and case studies.

Like the private sector, the public sector is going through rapid technological change to which it must learn to adjust.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the centre is to help federal public service managers and executives to acquire the skills they need to manage public programs effectively. Furthermore, it will expand their practical management skills and help them find solutions to current problems. We must help them develop motivation, principles, respect for tradition and a sense of responsibility. We must develop excellence by making Canadians aware of the problems of public administration and persuade various groups, including the private sector, to help improve management in the public sector.

We agree wholeheartedly with the objects of the centre which are to encourage pride and excellence in the management of the public service and to foster among public service managers a sense of the purposes, values and traditions of the public service. Mr. Speaker, these definitions are contained in Section 4 of the bill, and I would urge Hon. Members to read this section, which lists the objects of the centre. Mr. Speaker, I also agree with the centre's object to encourage managers to hone their skills and update their techniques.

I think it would be appropriate to raise some of the points discussed in the course of previous debates, and since this is the second time the House will examine the principle of the bill, I think it would be interesting for hon. members, since we do not often have a chance to read comments and suggestions made by the senators, who, as I said earlier, had an opportunity to consider Bill C–48— This means we will have an opportunity to benefit from the expertise of the other place, as we say here, in its consideration of a bill that is somewhat similar to Bill C–34.

I may add that a number of questions will be raised in committee about the new administrative structure of the centre. Mr. Speaker, there has been a rather important change, and I was advised of this change by the Deputy Prime Minister in a letter dated July 19. In the third paragraph of his letter, the Minister says the bill retains the characteristics of the previous Bill C–148 but gives the centre the status of a public institution instead of a department. Hon. members will recall that Bill C–34 did the opposite. The minister went on to say that as a public institution, the centre will be administered by a board of directors consisting of directors of private corporations, senior members of the Canadian academic community and general administrators of federal departments.

Mr. Speaker, in committee we will ask about these changes. If they were made to guarantee the institution's independence in managing the intellectual aspects of its business, I think we would like to have this confirmed by the Deputy Prime Minister when the bill is examined in committee. Otherwise, I would like to know why the structure was changed.

• (1210)

Mr. Speaker, regarding accountability to Parliament, the bill contains a proposal that says that within four months after the end of each fiscal year, the centre shall submit a report to the minister responsible and that the report shall be tabled in the House. In committee I will ask about the centre's accountability in this respect. Will

Hon. Members have a chance in committee to examine the centre's work and its administration?

Mr. Speaker, we are also concerned about the mechanisms for consultation and involvement of Canadian universities in programs and courses. As you know, for many years here in the National Capital Region and elsewhere, the Public Service of Canada has negotiated course programs with certain universities. I am thinking of specific programs at the University of Ottawa in my riding and at Carleton University in Ottawa. I think that these programs benefited public servants, and perhaps the implication for all these previous programs of co-operation between Canadian universities and federal officials should be studied in committee.

There is the whole issue of equal access to the Centre's programs for all Canadians, with special emphasis on women, native people and the handicapped to ensure that they have an equal opportunity to take these courses and obtain scholarships to pursue their education.

My friend and colleague, the hon. member for Ottawa West (Mrs. Catterall), has several questions which she will raise at the appropriate time. Mr. Speaker, we are taking this opportunity on second reading to strengthen the bill because we are convinced that the time is ripe and that the Canadian Centre for Management Development will meet Canadians' expectations by strengthening the federal government's managerial abilities. Definitely, better management will give us better performance and all Canadians will benefit from it.

[*English*]

As far back as 1974, I first proposed in a speech the establishment of a national administrative school for public servants. The Public Service of Canada has undergone tremendous change since then, and I would like to cite a few figures for the record to make the point I am about to state.

From 1965 to 1975 the number of employees in the Public Service of Canada had gone from 140,000 to 273,000, and programs had been adopted by Parliament, it is true. It is also true, Mr. Speaker, that we had gone through a social and health revolution in this country of some sort. Pensions were improved, the Canada Pension Plan came in, a whole lot of administrative challenges were to be met and the Public Service of Canada increased accordingly.

The Parliament of Canada, indeed this House, had endorsed these programs and expected an efficient public service to put into place these programs which the people of Canada wanted. Nevertheless, the fast growth of the public service combined with important organizational changes at management and staffing levels was followed by the inevitable restraint program of the late 1970s.

Staff reductions and cut-backs had a serious effect on careers in the public service. It also taxed the capacity of adaptation of public servants and it certainly raised justifiable fears. Management theories and practices had to change quickly to adjust to those new circumstances.

History has a tendency to repeat itself. Whereas we had appreciable growth in 1965 to 1975, I looked at the figures for the 1975 to 1985 period and found some growth. In 1975, there were 222,325 public servants, and in 1985 there were 223,173. That is little growth, an increase of less than 848.

I must tell the House that there were also some big changes. Canada Post came into being in 1981. That in itself took 60,000 jobs from the public service. These figures must be read in context. In 1981, when the Crown corporation of Canada Post was created, these public servants were taken out of the global figures of the public service. Therefore, there must be some adjustments made in interpreting these figures.

In 1985, we all know that the present Conservative government announced a 15,000 cut-back in the Public Service of Canada. Figures available today indicate that there were 224,026 public servants in 1984. Today, there are 214,253 public servants as of June, 1989, for a decrease of 9,773.

The effect of staff reductions, staff freezes, privatization, contracting out, a whole lot of new ways of administering the public affairs of this country, create difficult problems for career public servants, for those on whom this government, this Parliament, rely to do many things in terms of delivering the programs which we adopt.

There is a phenomenon called plateauing. I want to address that because I think it is pertinent to these discussions. In this new centre, studies must be undertaken to address the difficult problems faced by public

servants, the morale problems, the plateauing problem and others which may come to affect directly the efficiency of our public service.

The plateauing of careers has a serious impact on public servants who suffer tremendously from it. In a book entitled *The Plateauing Trap* which Judith Batwick published in 1986, she explains the phenomenon. As I understand it, there are two types of plateauing.

There is a structural plateauing. This refers to those whose careers are at a standstill because no further promotion is possible because of staff compressions or cut-backs. These people are cut off from promotions through no fault of their own. They are structurally unable to pursue promotions and greater careers.

The other type of plateauing is what is called the content plateauing. This refers to people who have been possibly long in the job who are looking for challenges. Most of them are bored because the work that they are doing offers no new challenge and they cannot find any stimuli in their professional careers.

This certainly addresses what we call professionals in the public service, those who have either a degree or who do specific work in a field such as medicine, veterinary science, engineering or research and development in terms of chemistry and physics. They find themselves doing monotonous jobs and experiencing no stimuli, no chance of doing something a little more demanding and challenging because there have been some compressions. The institution itself is unable to cope with the morale problems that these people experience.

• (1220)

That is why the centre will address not only the training and development of the public service but will address also some of the difficult problems public servants face when Parliaments and governments reduce or compress the public service and try to get from fewer people more efficiency and more effective programs for the same price.

In creating this new centre, I understand the idea is to integrate those programs presently offered in Touraine, Quebec, with programs at a new campus to be set up at De la Salle Academy on Sussex Drive in my riding. In passing, I must say that I am very proud that it is to be in my riding of Ottawa—Vanier, in the school that I attended when I was a kid, namely, De la Salle Academy. The intention is to put a campus there which will dispense services not only to the National Capital Region, but to western Canada and to Atlantic Canada. There will be programs available to people residing in those areas, responding to the regional concerns that people have in training and development.

There will be an orientation program for all those appointed to managerial positions in the public service which will be available to them within six months of their appointment. These management skills will be centred around crisis management,

This country of ours, this federation, has particular problems in administration. Federal-provincial relations, dealing with vested interest groups, small and medium sized business management techniques are all things which we must address.

Contrary to some remarks made in the other place, I do not think we should be competing with universities. I think we must rather expand the management training programs of the public service toward problem solving in the management of the federal Public Service of Canada.

We might see this through small seminars, symposia directed specifically to problems of our federation. I am thinking mostly of the federal-provincial problems arising within a decentralized state like ours.

The regional problems must be addressed and how do we address these problems? By co-ordinating with such established authorities as possibly the Conference Board of Canada and others which could give us advice and be important to the development of good managerial programs.

Language issues and how to improve and how to manage them within established government policies is something particular to the federal government. This is something which this House endorses. This is something on which last year, by adopting a new law, we asked public servants to show expertise, to show understanding, and tell us how to better administer this program, a will of this Parliament, but a job that must be done within the Public Service of Canada. How do we address it?

The private sector does not have that same challenge in dealing with regional requirements and official languages. The country has two official languages. There-

fore, we must address those problems on a managerial basis.

As I said before, the Centre for Management Studies will also do research in new management techniques in the public sector, to deal with the morale of our troops in the public service, if I might use that word, and the productivity and the efficiency of the public servants and their careers. They are entitled to want to make a career of serving Canada.

God knows we have had an efficient and very effective public service. We are very proud when we speak about the quality of public servants in Canada. From my experience, when I have spoken to foreigners who have come here to look at how we manage this country, they are always very impressed with the quality of public service that we have established.

There is also a need to give opportunities to senior managers and, I would say, those who want to bring forth new ideas and encourage diversity and initiatives that are stimulating to others. There will be a publishing centre in this new Canadian Centre for Management Studies. It will be an experience for public servants who will find themselves encouraged to present papers on their experience allowing, therefore, public service managers to get critical recognition in the field of public administration, not only by their peers, but maybe and more important, by the private sector which sometimes does not understand the challenges and difficulties faced by public administrators.

It is with pride and, I admit, with some sense of accomplishment that I thank the government for picking up on this idea, which has been with us for some time, to give the public servants of Canada access to a centre of excellence where, I would hope, we will develop these new techniques and new methods of public administration.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words on access to the Canadian Centre for Management Development, access for all Canadians, not an elite club for friends of the system but a real Canadian management centre where representatives of all groups and regions of this country will be found, which will include women, native people and the physically disabled so they can benefit from the experience.

Mr. Speaker, this Canadian Centre for Management Development must not become a centre for the Establishment. This country's Constitution states that English and French are the two official languages of Canada. Equal opportunity for training grants will have to be ensured so that all can have access to this high-quality training.

The centre will have to present programs of study, courses and symposiums in both official languages. I am hopeful, Mr. Speaker, that the centre will take this duty seriously.

Mr. Speaker, I do not need to go over the proportional representation of various groups within the Public Service. We all know the record. We know that women are under-represented. We know that we have a long way to go to represent native people and the disabled fairly. We know that employment equity is a challenge for us and, Mr. Speaker, I am sure that we will come back to it in committee when we give the bill clause-by-clause consideration.

Mr. Speaker, I can only agree with the setting up of a Canadian Centre for Management Development. I think that it is a good idea, the time is right, as I was saying, and I call on my colleagues in the House to support this bill, as I will.

• (1230)

[*English*]

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on Bill C-34 which passed in almost exactly the same form in August 1988 as Bill C-148. We support the basic principles of the bill, but we have a few concerns about the process which we will be questioning when the bill comes before the legislative committee.

It is basically a sound idea, and we should give the member for Ottawa—Vanier a considerable amount of credit for the thinking behind this because he presented his original bill in 1977 which I believe suggested this kind of an institution.

The parliamentary secretary misled the public somewhat in his presentation of the bill because he indicated or seemed to indicate that this was a marginal start for an institution that is already a full-blown institution and has been in place for a considerable time already. It has

within the PMO five people responsible to Mr. Manion plus approximately another 100 people who operate as part of the Crown corporation that is to be established as the Centre for Management Development. As an educator I recognize the need for training and the need for research, so we will support this particular approach.

It is very interesting, as was pointed out by the member for Ottawa—Vanier, that the history of the need for such an institution as this has been pointed to for many years. In 1962 the Glassco commission recommended a very specific statement: "Let managers manage". It suggested that there was a need to move away from the flat system that had developed in the federal civil service at that time.

In 1975 the then Auditor General warned in his report that parliamentarians had lost financial control of government expenditures. I can list a number of other items which could be registered as recognition of the need for management studies and a Centre for Management Development: the Lambert commission of 1979, the establishment of the PMS system under the government of the present Secretary of State for External Affairs, and the 1980 value for money auditing which was a direct result of the need to be accountable for the kind of management that was going on.

In 1983 the Auditor General listed a number of constraints in the structure of government which were against good management in government and pointed out that there was a need for better recognition and better movement of managers through the system.

The Nielsen task force on government cut-backs makes this particular approach a bit suspect because we know that the aim of that task force was to a great extent the reduction of the civil service. That particular task force report suggested that some kind of a management structure be put into place.

Things have changed over the years. The complexity of government has increased and the need for understanding, study and research has increased along with that complexity.

It is kind of interesting to recognize that this particular management centre, as it is called, is being established pretty much against the basic philosophy of the Conservative Party because it has said on a number of occasions, and even stated categorically on occasion, that it does not believe in the setting up of Crown corporations to do these kinds of things that the private sector should have the opportunity to do.

The U.S. model has been to allow the private sector to do it. In the United States republic managed education is conducted almost entirely by the private sector. The United States has set up a number of elaborate and up to date institutions, of which the most widely known and probably world recognized is Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. Other countries have also over a period established the same kind of schools, mostly related to the governments themselves, that is under government control, as this particular bill suggests we are to do in Canada.

We have in Canada a large number of universities which have in place schools with public management programs that could contribute a considerable amount. They could in many cases provide the kind of training research outlined as an objective in this particular bill.

One of the questions which the committee should look into is why we are setting up extensive programs in certain areas when we could—and the bill gives the centre this alternative—contract a considerable amount of the program from universities which already have programs in place, thereby increasing the quality of those programs and also increasing the breadth of them.

There is no suggestion in the bill of the cost of this institution. As I pointed out, there are already 100 or so members listed under the Canadian Centre for Management Development. The principle has been in place since about June 1988. A considerable number of courses are in place that have been quite well and widely accepted. In fact they have received a certain amount of raves as far as their quality.

• (1240)

The bill does not state the direction which this centre will take or the size to which it will grow. I think it is something which the committee looking at it should delve into considerably more.

It would be very interesting to know what the cost of this institute has been to date because it grew from April 1988 when it was first announced to a fairly full-blown institution within the government right now, without, I point out, legislative authority to do so.

I guess that is probably an indication of the direction this government has taken in dealing with a number of its development projects. It proceeded without the legislative authority to do so and established the organization the same way as it did a couple of the departments which were set up before the government had the legislative authority to proceed.

We need to know—and these are the kinds of things which we should be asking within the committee—what the costs have been to date, how far the plans have been developed, and exactly what the plans are. Will those plans be available to the committee for study, since we have had a fairly large group in place working on it? Does Section 16 mean it can be done entirely by contract? Can all of the programs be developed by contract? Will that be a major portion of the expenditures?

Mr. Jim Armstrong, vice-principal of the Centre for Management Development, states in an article in *Dialogue* that we are building an institution and that it has in place a board of directors which I suppose will be authorized by this bill when it is passed. The board of directors includes leaders from universities, business and public service. It would be interesting to know how the board of directors is being paid since there is no legislative authority to do so as yet.

Although we will support this in principle, we want to look very closely at it. We do have a number of concerns, some of which I would like to go over at this time.

One of our concerns is that since we have not had the opportunity of having Mr. Manion or Mr. Armstrong or any of the officers before us, there seems to be no opportunity for the non-management level of the public service to make a contribution or have input into what happens with and what becomes part of this institution.

There seems to be a very great opportunity for elitism to develop if this kind of institution is made an integral part of getting into the service and of promotion within the service. Those things should be looked at and discussed as well. There is no doubt that there is a possibility that it will lead to differing treatment between management and the rank and file in the civil service.

I think that as parliamentarians we should look very closely at the possibility of input from public service employees and the professional institute; groups that should have specific and definite interests in the kind of institution which is used and in the process of promotion, although I know this is not necessarily the basic reason for the institute to be in place.

We must also have some concern about the curriculum, the kind of programs that are developed, because of the possibility of it being used as an elitism approach but also because of the possibility of proselytizing particular points of view. I think there is a danger in any school or institution of it being used to proselytize a particular point of view and make it the reason for the operation of that particular institution. I would hope that that is something we do not have to worry about, but it does have to be a concern.

Mind control by research institutions is not unknown in government and is used in parts of the world with which we would not want to be compared in any way.

There has been very little public recognition of the need for this institution, and we consequently know very little about public acceptance of this institution. Perhaps it would be worth while to have before the committee not only members of the public service but also members of the general public, of universities, academics, as well as people who might want to get into the public service.

Another concern I have is that when the Deputy Prime Minister made the announcement shortly after the Prime Minister made his announcement in April 1988, he said that he made the key role of this institution a matter of getting rid of bureaucracy. Mr. Jack Manion, when he was interviewed and discussed the matter, listed a number of concepts which he said we are dealing with and with which we want the manager level of the civil service to be able to deal.

It is very interesting to look at that list of concepts. They are decentralization, deregulation, deburdening and debureaucratization. The concern here is that all these are part of a right wing agenda to make the government less effective in the economy of the country and in the control and regulation of that economy.

• (1250)

We in Canada have used Crown corporations, which surprisingly this is, and regulation to a great extent to allow our economy to operate successfully in our particular economic climate. If we are putting in place a government institution which is dealing with this part of government law and structure, we are putting the concepts of a political decision into the process of management rather than allowing the managers to be administrators of organizations already in place that have been accepted by the people.

That is why, although as an educator I have a great deal of respect for the quality of public institutions and the quality of publicly regulated institutions, I am concerned that it might be possible to direct an institution such as this one in such a way that it would be detrimental to the development of the public service itself and to the direction that the country would go.

As much as I would be unlikely to say so, there is a certain amount of comfort in the idea that there is going to be a board of directors which will include academics as well as the private sector.

I have only a couple more remarks to make, Mr. Speaker. I have a continuing concern about a necessity that inputs into the total structure which determines the kind of research that is going to be carried out so that the direction this institution is going to go will not be entirely in the hands of the government of the day. As the member for Ottawa—Vanier suggested, by remaining a Crown corporation within the government we need to look at the accountability of this institution to this Parliament when we have the bill before us at committee.

To a great extent the discussion that has taken place from April 1988 until now has been internal discussion within the civil service, not even within this Parliament. There is a great need to expand this discussion to the public generally and to use it to develop a kind of institution that becomes open to the public much more than has happened in the year or so in which it has been in place.

Our party will support in principle the development of this institution. We have some concerns at which we will want to look while we are in committee.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise on this bill and to follow my colleague, the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier, who has been working on this subject for a long time. I also want to mention that I am following another colleague in this House who for nearly two decades represented Ottawa West and public service employees in this region, sometimes in office, sometimes out of office—the hon. Lloyd Francis, former Speaker of the House of Commons.

As critic for public service employment on this side of the House I examined the bill that provides for the legal mandate and the framework for the Canadian Centre for Management Development on the basis of my view of the role and importance of the Public Service in Canada in the building of the nation.

That is not usually the way people think of public bureaucracies. They are not generally regarded as nation builders. Next to politicians they are among the most maligned of species. They are the easy target of every taxpayer who thinks taxes are too high, the brunt of every politician who comes to Ottawa to clean up government. Many consider them malingerers, leeches on the public purse just putting in minimal hours with minimum effort until they can collect a fat pension.

These are not the public service employees I have known all my life—friends, neighbours and family who have worked for the people of Canada with pride, with commitment to the future of their country and with dedication to the concept of service to the public.

This is a young country, barely 122 years old. It is still a vast territory, largely unpopulated, with 80 per cent of its people concentrated in a narrow band along the border with the United States, a thin ribbon between Windsor and Quebec City so insignificant as hardly to be noticeable on the map. The country is still struggling with its identity, its sense of nationhood, and its place in the world.

It is a nation that has been created against all odds of climate and geography by a vision of piecing together and binding in common purpose a diversity of communities and a diversity of people.

Canada was and is not a natural nation but very much a creation of public policy. Its continued development as a nation has depended on a delicate and changing balance between the roles of the public and private sector and an understanding that has pervaded our 122 years of the role of government, the role of public policy, in building the nation. That is one of the reasons this country developed a public service that has been recognized

internationally for its excellence, its professionalism, and its impartiality.

There is nothing we do in the House or that the thousands of members who have preceded us in this House have done to set the direction for the future of society. None of that could have been accomplished without the support and commitment of the millions who have formed throughout those generations the Public Service of Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret that I have to intervene. The hon. member will have 14 minutes left in her speech plus 10 minutes for questions and comments when the debate resumes after 3 p.m.

It being one o'clock I do now leave the chair until two o'clock this day.

The House took recess at 1 p.m.

* * *

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY LEADERSHIP

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, I stand today to offer my party's as well as my personal congratulations to the member for Yukon, the new leader-elect of the federal New Democratic Party.

This weekend every Canadian had reason to smile. For the first time in Canada's history a federal political party elected a woman as its leader. What this says about Canada is that the mores of the past and the walls of gender disparity are being chipped away.

I might also add that the hon. member is in very good company. All her opponents put up great fights, and all of them deserve hearty congratulations.

The hon. member is now receiving mountains of advice from the pundits and the gurus of the media and elsewhere. My hope is that in the midst of all this she manages to take a well-deserved break to prepare for the battles to come. Congratulations!

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, the Alberta Medical Association has added its name to the list of those calling for a moratorium on the Alberta-Pacific pulp mill project in northern Alberta.

The AMA, which speaks for 4,000 physicians, is concerned about the effect of pollution from the project on the health of the area's residents. A spokesperson for the AMA stated that not enough is known about the effects of the organochlorines which will be discharged as industry effluent into the Athabasca River.

The AMA is criticizing the Alberta government for acting irresponsibly, favouring economic growth and development at the expense of the environment and, ultimately, the health of Albertans.

The federal Department of Indian and Northern Affairs has stated that it supports a moratorium on development of these mills as demanded by the native bands who live in the area.

I ask the Minister of the Environment to immediately impose a moratorium on the Alberta-Pacific project until an assurance is given by the company that it will comply with the new federal regulations governing effluent from these pulp mills.

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[*Translation*]

THE WORLD DOWNHILL SKI CUP

Mr. Charles deBlois (Montmorency—Orléans): Mr. Speaker, over the past few days the riding of Montmorency—Orléans has been the site of a major international downhill ski competition for the championship in which the best skiers of the world took part, including a half dozen Canadians.

Rushing down the Montmorency slope, the White Circus champions were able to appreciate the quality of Mont Sainte-Anne Park facilities. The outstanding tourism promotion by management was highlighted last Friday during the great annual reception of Quebec's tourist industry.

I congratulate the organizers of this competition, especially Messrs. Raymond Dupont and Pierre Bourgeault of *Sports internationaux du Québec* as well as Mont Sainte-Anne Park Director Claude Beaudoin for the

tremendous work they have done with the financial support of several groups, including our government.

In conclusion, I invite Canadian skiers to discover the 50 downhill ski slopes and the 214 kilometres of cross-country ski trails which make Mont Sainte-Anne the most beautiful ski centre in Canada.

* * *

[*English*]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian economy is alive and well. That was the message in a report released by the Organization for Economic Development and Co-operation.

In its review of the Canadian economy the European-based think tank praised our government for its initiatives on the Canada-U.S. trade deal, monetary restraint and the goods and services tax.

The report goes on to state that Canada's recent growth has been impressive in terms of creating growth and employment. The Canadian economy has been second only to Japan in terms of growth over the past 18 months and has created more jobs over the past two years than any of the other 24 OECD countries.

Though not always politically popular, the world agrees that this government is taking the tough measures necessary to ensure Canada's future economic well-being. This government should be commended for its leadership in attempting to bring continued prosperity to this country.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, despite its claim of being for sustainable development and a clean environment, the Government of Alberta is promoting the overcutting of forests and polluting of rivers. Despite the rhetoric here in Ottawa about sustainable development, Canada's environment minister is silent about the proposed devastation of Alberta's heritage.

It is up to a committed scientist, Dr. Jack Vallentyne, Canadian Chairman of the International Joint Commission's Great Lakes Science Advisory Board, to say that not only should the proposed mill on the Athabasca River be scrapped but a moratorium be imposed on the construction of bleached-kraft pulp mills until more is known about the effects of toxic chemicals found in mill waste water.

If Canada's environment minister wants to live up to his own words, he should urge the Alberta government to scrap the proposed $1.3 billion pulp mill on the Athabasca River. It is an abuse of precious natural resources, and it is not sustainable development.

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[*Translation*]

FISCAL COMPENSATION GRANTED TO ISOLATED AND NORTHERN AREAS

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, I just came back from northern Quebec where I held meetings with the economic spokesmen for the municipalities of Matagami, Joutel and Lebel-sur-Quévillon to talk about the Report of the Task Force on Tax Benefits for Northern and Isolated Areas. Task Force Chairman René Brunelle attended every meeting. The residents of these communities were not consulted before the report was handed to the Minister of Finance last October 27. Should the Canadian government endorse the recommendations of this report which has raised great concerns in these communities, the situation can only get worse.

Mr. Speaker, the citizens of Matagami, Joutel, Lebel-sur-Quévillon, Chapais and Chibougamau are in the best position in Québec to define the tax benefits granted for northern isolation. Are the Government of Canada and the Minister of Finance aware of the fact that Canada's economy needs these courageous and permanent northern residents?

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[*English*]

NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY LEADERSHIP

Mr. Ken James (Sarnia—Lambton): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the hon. member for Yukon on her election as leader at the

New Democratic Party leadership convention held in Winnipeg this past weekend.

This election is of particular note both to the New Democratic Party and to all Canadians as the hon. member is the first woman in history to become the leader of a Canadian national political party.

It is with regret that we must say goodbye to the hon. member for Oshawa as Leader of the NDP, but I am pleased to welcome the hon. member for Yukon in her new capacity as party leader. So, Mr. Speaker, I pay tribute to both the past and the present Leaders of the New Democratic Party and thank them for their personal contributions to the democratic process.

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PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE OF CANADA

Mr. Joe McGuire (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, talks between the PSAC and Treasury Board broke down again last Saturday. This means that over 2,000 Coast Guard workers are still on strike. Included in this group are federal ships crews who provide fisheries patrols for the lobster industry and others who provide ice-breaking services to ports in Atlantic Canada.

The Port of Summerside enjoys the busiest part of its season in the fall and winter months because of potato shipments after the fall harvest. The Chamber of Commerce is quite concerned that a prolonged strike would allow a harbour freeze-up which could result in foreign market loss as well as a further decrease in economic activity. This, in addition to the problems that have already occurred, is something that Summerside can ill afford.

The most contentious issue in this strike is the wage disparity between workers on the east coast and workers on the west coast. It is a flagrant case of discrimination when our east coast workers earn up to $2,500 less for doing the same job.

The government should go back to the bargaining table and negotiate a fair collective agreement to resolve this wage disparity problem, bring this strike to an end, and keep our ports open. It should not be sitting back waiting until it becomes a real crisis situation and then using this as an excuse for introducing back-to-work legislation.

NORTHERN TAX ALLOWANCE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, as residents in northern Alberta communities are well aware, the task force on northern benefits has released a report recommending the boundary for the northern tax benefit be changed from the 55th parallel to the 57th parallel and 30 degrees.

The proposed change will exclude thousands of Canadians who live in northern and remote areas from a northern tax benefit. This recommendation will remove approximately $16 million from the northern Alberta economy. The boundary change will pit one community benefiting from the tax break against another community barred from it.

I have proposed an alternative to the task force recommendations. I suggest a scaled-down benefit of one-half for communities north of the 55th parallel and south of the 57th and 30 degrees. I urge the Minister of Finance to accept this proposal.

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[*Translation*]

DANGEROUS GOODS

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, Canadian people were surprised to find out last Friday that the Balmet Corporation in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu had shipped hazardous waste from Montreal harbour to Brazil and that a second shipment is expected to leave for France in the next few days. We know that these dangerous goods have caused poisoning in about 20 children as well as contamination of many lands and homes in the Saint-Jean region. As in the case of the PCB shipments which sailed around the world last summer, this government would seem unable to keep hazardous waste produced in Canada from becoming a threat to the environment.

• (1410)

[*English*]

This government keeps promising to make the environment a priority but when it comes to taking real action to ensure a clean environment, nothing is done. Immediate action should be taken to stop the second shipment of Balmet Corporation expected to leave for

France in the next few days. We need concrete action now.

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NOVA SCOTIA

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, since the days of Edward Cornwallis in 1749 Nova Scotia has had many distinguished Lieutenant-Governors.

It has never been an uncommon practice for friends of the government of the day to be appointed to the prestigious vice-regal office. However, as party politics developed during the 19th century, so also did the practice that those who left the partisan wars to represent the Crown at Government House took on with the office a posture and practice of non-partisanship. So the tradition has remained, and rightly so.

Thus the decision recently announced by former Lieutenant Governor Alan Abraham to return to partisan politics as Liberal Party organizer for Halifax is regrettable. It is a decision frowned upon, I am sure, by members on all sides of this House. I urge Mr. Abraham who served with such distinction in the office not to demean the office but to reconsider his decision.

I also call upon the leaders of the Liberal Party of Canada and of Nova Scotia to join me in this request.

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ETHIOPIA

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, in 1984 Canada and the world witnessed the most devastating of famines ever in Ethiopia. Over a million people perished during that particular famine.

Ethiopia is now facing another severe drought and, again, more than one million people are at risk, particularly in the northern areas of Tigray and Eritrea where the government has expelled relief workers as a result of armed conflict with opposition forces.

Canada must work at ensuring that emergency food aid reaches these people. We ask that the Canadian government use our representative at the UN to influence other governments, including those of the Soviet Union and Israel, to pressure the Ethiopian government to set up safe transportation corridors to facilitate the transport of emergency aid.

We would also like to see our own diplomatic resources in Ethiopia work out an agreement between the government and opposition forces to form these corridors of tranquillity for international relief organizations.

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SENATE REFORM

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago at the federal-provincial First Ministers' Conference I was surprised to hear the Prime Minister and the premiers discussing reform of the Senate. In his new-found forum with the premiers, the Prime Minister has found himself a new title as chairman of the board. In this extra-parliamentary forum only one of the 11 parties is elected to represent the federal interest. So I was shocked to hear the 10 non-federal premiers speaking of undertaking to reform the Senate.

The Senate is a federal institution and not a provincial one. Our premiers are elected to look after provincial institutions and not federal. They have absolutely no business or mandate pre-setting an agenda for reform of our Parliament. If a premier wants to reform a senate, let him create his own in his own province.

This Parliament must be made aware of the dangers in letting provincial politicians pre-set the agenda and attitudes for federal reforms.

In the meantime, I call upon the Prime Minister to place Senate reform on the agenda of this Parliament, this House and the other place, and abandon his predisposition for carrying out reforms in his private club of 11 and stealing from the jurisdiction of this Parliament and from members on both sides of the House.

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AGRICULTURE

Mr. Bob Porter (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, one week from today the National Agri-food Policy Conference begins in Ottawa. This conference will provide the first public forum for all partners in Canada's food production and marketing areas to discuss policies and programs.

Agriculture's share of the domestic product is between 2.5 per cent and 3 per cent and employs 4 per cent of the labour force. That proportion rises almost 15 per cent when related machinery, processing, food retailing and service industries are included.

The perception that large scale agri-business is taking over family farms is not a reality according to Statistics Canada figures. Most farm businesses are family oriented. Less than 1 per cent of farms are operated by non-family corporations.

Working closely with provincial agriculture ministers, farm organizations, commodity and consumer groups is an essential part of developing a comprehensive national framework for agri-food policies. This conference is an opportunity for each facet of agriculture to have input into the decisions affecting their industry as we meet the changing markets and challenging opportunities of the 1990s.

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JUSTICE

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I rise to draw to the attention of the House, and in particular to the Minister of Justice, a very serious injustice being done to a young native student who is a law student here at the University of Ottawa.

Mr. Rock Matte had applied for funding under the Department of Justice's Native Program, but was turned down because he did not have a favourable recommendation from the Law Preparation Course for native students in Saskatoon. The problem is that that course is offered in English and Mr. Matte speaks French.

Mr. Matte is saying now: "I am praying a lot and eating little". The minister's representative in the Department of Justice said: "It is unfortunate that the turn of events were just not in Rock's favour. He is in a rough and tough spot". Indeed, he is.

I appeal to the minister to reconsider this matter and to recognize that the Canadian Human Rights Commission has pointed out that our treatment of natives is a national scandal and that a young native person in Canada today has a better chance of going to prison than of going to university.

I call upon the Minister of Justice to look into this matter seriously and to provide the funding that this young native law student so badly needs.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

UNEMPLOYMENT

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is for someone representing the government, the acting prime minister of Canada, in the absence of the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister.

In the last few days thousands of Canadians have lost their jobs to the United States. How does the acting prime minister explain that Gerber Baby Foods is closing its Canadian operation, and that from now on all Gerber baby foods for Canadian families will be produced in Michigan? How does he explain that Burlington Carpets has just closed its entire Canadian operation, and from now on all Burlington carpets for Canadian homes will be produced in North Carolina? How does he explain that the Whirlpool Corporation has closed its Canadian operations, and from now on all Whirlpool appliances for Canadian homes and apartments will be produced in Ohio? How does he explain that in the last week some of the largest and best known American multinationals no longer have a single employee in Canada?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I am quite sure that all of us in this House are in agreement that it is unfortunate these people are losing their jobs at a time like this.

We have to realize that we have a dynamic economy. There are jobs that are being created every day and there are jobs that are being lost every day. It is important for us to realize that, first, the bottom line is that there have been a considerable number of new jobs created over the course of the past five years and that will continue on into the future.

Second, my colleague, the Minister of Employment and Immigration, has a number of programs in place to assist those people in order to help them find new opportunities, new jobs to continue on from where they are now, to support the type of programs that these companies have put in place to assist these people to move from one job to the next.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, I could suggest to the Minister of Finance what the dynamics are. They are the dynamics we predicted in the last federal election. When there is rationalization of North American business, what is going to be done and is being

done now is at the expense of Canadian workers in favour of American plants. That is what has happened.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, Pittsburgh Paints and Glass is putting Canadians out of work.

The Ford Company is closing its V-8 engine manufacturing plant, from now on all V-8 engines will be produced in Michigan.

General Electric is closing its specialized equipment plant in Montreal, in the Saint-Denis riding, so that Canadians will have to buy their supplies in the United States.

General Motors is transferring its van production facilities from Canada to the United States.

Can the Minister of Finance tell us why, every time choices have to be made between saving American and Canadian jobs, multinational firms protect American workers? And now Ford, General Electric, Burlington Carpets, General Motors, Whirlpool and Gerber Baby Foods have decided in favour of the United States at the expense of Canadian workers.

• (1420)

[*English*]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, as his former finance critic has said: "Every sparrow that falls from a tree will be blamed on the free trade agreement".

He mentioned the Ford engine plant. Let me quote from *The Financial Post* of December 1 which states: "The plant is old, CAW President Bob White said, and we were able to work together to give it a longer life than we had expected". Bob White did not blame it on the free trade agreement, and he feels about the free trade agreement the same as the Leader of the Opposition does.

The Leader of the Opposition talked about General Motors. On the same day that General Motors mentioned that in a couple of years "perhaps" its Scarborough plant will no longer be producing vans, Freightliner, a truck manufacturer, said it was starting up a Greenfield plant in southern Ontario. It has an existing facility in North Carolina. Contrary to the predictions of the opposition, it is not going to expand that plant. It is opening up a Greenfield plant in southern Ontario employing some 1,200 new people.

The economy is in a dynamic phase. New investments are coming in. Yes, there are mergers occurring and other things happening. That is what happens in a dynamic economy. It is because we have adapted to a dynamic economy that we have had the tremendous economic performance for which the OECD praised Canada just yesterday.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has yielded to the Minister of Industry. I want to tell him what the dynamics are. The fact is that when choices are made that have to be made between saving Canadian and American jobs multinational firms sacrifice Canadian jobs every time because they know that for the first time in history they are dealing with a government that has not got the guts to stand up to the United States.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister of Industry: Where is that adjustment program to help the thousands of Canadians who have lost their jobs because of the trade deal? Where is that adjustment program to help the thousands of Canadian workers who have lost their employment because this government has sold out to the United States? Where is that massive program of adjustment and retraining that the Prime Minister promised the day after he signed the trade deal, that adjustment program in favour of Canadian workers who would lose their jobs because of the trade deal? Where is that adjustment program?

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition should again be a little more careful with the facts. He neglected to acknowledge, for example, that General Motors Diesel is phasing out its Illinois plant and moving it to London, Ontario.

He neglected to mention that because of the drop off in car sales Chrysler is laying off 4,000 employees in the United States—none of their Canadian employees are being laid off. This reduction in work force is occurring in the United States.

Perhaps the hon. Leader of the Opposition should listen to his colleague, the member for LaSalle—Émard, who said on February 14, 1989, as reported in *The Toronto Star*: "It makes no sense for us as a party to blame the free trade agreement for every piece of economic up-

heaval that occurs". He should listen to that advice and heed it.

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology. He talks about the facts. It is a fact that the work that is going to be transferred from the Ford Motor Company engine plant No. 2 in Windsor is going to be transferred to the United States. When he talks about a dynamic phase, it is a phasing out of Canadian jobs from this country to the United States.

I want to ask the minister this. Will he make a commitment right now to get the Ford Motor Company to place in Windsor some of the new production of engines and components it is working on so that at the end of 1990 the 900 jobs will be preserved and the benefit of this will continue to be there for the Windsor and Canadian economies? Will he make the commitment today, right now?

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, when Ford opened its new engine plants it indicated that the V-8 plant which was old and obsolete would be phased out some time in the future. The union leaders, Bob White and the union local president, Frank McAnally, said: "Quite frankly, we've been pushing the company to make the announcement for the past few months". They have expected it for a few months. It is part of the national evolution of things.

The fact is any reasonable person looking at how Canada has fared *vis-à-vis* the United States in this current downturn in the automobile industry will recognize, as the Americans surely do and the auto workers do, that in fact we fare very well and that Canadian automobile workers are more productive than those in the United States. Therefore we have not suffered the lay-offs. In fact, we are getting new investment in Canada which they are not getting in the United States.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): The president of the Canadian Automobile Workers also said that he wanted to see new production placed in that plant by the end of 1990.

Is the minister going to make a commitment today to get that new production there to preserve those jobs or is he and the Conservative government simply telling the workers in Windsor and across Canada that they don't give a damn? That is not good enough.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member used the word "preserving". We are interested in making sure that Canada can compete in the next century. We are interested in making sure that Canada still remains the best place in North America for manufacturing jobs.

He talks about the free trade agreement. Perhaps he did not see in today's paper the comments by Ted Newell, president of Dupont Canada, who stated that the $28 million expansion of its chemical plant in Maitland is evidence that free trade is working and that more jobs will be generated at Dupont plants across Ontario over the next two years. That is happening in all kinds of industry.

It is good news, so it does not get the front page feature that some of these plant closings get, but it is happening everywhere. The fact of the matter is there are more Canadian jobs being won as a result of the free trade agreement than are being lost.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Fisheries. We have learned that immunity from prosecution has been granted to certain large corporations and individuals by the minister and his department. There is an important principle involved here. Canadians expect fisheries officers and the minister to enforce the laws that are passed by this Parliament.

We know now that that is not the case. Let me quote from a November 15, 1989 federal document from the head of habitat management which states: "The habitat destruction that has taken place has been ignored to a significant degree. We have determined that DFO friendly corporations or parties with provincial permits will enjoy relative immunity from the Fisheries Act while the small guy gets prosecuted".

Will the minister tell this House why he is allowing certain friends of the government to break the law and remain immune from charges?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I heard the hon. member use the phrase "immunity from prosecution". He knows, as do

all those who work in co-operation with officials of my department, that no one is immune from prosecution under the Fisheries Act of offences in regard to environmental pollution, water quality or degradation of the habitat.

The member also knows because he and his party and all hon. members, I believe, support the policy for fish habitat management which I introduced three years ago in this House. That policy reads in part as follows: "The department prefers to prevent damage to habitat and avoid losses to the fisheries resource rather than to take court action against offenders after the fact. However, when voluntary compliance fails to produce the desired objective and the Fisheries Act is contravened and the habitat supporting fisheries resources are altered, destroyed or degraded, enforcement officers of the department will carry out effective enforcement action."

Mr. Speaker, I can provide the hon. member with a long list of cases as to instances where this has happened.

• (1430)

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister of Fisheries is about to learn that what we are talking about here is somewhat more serious than he took the first question.

We have learned that some large corporations are being granted immunity from prosecution for serious violations of the Fisheries Act.

Let me quote again from the minister's own departmental documents: "Despite obvious and very significant violations legitimate cases are in jeopardy or have been stifled". The example, one of many used in the document, is: "Alcan and their contractors, without any approvals, largely destroyed a salmon stream at Kemano". That is in British Columbia. They largely destroyed a salmon stream. One would think that is the sort of thing about which the Minister of Fisheries would be interested.

Is the minister suggesting to this House that the stifling of what his officials describe as very significant violations is acceptable? If he does not, is he planning to speak to the Solicitor General or to the head of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to see whether the commercial crime squad of the RCMP or perhaps the head of the RCM Police himself, might want to look into the the minister's department because I suggest that there is, at the very least, criminal activity going on in the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

Mr. Speaker: That is not an acceptable allegation to make in Question Period, and as a consequence I am going to move on to the next speaker.

* * *

FORESTRY

Mr. George S. Baker (Gander—Grand Falls): Mr. Speaker, on Friday, Abitibi Price shocked the people of Newfoundland by announcing the closure of a portion of its pulp and paper mill in Grand Falls, putting 250 people out of work inside the mill, and hundreds of people out of work permanently outside the mill, the loggers in central Newfoundland. But the company says it is going to build a new pulp and paper mill in Alabama.

Will the Minister of Forestry look into this matter and find out whether or not the company, in announcing the closure of a portion of its plant, has violated the terms and conditions of millions of dollars it has received from this government over the past three or four years, or is this just another benefit of free trade—take all you can get from the Canadian Government and invest the profits in Alabama?

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of State (Forestry)): Mr. Speaker, I anticipated the question because I share with my hon. friend the concern of the untimely announcement of a partial closure of an important facility in an area where other economic prospects are more limited than they would be in other parts of the country.

The decision by Abitibi Price is a commercial decision. It is made in line with the necessary rationalization adjustments that have to be made from time to time in accordance with a number of criteria, including international market conditions, the availability of adequate quantities and qualities of fibre, labour markets and those kinds of things.

The fact is that the particular line that has been closed which will reduce the workforce in this particular mill by roughly one-third was built in 1926 and is hardly state of the art, which is required in today's changing international market-places.

Mr. Baker: Mr. Speaker, in a public statement made Friday, the company said: "The future viability of pulp and paper mills in Canada rests on their ability to compete in the offshore market".

The company has become the offshore competition. It is building a new pulp and paper mill in the United Kingdom and in Venezuela using the wood from the rain forests of the Amazon, whereas in this country under this government it is closing down operations.

I want to ask the minister, will he now demand a meeting with the board of directors—it should not be too difficult with the number of prominent Conservatives on the board—and say to them: "Look, you have built a world class company here on the backs of Canadian workers and now you are going to sell them down the river, the Amazon River".

Is the government going to stand idly by and watch every pulp and paper company close in this country? You will be beaten to a pulp in the next election if you do.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Oberle: Mr. Speaker, reference was made earlier, at least peripherally, to this particular closure being related to the free trade deal. The company did not announce the building of a new mill in Alabama.

It is another one of these instances where the sparrows are falling out of the sky, except in this particular instance it would almost sound like a whole flock of thunderbirds has crashed. But that is not the case.

The fact is that the Canadian pulp and paper industry, just like every other major industry in this country, does have to be very sensitive to the conditions in the market-places of the world. While my friend and his supporters may think that we can build a wall around our country and ignore the dynamic changes, we have to be competitive and we have to build the very best in facilities in those areas where we have our natural strength and that is obviously what this company is intending to do.

* * *

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Last week, General Electric announced that it was closing its Montreal plant and that 200 jobs, mostly held by women, would be lost. This company has been making a range of electric lights in Montreal for 30 years, and now most of this production will be transferred to Fairfield, Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, what will the government do to prevent this transfer of jobs and why did the government hide these consequences of free trade with the United States?

[*English*]

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, if there is any area under this government that is going to do well under free trade, it is Quebec and the region of Montreal.

We are seeing an expansion of jobs in Montreal as we are in other parts of Quebec where the unemployment rate has been improving considerably. The business people there are going to be taking advantage of free trade to continue to build new jobs in Quebec.

In addition, with the labour force strategy, whereby we are going to be in a position to train people better for these new jobs, we are going to see a lot more economic development in Montreal.

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, the minister is not up to date on the figures. Every week, there is another plant closure in Montreal. Last week it was General Electric with 200 jobs lost. The week before it was Canadian Steel Foundries with 250 jobs lost. Since the beginning of this year, we have had over 80 notices of lay-offs in Montreal involving approximately 7,000 lost jobs, and most were solid full-time jobs.

What is the government going to do about this serious situation? The people of Montreal want action, not rhetoric.

Mrs. McDougall: Mr. Speaker, the people of Montreal recognize that there is a dynamic economy in Montreal right now that is getting better and with free trade it will continue to get better.

If the hon. member would check the numbers on unemployment, he would see, as I do, that the changes in Montreal are very positive ones.

FISHERIES

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I want to pursue with the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans a very serious issue. Reading from a departmental document, it states: "We have determined that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans with friendly corporations will enjoy relative immunity from the Fisheries Act". This is in addition to the years of immunity we have given those mills that have been fortunate to have a continuous discharge and can negotiate and promise while they continue to pollute.

My question to the minister is very straightforward. Was the minister aware that this policy of immunity to certain corporations was policy in his department?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I am not only unaware of that, I categorically reject any such insinuation.

In fact, the document to which the hon. member is referring was prepared by a lower level official in my department, widely copied, but not advanced through the system. I did not learn about it until Friday afternoon. While these are the opinions of one official responsible for one region in British Columbia reporting to his area director, the director general, the deputy minister, and the assistant deputy minister, they do not reflect the policy of this government or this department.

• (1440)

In fact, in the period 1986 to 1988, we have laid well over 100 charges with 47 successful prosecutions for offences under the Fisheries Act and fines up to $35,000. It is absolutely improper to suggest any irregularity or unfairness in prosecution and the application of the Fisheries Act.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, this is most serious in terms of what the minister is telling us because, again, it is very clear that the minister has to accept responsibility for practices of his department. For example, when the document goes on and states: "Alcan and their contractors, without any approval, largely destroyed a salmon stream at Kemano due to our special relationship with Alcan."

It also states: "Due to authorization and unworkable enforcement arrangements, near total immunity has been given to Yukon placer miners to harmfully alter and pollute Yukon streams. Even when the miners cannot meet extremely lax standards no enforcement has taken place in 1988 or 1989, despite numerous violations."

Considering that these are factual statements, that there have been numerous lax standards applied and no enforcement in terms of where that law has been broken, will the minister do the appropriate thing and offer his resignation?

Mr. Siddon: Absolutely not, Mr. Speaker. I have already pointed out that it is the policy of the department to seek remedies to environmental offences. But when there is clear evidence of intent, on the recommendation of the Department of Justice, my officials and the Department of Justice and those of the Department of the Environment bring appropriate charges.

It is absolutely improper, in fact it is probably one person within the department who has frustrations with the system and technical and legal constraints, to draw these conclusions.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

Mr. Speaker: Order! I am pleased to call the attention of the House to the presence in the gallery of Mr. André Billardon, Deputy Speaker of the French National Assembly.

[*English*]

I also wish to draw to members' attention the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Ahmed Ali Al-Mohanni, Minister of Oil and Mineral Resources of the Yemen Arab Republic.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

* * *

[*Translation*]

FISCAL COMPENSATION GRANTED TO ISOLATED AND NORTHERN AREAS

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

The task force on fiscal compensation for isolated and northern areas tabled its report on October 27. Its recommendations are unacceptable for workers in northern Quebec and northern Canada. It is in Canada's

interest to help workers in the north and near north, not only the developing countries.

My question is this: Can the Minister confirm in the House that at the meeting of provincial finance ministers in Ottawa this week, fiscal compensation for isolated and northern communities and a permanent tax policy for the near north will be on the agenda? Yes or no?

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, let me say to the hon. member that the matter will be discussed. I have been having some discussions already with one or two of my colleagues who have indicated an interest to have some discussion on this.

I would like to remind my friend that this commission task force worked for 18 months to produce these proposals at the request of the Government of Canada because of the great inequities that were in this tax system between people who lived in the same part of the country but happened to live a few miles farther away than others and therefore got the benefit whereas others did not. These are difficulties that we asked the task force to address.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Say yes or no to your member. Give him a decent answer!

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): I am sure that the Hon. Leader of the Opposition would be quite pleased to—

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Give your member a clear answer.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Well, Mr. Speaker, it is very hard to respond to a question in face of the bluster from the other side of the House.

* * *

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister, I would like to direct my question to the Acting Prime Minister. It has to do with the conflict of interest code.

As the minister is no doubt aware, Mr. Robert Jarvis, a former Conservative Member of Parliament and the chairman of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation for the past five years, has lobbied on behalf of a private developer to the Ontario Minister of Housing.

Can the Acting Prime Minister justify, in any way, the activities of the Tory-appointed boss of Canada's national housing agency, when he is also lobbying the Ontario Minister of Housing for the benefit of a private developer to obtain money for housing which is partially funded by the federal government?

Hon. Alan Redway (Minister of State (Housing)): Mr. Speaker, the first public report of this appeared in the paper today. We are currently looking into the matter, trying to ascertain all of the facts that are involved in the situation. As soon as we do, we will certainly advise the hon. member.

Mr. Fontana: Mr. Speaker, let me see if I can be a little helpful to the minister. It is quite clear on this issue in Sections 4(d), 7(a), 7(b), and 7(f) of the code. I quote: "Public office holders shall not step out of their official roles to assist private entities or persons in their dealings with the government where this would result in preferential treatment to any person."

What action will this government take to address what most Canadians would call a conflict of interest, and will this government re-evaluate the position of this chairman of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation?

Mr. Redway: Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member is a fair member, as are all members of this House, and will want to make sure that all of the facts are known and that everyone has an opportunity to fully set out those facts. I know that he would want to wait until all the facts are in before he draws any conclusions from the situation himself. Certainly that is my position and that of the government.

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PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, this government's blatant disregard for the Speaker's recent ruling is indicated by the announcement that on December 27 this year Revenue Canada intends to start mailing application forms for the credits on the proposed goods and services tax.

My question for the Acting Prime Minister is the following: Why is the Minister of National Revenue sending Canadians application forms for the proposed

goods and services tax credit when no legislation on this has been presented to Parliament, let alone approved?

Hon. Otto Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member would listen to the Auditor General's last report, for example, he stated quite categorically that it was the duty of this government, as it is indeed of any other government, that when there is proposed legislation the government begins to prepare for the legislation to come forward and be implemented. This is why the government is moving ahead, consistent with parliamentary precedents, and within the rules and regulations of Treasury Board.

I hear Liberal members saying that we are arrogant. Well, of course, when I say that we are abiding by parliamentary precedents, we are looking at some of the former Liberal precedents that have been set out, such as the hired 4,000 employees prior to the legislation even being tabled. So we are just following what the Auditor General has said and what the rights and obligations of this government are.

I will let you know one other thing, Mr. Speaker, that if we did not prepare for a smooth launch we would be doing a disservice to Canadians and we would then be irresponsible.

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General has more influence with the government than the Speaker does.

• (1450)

[*Translation*]

Since the Minister of National Revenue takes Parliament's approval for granted, although no bill has yet been tabled in this House, he is obviously admitting to us that his proposed schedule for implementing the GST is totally unrealistic.

[*English*]

My question is for the Minister of Finance. Has he asked for advice from the Department of Revenue on the lead time required for the implementation of the GST? If not, why not?

Is it not true that his department has been told by Revenue Canada that the GST should not be put in place on January 1, 1991 because of administrative difficulties?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the obvious answer to that question is, yes, we have had considerable discussion between the Department of Finance and the Department of National Revenue. The implementation date of January 1, 1991 has been agreed upon between the two.

That is the proposal being put before the House of Commons, and that is the proposal which I believe can be met. It does require, as my colleague has said, a degree of information, a degree of planning, a degree of working with Canadian taxpayers to ensure that we have a smooth launch of this proposed legislation.

* * *

FISHERIES

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, I would like to go back to the Minister of Fisheries.

He just told this House that decisions on prosecutions are made by the Department of Justice. I would like to quote from a departmental document regarding the Swift River case where it states: "The Department of Justice says we should charge the Minister of Forests, the officer issuing the cash sale as well as the loggers. The director general of fisheries has ruled that we will not charge the Minister of Forests, so the Department of Justice will not charge the logger. Consequently, we are locked in the embarrassing situation and immunity has been extended to those responsible for the violation."

I would like the minister to explain this situation.

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I am not prepared to explain the detail of any particular situation today.

I have asked the deputy minister of fisheries to inquire into these opinions of one lower level official in the Department of Fisheries—

Mr. Fulton: The head of Habitat.

Mr. Siddon: He is not the head of Habitat, he is a head of the Fraser River unit.

I would like to determine the extent to which these allegations are based on fact before I draw any conclusions about the very serious, and if not factual, improper allegations that have been made.

Ms. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote again from the document which states that "Alcan and their contractors, without any approval, largely destroyed a salmon stream at Kemano. Due to our special relationship with Alcan, it has been determined that the violation will probably not be prosecuted".

What is this special relationship that provides for immunity from prosecution? Is it political? Is it financial? What is the nature of this special relationship?

Mr. Siddon: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member would note the two words, "probably not," showing that there is no specific component to that allegation in terms of actions that may or may not have been taken. There is no special relationship with Alcan. As you and members of this House know there is an agreement between this government, the government of the province and Alcan with respect to the Nechako River and reservoir which has already produced great dividends to the natives of the Cheslatta Band and will produce a number of other benefits to all the people of British Columbia.

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FINANCE

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. The OECD report notes the efforts by the Bank of Canada to reduce inflation through high interest rates has been appropriate.

As indicated, however, this course of action may lead to a corresponding increase in unemployment levels. Given the fact that a high interest policy traditionally hits harder in the regions of this country which are less able to adjust to economic slowdowns, my question for the Minister of Finance is this: Given that these measures are implemented primarily to cool the over-heated economy of central Canada, what assurances can the minister give to the people of Atlantic Canada that the government is prepared to act to offset the negative impact of this policy in the regions of the country?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, this is a report that has been put out by one of the premier international organizations in the world that looks into the performance of economies and government policies.

I want to quote briefly: "In summary, recent Canadian performance with respect to the output growth and employment creation has been impressive and has brought the economy back to full capacity utilization". It goes on to say that "given the importance of preventing a re-acceleration of inflation, the policy action of the Bank of Canada was appropriate".

It is important to realize that wage and price pressures have been developing in all parts of the country. As an example, in the member's own province, the inflation rate, excluding food and energy, has gone from 4.5 per cent to 5.6 per cent over the course of this year. So we do have pressures in all provinces of the country, both in inflation and in wage settlements.

What we have to do is to continue this policy, because if we do not get inflation under control it will be the weaker parts of the country that will suffer the most.

Having said that, we are still very much committed to the operations of organizations like ACOA, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, to provide for some offset to the impact of higher interest rates in order to support regional development in these parts of the country.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Finance some questions relating to the response he just made dealing with high interest rates. As the minister knows, in the last two years Canadian exports have lost close to $18 billion worth of sales because of the rise of the dollar which is directly related to the interest rate charges by the bank. The current account deficit with the United States has gone from a surplus of $3.4 billion to a deficit of $2.3 billion. That hurts the resource industries of the very regions about which the member just spoke.

I want to ask the minister specifically, if the high interest rate policy forcing up the dollar is destroying the export markets of this country, is he going to sit down with the Governor of the Bank of Canada and ask him to start bringing down the interest rates and the exchange rate so Canadians can start trading again?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have expected a question like this from the Liberal Party of Canada which simply does not understand the operations of the economy. It is precisely a question like that which demonstrates that the hon. member does not understand

what this international organization has been saying about policy in Canada.

We have had broad support and encouragement from this organization, from the International Monetary Fund and from other international observers that if we do not get inflation under control, interest rates will end up being an awful lot higher than they are today.

That is precisely what happened in the 1970s when the Liberal Party was in power and ignored the problem of inflation. The Liberals swept the problem under the carpet. We saw inflation going from about 5.5 per cent in 1976 to 13 per cent in 1981 and interest rates going to 20 or 21 per cent. That led to the worst recession we have had in years in this country.

We on this side of the House are not going to ignore the lessons of the past. We are going to deal with these problems as they occur and avoid the mess that the Liberals got us into in 1981.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): This lecture on inflation comes from a minister of finance who is bringing in a tax that is going to force the inflation rate up to 7 per cent. He has no business telling us how to deal with inflation when he is going to bring in a tax that is going to drive Canadian prices out of sight.

I want to ask the minister when is he going to stop listening to international organizations and start listening to Canadians? For example, the furniture makers say that this year alone imports from the United States are up 29 per cent while exports are down 3 per cent.

• (1500)

When is he going to listen to the foundry association which says that it has lost 1,500 jobs in the last eight months alone? It says that it cannot take the trade deal and an 85-cent dollar at the same time. When is he going to start listening to Canadians who are losing their jobs, their incomes, their livelihoods? When will he start listening to what really makes sense?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, I listen to people who are in business and who tell me these things. I say to them right back that we are at a position now, as this report from the OECD has said, where we are at full capacity. We have seen the effects of this in price inflation, in wage inflation, and we are seeing it in monetary aggregates. The bank loans are growing at 12 per cent per annum and have been for some time now.

These are all signs that this country's economy must slow down some. If it does not slow down, if we do not see a control of inflation, we are going to get back to the 13 per cent inflation rate we had back in 1981. If the hon. member wants to get back to that—

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Cancel your tax.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): —why does he not start standing up and saying that he supports the policies of the 1970s and early 1980s of the Liberal Party of Canada that got this country into the worst mess we have seen in 50 years?

Mr. Speaker: Hon. members will know that a few days ago we had to accept the unhappy news of the passing of one of our former colleagues and by arrangement with all parties tributes will be paid.

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THE LATE JAMES KENNETH JEPSON

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute on behalf of the friends and colleagues of Jim Jepson who was the member of Parliament for London East. He was my friend and my colleague, as he was a friend and colleague of almost everyone who served in the former Parliament.

There were few members of that Parliament who made a more vivid impression than the member for London East. His buoyant good humour, his great one liners, his love of attention, his pride—he did not hide it being a successful businessman—his happy warrior approach to defending God, country and family, his belief that each individual was sacred, were familiar to all those who knew him.

For those of you who did not know him, you may have thought those beliefs might have been just politically convenient. That was not the case. Jim Jepson did not inherit these beliefs from comfortable middle-class London, Ontario. In fact he represented a riding which was as much working class as middle class. It has many new

Canadians. It is now represented by the Liberal Premier of Ontario.

He did not inherit the beliefs either. He was, 20 years ago, a skeptic and an agnostic about all things spiritual. When he would see an evangelical preacher on TV, he used to say to his dear wife Bev in his own inimitable way: "I think the elevator doesn't always go to the top two floors for those people". But he became converted and he became a very strong defender of his faith and of his country.

Jim, as all of us know, preferred to learn not from books. Although, by the way, he read five psalms every day and a chapter from the book of Proverbs, he liked to learn from people because he loved people. Although I do not think he probably ever read Dostoevsky, he believed with Dostoevsky that a person cannot live without worshipping something. He said to me one day that if you do not worship God, you must worship something else.

Just two weeks ago we were talking about that something else: ideologies, groups, leaders who received sort of divine honours in their time but were later rejected. The object of his worship was of course God. Jim really did follow the Gospels.

This brings me to the point I wanted to make in this House. It is often said that a member of Parliament, when he retires or when he passes away, loved Parliament. Well, I want to share with this House a little secret. Jim achingly missed this place. He loved it because he was gregarious. He loved it—I do not apologize for this—because he was competitive. He loved the competition here. He loved it too because he believed that in this most imperfect of places there was potential for helping Canada to be renewed politically and spiritually.

I believe this is why thousands were at his funeral on Saturday. Our hearts are with him and his family as he is interred today. I believe that all who knew him will treasure his example and his memory.

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I wish to convey our heartfelt sorrow and sense of loss to Mr. Jepson's family: Bev, his wife and Jane, Craig, and Susan, his children.

Jim Jepson was a proud Canadian. He loved his country and its people passionately. As a member of Parliament between 1984 and 1988 he passionately spoke of this country, its values and its potential. He was a man with deeply held convictions and for that he was respected by members on both sides of the House. He was a man of honesty, integrity and principles, and that is why he fought for the things that he believed in. He believed in the family, in high moral standards and in people.

Just to give an example of the kind of man he was, in a speech that he gave on November 25 he said:

> All that is required for evil to triumph is for good men and women to do nothing.

He was always an optimist and optimistic about this country. That is why we pay tribute to a former parliamentarian. Canada has lost a good son, and London a fine citizen.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, God has taken from us one of his most favourite and faithful children with Jim Jepson's passing. He was a man who lived his faith. Those of us who had the good fortune to work with Jim were saddened when we heard the news of his passing. In many ways he contributed much to this place.

Although we disagreed on many items, he was always a man who was willing to sit down, have a cup of coffee and discuss our differences and explain at some length the position that he took on various issues and reasons for them.

He was a very humble man in many respects. He appreciated that we all held different views and yet respected those views. I say he was a very decent man, a very friendly man. One of the first people I encountered after the last election was Jim Jepson, as he walked around introducing himself to various people, looking forward to establishing strong and close working relationships with members from all sides of the House.

We express our deepest sympathy to his wife Bev and his children. We will miss Jim Jepson deeply and for a long time.

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, as has been mentioned Jim Jepson was elected in 1984. I remember prior to his election speaking to him about his candidacy. One of his concerns was how this place would affect his family. I think for a lot of us those are the kinds of questions we privately ponder as we look at public life.

• (1510)

Jim as has been mentioned here was gregarious. Possibly he is enjoying the scene right now as we are speaking about him, not in a partisan way but in the friendly way that he greeted people and met with them so easily.

He was concerned about the public purse and public issues well beyond the ones that he profiled in this House. He had very strong moral views, as has been mentioned. He was convinced that the nation had prosperity and stability if it relied on the roots on which it had been established, primarily in the concepts that were incorporated in our coat of arms. It is from Psalm 72:

> He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth.

We will miss his smile and we will miss his friendship. I as an individual will miss the fact that I think he was the only one who was not daunted by anyone who might have certain positions around here. He would pop in at any time no matter who was in the office and drive the staff around the bend because he had to talk to me. That was the kind of person he was, no airs and I appreciated that.

I remember we would go by this place when the buildings of Parliament Hill would be darkened and the flag would be lit up late at night, and he would express what many of us believe. He once said: "Jake, I still do not know how I got here". He was probably expressing that view for a lot of us. And then he would say: "Every time I see that flag on the Peace Tower I still get goose bumps, and I still get goose bumps from the fact that I have been asked to serve here".

Lastly, in respect to Jim, Jim has finished his race and he probably is best reflected in this House by what the writer to the Hebrews said in Chapter 11, in the modern transliteration which says: "And we have a crowd of witnesses who stand here in the grandstands cheering us on". Jim would cheer us on today, to love righteousness, to respect God's word, and to follow the precepts that are written in the cabinet room on the wall: "Love justice, you who are the rulers of the earth".

On behalf of all of us I am sure we want to convey to Bev, to Jane, to Susan, to Craig, and to his former constituents our sorrow and our thanks for his life.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, Jim Jepson was one of the most popular members of this House of Commons. He was liked by all of us on this side of the House. We appreciated his forthrightness and his candour. He was a fine gentleman. He had a radiant and buoyant personality that lit up a room.

I used to tease him about his being a born again Christian, with the convictions that that meant, the fact that he was not afraid to stand up or express his views, either his theological views or his political views. I must say I was closer to his religion than I was to his politics, but in any event he was a man who demanded and received instant respect.

I want to add the condolences of our party. Jim Jepson was an exemplary member of Parliament, a man who always wanted to get here and when he got here served well. When he lost, he took it with distinction and understanding that in a democracy that is the price one pays for public office.

I saw him once or twice after the election. His defeat had not phased him a bit. I want to say to his wife, Beverly, and his family, and to the constituents that he represented, that he was a fine member of Parliament, a credit to this House, a credit to the city of London, the constituency he represented. He is the type of person we need to elect to this House of Commons.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, I want to join other members in the House in saying a word of commendation about Jim Jepson.

Jim and I were put together rather early in his political career because of the seating arrangement in the House. I was sitting in the second row of our caucus over here, and he was sitting in the seat right across the aisle from me in the second Conservative row. As a result we became very good friends. We used to sit here and discuss how Question Period should and should not be run, and so on.

I join others who have talked about his deep commitment to his faith. There was no question that Jim Jepson was one of the finest when it came to keeping his religious faith. He was a good father and a good husband. He always talked very lovingly of his wife, Bev. They obviously had a very good relationship together. I can

also recall being in Washington with him as one of the delegation to the prayer breakfast meeting there. I was shocked the other night when I saw on the television that he had passed away at the age of 47.

I want to join with our colleague from London East who has spoken very well today and others in this House to convey my personal sympathy to Bev, to the members of the family and to his dear mother.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, Jim Jepson and I sat on the justice committee and on a number of other committees together. I suppose we probably had our differences of opinion from time to time on a number of issues.

I want to join with my colleagues in the House in paying tribute to Jim. While we did have some very fundamental differences of opinion on issues, he was always a fair and honest man who treated people with dignity and respect.

I want to join in extending condolences to his wife, Bev and to their children. I had the privilege of meeting them as well at a skiing holiday at Sunshine Village when Jim Jepson and Alex Kindy joined me on a couple of runs.

I was shocked and saddened, as were all members of this House who worked with Jim. Again, to his wife and family our deep condolences and respect.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I want to take but a minute of the House to add my words of condolences to Beverly Jepson. As some members may know, I was a pretty good friend of Jim Jepson. He once told me of his daughter who had been very ill at one time, and how he considered it a miracle that she had come back to life from the state where most experts were considering that she would not live.

Similarly when I heard that he had become gravely ill I sent a message to Beverly hoping that that same kind of miracle would happen again but this time of course to save Jim Jepson's own life.

I was very much an admirer of his religious convictions. I did not share his views on every topic, but I did share his view very profoundly on one topic. Most members will recognize that as being the topic of abortion. As a matter of fact, when I took the somewhat controversial position I do have, I suppose, I thanked two members of the House for their support and assistance. One of them was the member for York South—Weston and the other one whom I thanked publicly at that time was the then member for London East, Jim Jepson.

I want his family to know how much I appreciated having Jim Jepson around the House of Commons and how much we will all miss him in the future.

Mr. Speaker: May I ask hon. members to rise for one minute.

[*Editor's Note: Whereupon the House stood in silence.*]

* * *

• (1520)

PRIVILEGE

GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, earlier this morning a question of privilege was raised by the hon. member for Victoria with respect to the appointment of the CSIS committee.

I have now had an opportunity to obtain further information on the matter. I thought it might be helpful if I were to point out briefly what had happened at a previous time when these appointments were made. I did not have that information available to me at the time.

The act that was quoted this morning contemplates receiving names from the Official Opposition and the New Democratic Party as to appointments to the committee. On October 2, 1984 the Prime Minister wrote to the Leader of the Opposition and to Mr. Broadbent and sought their views with respect to possible candidates for appointment to a certain committee. I will read it if I may and then table the letter:

> Mr. Broadbent,
>
> I am ready to seek your views with respect to possible candidates for appointment to the Security Intelligence Review Committee established by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act. As you know, Section 34(1) of the act provides for the establishment of the SIRC whose members shall be appointed by the Governor in Council after consultation with the Prime Minister of Canada, with the Leader

of the Opposition in the House of Commons, and the Leader in the House of Commons of each party having at least 12 seats in the House.

The members of the review committee are to be selected from among members of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada who are not members of the Senate or House of Commons. A list of Privy Council members effective June 30, 1984 is attached for ease of reference.

I would like the review committee to be constituted in the near future and also I would like to receive your suggestions as soon as possible. I am also writing along these lines to Mr. Turner.

It is our understanding that there were no further discussions between the date of that letter and November 29, 1984. On November 29, 1984 the Prime Minister wrote to Mr. Broadbent:

As you will recall, I wrote on October 2, 1984, requesting your views regarding possible candidates for appointment to the Security Review Committee. I understand that you have suggested Mr. Saul Cherniak. I am pleased to accept this suggestion and wish to inform you that the planned members of the review committee will be, in addition to Mr. Cherniak, Mr. Ronald Atkey, Chairman; Frank McGee, Jean-Jacques Blais, and Mlle. P. Gauthier.

I expect the committee will be constituted on November 30, 1984.

I thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

The announcement was then made the next day.

I think that my hon. friend has inadvertently misunderstood the reasons for the section in the act, that is to make sure that when nominations come forward from the opposition parties they are in fact satisfactory to the opposition party and that it is not by way of a veto that the constitution process goes through but by way of confirming that the name of that person is satisfactory.

This time both Mr. Jean-Jacques Blais and Mr. Cherniak were reappointed and therefore the Prime Minister wrote the letter that was referred to and tabled earlier, in which he had the closing paragraph:

I would like to know your views on these proposed appointments as I would propose to announce them shortly.

I submit that the section is there because this is a very important committee. When it was originally constituted representation was wanted from all three parties. It is by way of confirmation in the name of the party in question, not by way of veto that the clause is there.

I submit that the letter was written and it was received in ample time to find out if the hon. Leader of the NDP and the right hon. Leader of the Official Opposition were in agreement with the names of the former appointees going forward. I am prepared to table the two letters that I have now referred to.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make the following comments on the question of privilege. First of all, I am not aware of the details of what happened in 1984. I was not here or a party to them. I will seek further information on that and, if I have anything to add to what the minister said, I will so advise Your Honour of these you before you make your ruling.

However, I would certainly say that whatever happened in practice in 1984 does not provide you with any assistance as to the legal requirements of the act and in particular on the question of consultation.

The act says that the appointments must be made "in consultation with" the Leader of the New Democratic Party and the Leader of the Official Opposition. There may or may not have been any reply back in 1984. There was no consultation in 1989. There was no communication, either implied or direct, from Mr. Broadbent's office of his views on this appointment. Therefore, the point that I made this morning seems to me unaffected by the additional information provided by the minister.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister's intervention, but I think he has misunderstood the point of the remarks that I made this morning and the remarks that the hon. member for Victoria made.

We were not arguing that the opposition has a right of veto of the appointment to be made by the government in this matter. The act does not provide for the consent of the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of the third party in the House of Commons. It provides for consultation only. It does not say consent. If it said consent, I would suggest that we have a veto. The minister spoke of a veto and I am not suggesting that, nor did I this morning.

The minister may have misunderstood me. I did not suggest that we in fact had a veto. What I suggested was that the government had an obligation to consult. What I

suggest in the strongest possible terms is that sending a letter less than 48 hours before you make the appointment and inviting comments is not consultation. It is not a reasonable time if a letter is to be the chosen method of the government.

The Minister of Justice is a lawyer, as you are, Mr. Speaker. Your Honour knows the rules of the law of contract in terms of making contracts. If the offerer chooses the method of communication he is stuck with that method and he has to give a reasonable time for a reply. The minister knows that a reasonable time for a reply to an offer in contract made on the telephone will be a shorter time than the time required if the offerer chooses to write by letter.

I suggest that the analogy is one that could properly be adopted in dealing with this question of consultation. The requirement here was for consultation with the opposition. The letter was sent at 3.30 on the afternoon of the 28th and on the morning of the 30th the announcement was made that this gentleman had been appointed to the position. I say that is too soon. There was not sufficient time.

The Leader of the Official Opposition and the Leader of the New Democratic Party had fair reason to expect the courtesy of a reasonable time to furnish their opinion to the government. I suggest that reasonable time was not given, and that was the thrust of my remarks. The failure to give that time amounted to a contempt of this House.

Mr. Speaker: I think there was extensive argument this morning.

The Minister of Justice came into the House and has given further information for my consideration. I have heard from both the hon. member for Victoria on behalf of the New Democratic Party and the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands on behalf of the Official Opposition in reply.

I will, of course, consider the matter further and report back to the House.

• (1530)

ADVERTISING

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege to draw to the attention of the Chair an advertisement that I received this morning which I think is clearly in violation of House rules and does affect the privileges of members of Parliament.

This particular ad calls for people throughout the House of Commons to purchase Christmas wreaths and to make cheques payable to a private company. Unfortunately, the ad is placed on an individual member's personal stationery. The office phone number that is published is the phone number of that particular member. Very much, Mr. Speaker, I think it is an abuse of the system in that it does use House of Commons stationery and House of Commons phones and I think deserves to be examined. I am quite happy to forward to the Speaker a copy of this particular ad.

Mr. Speaker: I of course will accept the ad. I suggest, though, before I close off this matter—I know that the Parliamentary Secretary would be most prepared to do this—he might discuss with the other side whether any comment is requested or is necessary and perhaps I could be given some indication of those discussions at least by tomorrow.

There is no need to pursue the matter now. I do not know who the member is and it may be that the parliamentary secretary could discuss it with the other side. I will hear further discussion later.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

NORDION AND THERATRONICS DIVESTITURE AUTHORIZATION ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-13, an act to authorize the divestiture of Nordion International Inc. and Theratronics International Limited, as reported (without amendment) from a legislative committee.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: There are four motions in amendment in the name of the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke set down on the Notice Paper for the report stage of Bill C-13, an act to authorize the divestiture of Nordion International Inc. and Theratronics International Limited. I have doubts with regard to the admissibility of Motion No. 1. The intent of the hon. member is to have Nordion International Inc. and Theratronics pay a royalty to Atomic Energy of Canada Limited based on

profits exceeding $10,000 each calendar year. The percentage of royalty would be increased as profits increased.

As I understand the bill, the principle is to authorize the divestiture by the government of these two companies. The argument can be made that the hon. member is introducing a new concept but it can be equally argued that he is setting out a term or a condition must be met in the sale. This, for example, is what is being done in subclause (1) of Clause 4.

I will therefore give the hon. member the benefit of the doubt and allow Motion No. 1. It will be debated and voted on separately.

[*Translation*]

Motions Nos. 2, 3 and 4 are in order. They will be grouped together for debate and the vote on motion No. 2 will also apply to Motions Nos. 3 and 4. I will now open debate on Motion No. 1.

[*English*]

MEASURE TO ENACT

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke) moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-13 be amended by adding immediately after line 19 at page 2 the following new clause:

"5. There shall be paid to the Crown corporation Atomic Energy of Canada Limited by Nordion and Theratronics an annual royalty on any profits of these corporations that exceed the sum of ten thousand dollars during any calendar year, and Nordion and Theratronics shall pay the Crown corporation an annual royalty as follows:

(a) on annual profits in excess of ten thousand dollars and up to one million dollars, three per cent;

(b) on the excess above one million dollars up to five million dollars, five per cent;

(c) on the excess above five million dollars up to ten million dollars, six per cent; and

(d) on the excess above ten million dollars, a proportional increase of one per cent for each additional five million dollars."

He said: Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your comments and your fairness.

I want to say at the outset that Bill C-13 which deals with the Nordion and Theratronics divestiture authorization act is a short piece of legislation that authorizes the Canadian Development Investment Corporation to sell any or all of the shares of Nordion International Inc. and Theratronics International Limited. The provisions of the bill are probably similar to those of other statutes authorizing the sale or privatization of Crown-owned corporations such as the 1988 legislation regarding Eldorado Nuclear Limited, for example.

The reason for Motion No. 1 is that both these companies had been developing within Atomic Energy of Canada's structure since 1952 up until they became Crown corporations just a short time ago and then handed over to the Canadian Development Investment Corporation for sale. For a while prior to 1952 they were part of Eldorado Mining and Refining, so it is fair to say that 45 years of research and development have gone into what we have in these two Crown corporations today.

Nordion really has done a tremendous job in the field of nuclear medicine for the treatment of cancer. Nordion produces isotope products and also deals with industrial irradiation. The isotope products can be found in radio-pharmaceuticals for medical diagnosis and therapy. Isotopes in bulk are used by other companies for radio-pharmaceutical production and, of course, industrial irradiation, cobalt 60 sources for industrial research purposes and irradiators are used to sterilize medical and consumer products.

This type of research has gone a long way, and these two companies are very important in the scheme of things. What can be more important today as we look around us than the years and the public funds that have gone into companies that deal to a very large degree with the treatment of cancer at a time when the public is donating money for research? The country has spent 45 years putting money into Atomic Energy of Canada and Eldorado Mining and Refining Corporation to bring this research in this field to where it is today.

Today, we are selling cobalt therapy units all around the world and are competing very well. Canada produces something like 80 per cent of the world's supply of radioisotopes. I think that is a tremendous accomplishment.

I feel very strongly that Motion No. 1 is an absolute necessity because the government has been telling Atomic Energy of Canada Limited since the finance minister's budget back in 1985 to either make money and pay your way or we are going to close you down. After all

this tremendously productive work in the field of medicine has been done, it is a very cruel way to go.

These two companies are finally profitable. Nordion has been profitable for a long time. Theratronics has done very well. It is in the profit area now and it was making a profit before Theratronics became a Crown corporation. That was proven in the committee stage hearing of this bill.

How can we tell Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, which has spent all those years since 1952 supporting this kind of research for both these Crown corporations, that we are going to sell them off and say good day and then turn around and tell the company to finance itself or else?

The reason for my amendment becomes very clear. Why should a royalty not be paid back to Atomic Energy of Canada Limited since over the years the taxpayers' money has gone into this research and brought these two companies to where they are today? That is why I have provided in this amendment that on annual profits in excess of $10,000 and up to $1 million, a 3 per cent royalty would be paid to Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, and on the excess above $1 million up to $5 million, the companies would pay 5 per cent of their profit to AECL. On the excess above $5 million up to $10 million, there would be a 6 per cent levy for royalties to the parent company. On the excess above $10 million, there would be a proportional increase of 1 per cent for each additional $5 million.

• (1540)

This is a very, very small part of the companies' profits, and if a Crown corporation such as Atomic Energy of Canada Limited is going to continue doing this kind of research, build out of that parent company very healthy financial corporations of their own and go out and be privatized by government legislation, then surely there is something owing to the people of Canada back through Atomic Energy of Canada Limited so that that research and development can continue.

Who would ever deny that royalties from a profit–making company that makes the cobalt therapy treatment units and related cancer equipment and medical radioisotopes for the treatment of cancer and other refined purposes in the medical field should not be paid to a parent company instead of setting these companies up and having them make profits on the things that have actually been done by research money produced by the people of Canada over a period of 45 years?

If the parent company is going to continue its operations, how can it do it without help from those profit–making parts of the company? How can you say to AECL: "Now, you guys pay your bills but we are going to take all your profits away from you"? That is not the way to go.

Here is a tremendous success story in the field of medicine which has unfolded over the years. It has been a tremendous success. I believe the first cobalt therapy unit was first tested in the Royal Victoria Hospital in London, Ontario. Today they are in hospitals all around the world.

My strong feeling on this is that not only should there be a flow of money back into Atomic Energy of Canada Limited today from these companies, but certainly from any other companies that have been given public funds over the years to become successful operations and to contribute to the treatment of very serious diseases. Surely this Canada of ours deserves something back in return.

This is nothing new. You have royalties on books, on publications and on companies. There is absolutely no reason why this motion cannot be accepted.

I can only say that we are asking the people of Canada to pull out their pocketbooks and donate to cancer campaigns across this country to support research and development and then the government is turning around and selling off two profitable Crown corporations that have developed equipment for the treatment of cancer and medical radioisotopes for the treatment of cancer. We are going to say to the companies that buy them: "They are all yours. Now go ahead and make a profit".

The markets are already there in the world. In fact, there is going to be a tremendous increase in the profits of Nordion in the immediate years ahead. These companies are going to make great profits on it. We have set them up with public funds, they are going to pay a price for that company, but nothing beyond that. They have the research done up to date and from now on, I hope, they will do that themselves in a very effective way. We are all looking for that kind of leadership.

But there has got to be something left for those scientists and researchers in the parent Crown corporation Atomic Energy of Canada Limited so that they can go ahead and produce some more dynamic discoveries for the treatment of this horrible disease cancer that is taking so many loved ones away from our society today.

I ask the House to support this amendment very strongly. I hope the government will consider it. It is not asking for a great deal of the profits. They are very small percentages. Certainly the government has had a team trying to put a financial plan together for Atomic Energy of Canada for about the last four months or more. What would be better than to give AECL an income from what it and the Canadian taxpayers have produced over the years?

I would hope that the government would look at this amendment very seriously. It is one that has been tossed around among the science community for a long time. I think that its principle does a lot to really support the argument.

I believe my time is about up. I thank you for your patience, and I would ask the House and the government to give very serious consideration to this very important amendment which I am sure will be very well received, not only by the science community of this country, but also by those who are extremely interested in seeing continued the kind of top level, top drawer research and development that has been done and as a result has produced these two very fine Crown corporations.

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to say a few words on the motion of the hon. member for Renfrew.

Clearly, the two Crown corporations, Nordion and Theratronics, are not well known to Canadians, although the parent company, Atomic Energy of Canada, is very well known and has given us some of the most outstanding research this country has ever produced. The development of the Candu reactor is the most well known portion of it, although the issue of nuclear energy is sometimes controversial.

The kind of work that is done by these two Crown corporations, Nordion and Theratronics, which really were spawned by Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, is not controversial. There is no controversy with regard to the tremendous research and value they have given to medical treatment in this country with the cobalt bomb, the radioisotopes that are used in medical treatment and so on.

It is of interest that such a large number of establishments have been built around the world by Nordion, processing plants for sterilization of equipment and so on. I am told that there have been 145 radiation processing plants established in the world, 90 of which were built by Nordion and 75 of which Nordion sells cobalt to.

Clearly these companies are very important to Canada. Nordion sells some $90 million worth of sterilization systems a year and Theratronics some $40 million of cobalt therapy machines. Between them, they employ over 700 people.

I think there are two issues at stake here. One is the importance of AECL as an ongoing entity to our country. Clearly, with the greenhouse effect we are going to need more and more nuclear energy in this country to generate electricity. We are expecting a report in the next week or two which will probably catalogue that some eight new nuclear generating plants will have to be built in Ontario during the next 10 or 12 years or less. AECL should be able to have the benefits of these two Crown corporations which it has developed.

• (1550)

The hon. member for Renfrew has put forward, I believe, a very ingenious way in which these companies could be privatized. Some of the millions of dollars that have gone into the research and development could flow back to AECL for the ongoing research which it is doing in nuclear energy and waste management systems for the country. This ongoing problem will require a great deal more research and development in the years ahead.

It does not seem to make sense to sell off all the money-making portions of Crown corporations in a privatization activity. The hon. member has put forward in Motion No. 1 a procedure for royalties to flow back to the Crown corporation, Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, which will give to the Crown some return on the tremendous amount of investment that has taken place to pay tribute to the genius of those researchers who have developed this outstanding research and medical technology.

I support the hon. member for Renfrew. I think he has hit upon a very useful way in which the medical profession and medical services units around the world using radioisotopes and sterilization equipment will be able to make those funds available to the parent Crown corporation, Atomic Energy of Canada.

We not only have an ongoing need for Atomic Energy of Canada for developing nuclear energy in our country but also for the disposal of nuclear waste and all that complicated research which will take place. It does not make sense that we just sell off all the money-making portions of a company like AECL and leave the less profitable portions.

Clearly Nordion and Theratronics have been the money-makers and have been successful. The idea the hon. member put forward that we try to retain the ownership in Canada is a good idea. The cobalt bomb for the treatment of cancer is synonymous with Canada and Canadian technology and medical research. That idea is one worth considering as well when we move on to those other motions farther down the page with regard to Bill C-13.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that on the other side of the House we will get support for these several amendments which I think will strengthen the bill and will serve our country well. It will serve AECL well and will give back to the country some of the investment which the taxpayers have put in to this Crown corporation which has developed modern, new, advanced medical technology. Thus, we will be paying back to the Crown some of the funds which have gone into the establishment of this important and worth-while technology.

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, I too am very pleased to stand here in the House today to speak on the amendments put forward by my colleague, the member for Pembroke with regard to Bill C-13, an act to authorize the divestiture of Nordion International Inc. and Theratronics International Limited.

I know my colleagues have already mentioned the history of both Nordion and Theratronics but I would like to mention it as well. They have been part of a Crown corporation, Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, for a good number of years.

Atomic Energy of Canada Limited was formed in 1952. The history of these two companies began in the early post-war years and they were connected at that time to Eldorado Mining. In the late 1970s, a reorganization of AECL led to the commercial products division being reformed as the Radio Chemical Company and Medical Products Company. In 1987 both companies were profit-making and in 1988 ownership was transferred to the control of CDIC which, of course, is the Canadian Development Investment Corporation.

Now we have Bill C-13, which is to authorize privatization of these two companies. This is what concerns me. Theratronics is essentially a manufacturing company and Nordion is a high-tech company dealing largely with nuclear materials and, therefore, Canadian control is highly desirable. They are a leading international supplier of nuclear-based products, serving the world's health care industry. The industrial radiation division produces over half of the world's cobalt 60 radiation processing equipment.

Mr. Speaker, you may be wondering why I am briefly giving you this background information on these two companies, but I wish to reaffirm the importance to Canada and to Atomic Energy of Canada Limited of these two companies located in the nearby riding of Lanark—Carleton in the city of Kanata.

Nowhere can I find out the real reason why these companies are being privatized, although it does give reasons as to why they wish to privatize these two profit-making—and I have to stress profit-making—companies. It does give the reason that they will be better able to compete on the international market and will, therefore, make more profit than they are already making, but I guess this is where I have the difficulty with it.

The companies will obviously then be making profit for a private industry rather than for Canada and Canada has invested millions of dollars into these two companies and into AECL. I guess I am bothered about why we should be bothered to sell them in the first place.

Are we really hanging AECL out to dry on this one? It relies to a certain degree on the profits coming from these companies to subsist or to aid AECL in its operations because it is a research and development company.

How is it going to be put up for sale? It is said that it will be put out to the public tender process and it will be fair and square. Will these be invited bids or will they be selective? I think there are too many questions that beg answers.

Who is going to sit on the board? Is there a possible conflict? Who are these people? Is there going to be public accountability? These companies were formed with money from the Canadian taxpayers, millions and millions of dollars.

I know the minister responsible for privatization has said that it will provide these companies with the impetus for growth and development and the freedom to pursue new market opportunities. Those are wonderful words. Does this mean that just because a government appears to be committed to privatization, it must move in that direction come hell or high water, without any regard to who it is going to hurt?

I am a partner in a family business that has been fairly successful over the years. We always sell the losers and keep the winners, we do not sell the winners and keep the losers. This is what is being done here, the government is selling the winners, for goodness sake. I think the losers will be the Canadian people and Atomic Energy of Canada Limited.

Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, as per the amendment proposed by my colleague, should share in the profits of these companies. It needs to share in order to allow it to continue.

• (1600)

I look at other Crown corporations that are slowly being sold off. I think of de Havilland and, of course, the DASH-8 aircraft and of how fortunate an American company was to receive this Canadian company that was finally making profits. Look at the profit-making part of VIA Rail which is causing people in Amtrak to wring their hands with glee. I wonder whose buddies are going to benefit from these two companies.

Twenty-five per cent of Nordion cannot be out-of-country owned and I think that is a wise move, but what assurance do we have that that same thing will hold true with regard to Theratronics? We are saying that it will be held by the employees. What guarantee do we have that this will always take place?

I support the amendments of my colleague from Pembroke. I hope that the government side of this House will see merit in what he is trying to do. I think we have a responsibility as parliamentarians to ensure Canadians that Atomic Energy of Canada Limited has a share in the profit-making of these companies and we have a responsibility to ensure that Theratronics remains a Canadian-owned company.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity this afternoon to say a few very brief words on Bill C-13, an act to authorize the divestiture of Nordion International Inc. and Theratronics International Limited. I want, in particular, to pay tribute to my distinguished colleague from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke who has fought very hard in the interests of Canadians, both at the legislative committee and now by proposing these very thoughtful amendments which he is bringing forward in relation to this bill.

The minister across the way, who is sitting very patiently listening to the opposition's contributions to this debate, says that this bill is in the interests of Nordion and Theratronics. Assuming this is accurate, why then did the minister and his colleagues want this bill to be in and out of committee so quickly? What did they have to hide? Why was the committee not given the opportunity to listen to witnesses, experts who wanted to testify?

My colleague from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke tells me that he wanted people like representatives of the Canadian Cancer Society and others to be able to come to the committee and make a contribution, to explain their views, how they felt about the divestiture. Did they feel that the bill was adequate? Did they feel that the minister should have provided better assurances such as the ones mentioned now in Motion No. 1? What did the Tory majority do? They did what they are known to do best. They rammed the bill through with no witnesses.

The member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke is quite justly upset about this. I am glad and thankful that our member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke is standing up for Canadians on issues like this.

What does the government want to do? It wants to divest itself of these two Crown corporations which are profit-making. My colleague from Nepean has spoken very eloquently about how this government has its priorities all messed up, how it wants to sell those things

that are running well and keep those things that are not, which, even using Tory definitions of how to do things—heaven forbid that anyone should ever use those—does not work.

What are the Tories going to do afterwards? We have AECL, of course, which is the parent company, and now they are removing the paying component. What is going to happen to AECL afterwards? I ask that question and I want the minister to stand in this House and express very clearly and in a tangible way in legislation the long-term survival of AECL. That is what my colleague from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke is concerned with. That is why he wants this amendment passed and that is why he wants a number of other amendments passed. That is why some of us on this side of the House are standing up in the interests of the taxpayers of Canada, of the residents of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, who work at AECL, and several others involved with these industries in Kanata and elsewhere.

I know that the minister is in a rush to get this bill through. He may have committed himself to the Prime Minister or the House Leader, or to whomever, that he did not need much House time and this would go smoothly. I am sorry to disappoint him. Well, on second thoughts, I am not really that sorry, but I do want to tell the minister that he is just not going to get it quite that quickly.

I am not known to make long speeches—

Some Hon. Members: No, never.

Mr. Boudria: —and I would not want to take the time of the House, but if I have to I could be convinced that it is necessary to speak on all of these amendments and to encourage colleagues to do so. Perhaps the minister across the way could save a lot of the time of the House and he could encourage his colleagues to vote in favour of good, worthwhile, thoughtful amendments such as the ones proposed by my distinguished colleague from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

Mr. McDermid: Can we get a second opinion?

Mr. Boudria: A member across the way asks if we can get a second opinion. Well, we have had four opinions in a row here from this side of the House on this amendment, but this is not sufficient for the member across the way, so I will have to encourage my colleagues to provide more constructive opinions in favour of this amendment. Perhaps if 15 or 20 colleagues spoke in favour of this amendment, all of us seconding the very worth while proposition of my colleague from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, members across the way would consider that to be sufficient opinion.

We have only had four speakers so far speaking in favour of that amendment. The member across the way has invited us to get more opinions to further confirm the fact that this amendment is worthwhile and we are not going to disappoint him. I promise that we are going to have a number of other colleagues provide meaningful and equally constructive comment in favour of the amendment that has been offered to us as Motion No. 1 by my distinguished colleague, the hon. member from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

I would not want to take too much time of the House because I know so many other members want to speak in favour of Motion No. 1 to amend Bill C-13, but I thought that it was absolutely necessary to express to the minister across the way that we on this side of the House do not think much of the strategy of allowing this bill to go to committee for one or two meetings and then to refuse the opportunity to hear any witnesses, save and except two I think, and to pretend that this is a sufficient amount of debate before the Government of Canada divests itself of these paying propositions which are subsidiaries of AECL.

We do not think this is adequate. We think the bill should at least be amended. Preferably, it should go back to committee. Witnesses should be listened to and allowed to provide the contribution that they would have gladly made had we given them the opportunity to do so. But the government was in a rush to get this bill back in to the House at report stage and third reading thinking that perhaps after a few moments of discussion in the House the bill would be completed. Well, it may take a little longer than that.

The next time the government brings the bill forward it should consider allowing a proper number of witnesses to express their views. As a matter of fact, I invite the minister to stand in his place right now and refer the bill back to the committee and have the witnesses make the contributions that they would have made. If he does not want to do that, I guess some of us will have to speak on behalf of the witnesses who could not appear. As much as we hate to do so, we will have to work ourselves up to making that contribution. We hope that it does not take

too, too long, perhaps just a bit longer, but things need to be restated and my colleagues and I intend to do so.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

• (1610)

[*English*]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

Mr. Speaker: Before I recognize the hon. member for Ottawa West, it is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: The hon. member for Southwest Nova—Fisheries; the hon. member for Bonavista—Trinity—Conception—Canadian Armed Forces; the hon. member for Kenora—Rainy River—VIA Rail.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

NORDION AND THERATRONICS DIVESTITURE AUTHORIZATION ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-13, an act to authorize the divestiture of Nordion International Inc. and Theratronics International Limited, as reported (without amendment) from a legislative committee.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, today's debate has been a fine example of the schizophrenia of this government when it comes to the role and the responsibility of government.

We started this morning with debate on a bill, the stated purpose of which is to build excellence and pride in the public sector. To do that we are prepared to set up a national centre for management development with a budget of $11.7 million a year while we are closing down the Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, or at least telling that centre it has no more public role to play, and we are quite prepared to turn over the concerns for the health and safety of Canadians in the workplace to a corporation that can turn a profit, or at least pay its own way.

This bill takes some of the finest examples of excellence, pride, productivity and innovation in the public sector and wants to sell them. We want to sell these things without gaining for Canadians any return on the investment they have made for over 47 years in the success of Atomic Energy of Canada Limited and the various corporations that have been part of its structure, part of its excellent research history and part of its development of products that are serving the health needs, not only of Canadians but of people around the world.

The last annual report of NSERC identified that one of the most significant things that Canadians have to do for the good of the economy and for the long term prosperity of the country is to seek out those areas in which, by natural attributes of the nation, we have the opportunity to innovate, to create products that not only meet the needs of the world in areas such as the environment, biotechnology, cold regions living and cold regions research but also to create new economic opportunities for Canada.

I cannot think of another area of endeavour that more closely meets that description than the whole area of radiation technology. We have excelled in this area for decades. We have excelled in the development of new products. We have met a crucial human need around the world with our research and with our products in the area of atomic energy. Now we want to divest ourselves of a superb foundation we have built and with which we can create new technologies and new products and continue prospering.

Not only that, but we want to get rid of companies that Canadians working for their government—albeit perhaps somewhat indirectly but working with public funds—have built to a state where they are in fact very attractive to the private sector, companies that, for a number of years now have been funding further research, the development of further technology and products at Atomic Energy of Canada Limited. We want to get rid of something that is doing well, making a profit and assisting us in further establishing a strong, economic niche which, when I hear the dogma from the other side of the House, is what we want to do, we want to

invest in those things which are going to let our economy prosper.

What is the sense of getting rid of two companies that are doing exactly that? How are we supporting research and development and laying a strong foundation for further technology, further products and further export markets by divesting ourselves of companies that are producing the revenue to continue that research? At the same time this government has cut the budget of Atomic Energy of Canada Limited by $100 million it is divesting Atomic Energy Canada Limited of being able to fund, with the companies it has developed, its own ongoing research without further draws on the public purse.

If there is ever a place for public policy it is in the area of the development of nuclear technology and nuclear products. As a member of the environment committee I am constantly faced, at hearings we have every week, with the damage the garbage we have dumped into the environment, sometimes decades ago, is now doing to the world that we live in. I am faced with the need to go back and start undoing the damage we have done.

Nuclear technology is one of those newer technologies which we know produces a dangerous by-product from which we do not yet know quite how to protect the world. It is an area in which the need for public policy and public control is very evident. We simply cannot go ahead and produce harmful by-products as we have done in the past only to have them surface in the future for our children and our grandchildren to take care of.

As Canadians we have invested in this and we are now at a point where we are profiting from our investment and reinvesting that profit into the future of our country. It seems to me that a good conservative approach to this, in fact, would be to keep reinvesting those dollars rather than getting rid of something that is producing benefit for all of us and will continue to produce and benefit rather than allow someone else to profit from the risks we have taken and from the dollars we have invested.

I do want to speak for a moment on the process of the bill. This is the third time in a couple of months that I have seen successful attempts by government members to thwart the democratic process, to cut off debate, to cut off a thorough and careful examination of the public interest in matters. This happened with Bill C-16 on which we were hardly into committee when the government members of the committee were moving to limit debate to a matter of only hours on something as important as the establishment of a $3 trillion project, the Canadian space program.

On Bill C-21, a multi-billion dollar program, debate was limited, and now again on Bill C-13 we have the immediate chop. The people who have some expertise, some knowledge, some insight to contribute to our debate on public issues, are not able to come forward. We are not willing, as a House, or certainly as a government, to profit from that expertise and that knowledge.

Just the two matters that have been in the House today show the contradictory nature of this government's approach. The government talks about excellence and pride and innovation in the public sector and then immediately that happens slaps in the face people who have been responsible for that innovation and that excellence, saying, "We are selling off what you have created. We will no longer allow your current work to profit from what you created; and to see your investment reinvested in the future of this country."

Well that is foolish. That is short-sighted and it is wrong. I hope the members on the other side of the House will take the amendments proposed by my hon. colleague seriously and look at how in fact those amendments will be to the benefit of Canada and the benefit of research and development technology in this country and not simply dismiss them out of hand.

• (1620)

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I was not going to participate in this debate but I came into the House this afternoon and read the amendment we are now discussing in the name of the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

I thought that surely the government is agreeing to this amendment. Then I was informed that it was not and I thought this must be a simple error on the part of the Minister of State for Privatization. Because the amendment seems such a sensible one I could not imagine that the minister would disagree with it. The question of the sale of these companies is one that I would have thought the minister would regard as self-evident. He has decided, in his wisdom, to sell the companies. We may have

a disagreement, perhaps an ideological one, on this side of the House with that.

But even accepting that it was a sensible decision to sell, the Minister of State for Privatization is a businessman. I assumed that he was an experienced businessman who would have some considerable knowledge of the stock markets and the way they work in Canada. In fact I think it has been suggested that he was a tycoon, Mr. Speaker. I do not know. In any event, he knows that when you are going to sell stocks you wait until a propitious moment. You wait until your company is at its greatest value, when, in the eyes of the investing public, it will have the greatest worth because it is then that the investing public will pay the highest possible price for the shares.

Here we have two companies that the minister wants to sell on the market immediately. He is in a great rush. He wants to get this bill quickly through Parliament so that he can proceed with this public offering. Yet there is some evidence that these companies are now profitable and they are going to become much more profitable in the years ahead.

Surely if the minister had the best interests of Canadians at stake he would wait until the companies had achieved some considerable degree of profitability and then launch them out in a public offering so that he would maximize the dollar return for the Canadian owners of this company, all of us as Canadians. Surely he would want to sell these companies at a moment in their existence when they would fetch the highest possible dollar return on the investment.

Yet that does not appear to be the minister's attitude. He says, "I really don't care about how much I get for these companies, I want them sold now". I am amazed to hear that kind of argument from the minister because he is the one who is always harping in this House about the deficit.

To hear him complain as we have day after day, month after month, literally whining in this House about how dreadful the deficit is and how it has to be brought down, and for him to now want to sell one of our assets for less than it might fetch in another year when it could do more good in reducing the deficit, is absolutely astounding for me. Yet that seems to be the attitude of the minister. The Minister of Finance bleats and whines day after day in this House that he never gets any suggestions from the Opposition on how to reduce the deficit. Well, I will give him one right now, free. Hang on to these companies and sell them when they are worth more. Sell them when the value has gone up in the eyes of the investing public, I say to the Minister of State for Privatization. I hope he will convey the message to the Minister of Finance. He is the one who is always whining that we do not make any suggestions on how to lower the deficit. Yet here I am making a suggestion. Why does he not come running down here and say he agrees with me and accept to either postpone the sale or accept this amendment which provides for a return for the taxpayers of Canada?

We have heard from the previous speakers in this debate on this side of the House about how much money the government has invested in these corporations over the years. That money has come from the public Treasury of Canada. These companies are owned by us as taxpayers of Canada. Surely if we have an obligation as Members of Parliament, and I suggest that the obligation is even higher for the ministers of the Crown, to account for the public moneys of Canada and the way they are spent, surely we should be using our very best efforts to get the highest possible return on the investment for Canadians.

Surely one of the ways to do that is to accept this amendment which will provide that on this very significant investment Canadians have made in these companies there will be return in the years to come of moneys that they have put in by way of these royalty payments on the developed patents and so on that these companies have worked out.

Surely that is a reasonable approach to this. I do not understand the minister's reluctance. Does he think it is going to lower the value of the shares, and if so, by how much? Apparently he will not produce any evidence of this. He did not want to have it discussed in committee. The committee hearings were cut short.

I have read some of the transcript. I have it right here on my desk. There was a motion moved in early October by the Conservative members on the committee that the whole matter be reported to the House by October 26. I have it right here at page 21 of the proceedings of the committee on October 19. If the minister was not there, he had somebody there on his behalf. He knows what

went on in the committee. He knows that what I am saying is correct. The discussion was cut short so that these embarrassing facts, these possible explanations, could not come to light.

Surely if they had come to light and the Canadian public became aware that by holding on to the shares of these companies for another year, or by agreeing to an amendment such as the one that we are discussing today, the Canadian public would get a greater return on the sale of these assets, the public would have agreed with us that this amendment is entirely suitable and entirely proper.

I say to the minister through you, Mr. Speaker, reconsider your decision, Mr. Minister, to reject this amendment. Look at it in a more favourable light. This is doing something for the people of Canada who put their dollars into these corporations over the years. This is getting the money back on these dollars that are being forgone by the immediate sale. If that money can be recovered in this way, surely it is a reasonable way for us as the House of Commons to deal with this bill and say, look, the people of Canada deserve better than a quick fire sale of these corporations. Surely they deserve to get something for the substantial investment that they have put in and that will be coming back over the next few years in sales of the products that these companies manufacture, increase and improve.

That is the evidence we have before us. On the limited evidence that we have that would seem to be the view of the people who are running these corporations. Surely the Minister of State for Privatization has an obligation to speak for these companies, not just to speak for the potential investors who want to snap these shares up at bargain prices, but that seems to be his aim.

This government has rushed headlong into this privatization nonsense. It has sold off assets that belong to the Canadian taxpayers, sold them to a select few of those taxpayers at fire sale prices, I suggest. We should discontinue this practice at once. These companies have significant assets. These companies have invested a great deal of money in developing certain patents and procedures that can be marketed. Surely Canadians should get a return on those developments, those patents and those procedures.

The royalty scheme that is suggested in the amendment by my distinguished colleague from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke deserves the consideration of the minister instead of this apparent rejection, disinterest and lack of concern. Surely the minister has an obligation to the people of Canada to speak up and support this amendment, and I invite him to do so.

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by congratulating the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke for his effort to introduce an amendment to this House on a subject that is very dear to my heart. As someone who has been involved in research and development, as well as someone who worked in the private sector for a number of years, I know too well the importance of research and development for our country and for the well-being of our economy.

The amendment put before the House is nothing more than an assurance that the government and Canadians can rely on. Asking an ambassador or someone who is interested in purchasing a company, or a group of people who are planning to purchase a company, to pay a part of the profit to Atomic Energy so that it can be used in research and development is not asking a lot. If anything this money could be put to a proper use. It will be put to proper use by Atomic Energy, a corporation that has over the past decades done a tremendous amount of work in the area of research and development in the advancement of technology in Canada.

• (1630)

I have looked over the four different amendments and to me they make a lot of sense. I would say: why not? Normally when people sell an item it is because they are not satisfied with it. It is a white elephant, an item that is not generating any kind of revenue. They sell something because it is not serving the purpose.

My God, we have two world-class corporations about which every Canadian can be proud—those on the local scene and those on the international scene. We are planning to put them on the market so that we can sell them and so that we can get the funds.

I would say that if the government had been up front and indicated that all of the revenues from the sale of these corporations would go toward research and development, probably I would not have stood up in order to speak on this issue. But in the absence of any kind of

assurances that the proceeds from the sale of these two corporations, if and when they are sold, will go toward research and development, I find it alarming for a great many reasons.

First, the Prime Minister himself day after day at every possible opportunity has spoken on the issue of research and development. I have a lot of admiration for everything that he has said so far on this issue. He has spoken on the issue of education. He has spoken on the importance of Canada being competitive in the international market. I appreciate that very much. But now I have seen the government proceeding with the sale of two of the finest corporations owned by Canadians without giving any kind of assurances that the proceeds will go toward research and development. It is quite alarming.

I would suggest to the minister and to the government that it is not too late. We still have some time. I would suggest that the government take these recommendations to heart, look at them, and if for whatever reason it finds out that the sale is not going to be beneficial, then we will talk about it at a later stage. In my view it is time for us to make this issue as important as it should be.

We have to elevate the issue of research and development to the point where it deserves to be. We have to tackle it with a little more aggressiveness than we have been doing in the past.

In my view this is nothing but the beginning. I would say putting Crown corporations on the table and putting them on the market to sell is a decision that this government has proceeded with, and I am not going to argue the pros or cons of it. But the subject before us deals with a matter of great importance. It needs the attention and the concern of members on all sides of the House.

Without going further into the debate, I know the minister is listening and I have a lot of respect for him. I know he understands the issue too well to let it go by without any serious consideration. I hope that the government will look at the amendments of the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke and act upon them.

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, I would like first to thank the House for this opportunity to speak on Bill C-13 and the amendments to it presented by my learned colleague from Renfrew.

First, I think it would be important to talk about the theory and the importance of the Tory ideology as it relates to the selling off of Crown corporations before we get involved in the bill itself. I think it would be important for the people of Canada to understand what we are doing here today as members of Parliament.

It is not so much the fact that we are selling off Crown corporations which is very difficult to stomach; it is the fact that we spend millions and millions of dollars of taxpayers' money to improve on a particular area that is deficient in our country, for example, research and development related to atomic energy. We get involved in that particular process at the taxpayers' expense. Once we get to a certain point in its evolution and its history, this particular government has decided that it is time to give it back to private enterprise. In itself that is not so bad. The situation that is really intolerable is the way it has been done.

First, lengthy debate did not take place before it happened. In reality there has been no debate at all. If the people of Canada knew just what is being given away and what is being put out there on the block and the fact that there is not going to be a lot of benefit to Canadians once it is sold, then I think there would be a large outcry by Canadians as it relates to that issue.

What really makes me nervous about this whole particular ideology is that there are other Crown corporations out there that have not been sold yet which the minister would love to get his hands on to give back to private enterprise. An example of this would be Canada Post. It will not happen just yet since it has not started to create enough of a profit.

That is a perfect example of an issue that in this particular term of this particular government could become a bit of a national debate in the sense that once it becomes a profitable corporation it would be much easier to sell. Therefore, when that takes place, we will be looking at the same type of philosophy that we are seeing now. It is simply this—there is no debate. It is being pushed through as quickly as possible so that Canadians will not realize what is happening. They have so much on their plate now.

We have the GST that is keeping everybody busy. We have the abortion bill about which everybody is in an uproar. Everybody is in such a disturbing state as it relates to the direction this particular government is taking that these lesser areas of emphasis, these smaller

areas of change, may not be as visible and can go through without extensive debate. That in itself is a shame for a country that considers itself to be by far one of the most democratic countries in the world.

If the minister responsible for this bill was assured that this is the direction Canadians want to take, then why should there not be a debate? Why should this not be an issue for people to stand up and toss around their own ideas on, whether it be on the socialist side, the Liberal side, or the Conservative side?

Let us take a look at another area of major concern as it relates to this bill. I refer to the number of dollars that were pumped into these particular companies. The people of Canada felt that it was a responsible situation for past governments to get involved in. Now they are going to lose that feeling for that particular company because it is going to be put back in the private sector.

That is not so bad if there is a rationale behind it, but the minister and the government are bullying their way through the privatization of many Crown corporations, and we have no understanding as to why. The rationale behind this particular privatization is simply this: these companies will be more competitive in the international market.

I ask this simple question through you, Mr. Speaker, of the minister: If there are problems with marketing on the international scene, why not give that company the opportunity to allow for that change to take place? Therefore we would resolve that situation. Instead of selling off a very competitive company that is paying dividends to the taxpayers of Canada, after so many years of we taxpayers paying into it, here was a perfect opportunity for us to get some money back for a change, but once it becomes profitable this government wants to give it away. I have difficulty understanding the rationale for that.

• (1640)

What is really scary about all this is when we consider what may happen when CN becomes profitable. That should not be too long once it starts selling off everything and once it becomes a little bit more profitable. That may not be in this mandate, but it could be in a few mandates down the road. Maybe it will even make it in the next three or four years and this particular government will have the opportunity to give it away.

If we take a look at the number of dollars the taxpayers pumped into CN and the roadbeds that go with it, we see that we are talking about billions and billions of dollars. You will never get that back if you sell that company. But, then, does that matter to this particular government?

It is not so much the fact that we sell something that bothers us. It is how it is done and why it is done. That is the issue here. That is what we are debating here. My hon. colleague has put some amendments forward. They are good amendments because they protect the investment of the taxpayers of this country who have invested dearly in these companies.

I would like to ask the minister to stand up in his place and give us his rationale as to why we do not give the taxpayers of Canada some incentive to continue to buy these shares once these companies go on the open market, knowing that the taxpayers of Canada will receive some return.

Who is to say that the people who buy these shares will be Canadians? Who is to say it will not be some foreign investors who come in and buy the shares of this particular company? What will happen is that we will have companies operating in Canada that are owned in part by foreigners.

It is important for Canadians to understand that it is not so bad that a foreigner might buy a few shares of particular Crown corporations. What is drastically disgusting—and I think members opposite should look at this very seriously—is that more and more of the companies in this country are not owned by Canadians but by multinationals or subsidiaries of those multinationals. I think that is something of major importance in this debate. It is something we should look at seriously.

If the minister were serious in enhancing the debate on the privatization of Crown corporations in a more equitable and fulfilling manner for the members in this House, he would allow the committee to review and to ask to hear from a lot more witnesses than have been asked to come forward. They have their own feelings and ideas as to what the intent of these particular Crown corporations have been and will be in the future. They should decide whether we want to sell them off, as my colleague has said, for bargain basement prices or for

nothing which is even worse. If that is the case and if it is acceptable to Canadians, we will agree with the government that that is the way to go.

In reality we know that Canadians do not want that. That is why the government is trying to ram this through. It is inappropriate. That is why the government wants this debate to be so short. I suggest we will continue on with this because it is a very important topic to Canadians.

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, I too am delighted to take part in the debate on Bill C–13 this afternoon. I have had an opportunity to review the bill. I note at the very beginning that it is an act to authorize the divestiture of Nordion International Inc. and Theratronics International Limited.

"Divestiture" is an interesting word. It could simply have said sale or sell out or give away. But, no, the government has to go to the dictionary and come up with a $64 word for a 64–cent idea. They are going to divest themselves of two companies. Who is "they"? It is the people of Canada who ultimately are divesting themselves of these two corporations. We know that the government has a fix on divesting itself, in effect a fix on divestiture.

In order to feed the habit it continues to bring bills before this House concerning more corporations that it believes should be sold to private enterprise, forgetting of course that Canadians have a history of being sold out to foreign ownership. In the short time that I have to discuss Bill C–13 I would like to concentrate on and in effect restrict my remarks to the aspects of non–resident ownership.

I would like to talk first about Nordion International Inc. Nordion International is responsible for the production and marketing of radiating isotopes used for medical and industrial purposes. How many of us know that? It happens to be one of the world leaders in this field. Here we are selling or about to sell—

Mr. McDermid: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order to clarify something.

Are we discussing and debating all the amendments now or just the first amendment of my colleague from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke? We seem to be getting way off base here as to the topic.

I understand that what we should be debating now is the first amendment, Motion No. 1 put forward by my colleague from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke. We seem to be debating the philosophy of privatization. We seem to be debating ownership, and so on and so forth. I think the amendment we are debating now concerns royalties payable to AECL as I understand it.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I rise on this point of order as well.

Of course my colleague was referring to exactly the point that the minister raised himself in his point of order. The minister, in his point of order, asked why we were discussing privatization in general, the philosophy of privatization, and so on. Very specifically, Motion No. 1 refers to that philosophy of privatization and offers a formula in which this privatization could offer a better return to the government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I think the hon. member who has been in this chamber now for a while realizes what Motion No. 1 is. I know he is going to get to it. The hon. member on debate.

Mr. Wappel: Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely delighted that the minister was listening.

Mr. McDermid: This minister is always listening.

Mr. Wappel: We need a minister who will listen to members of this House once in a while and to the views of Canadians, other than the views that he thinks are the only views.

You are absolutely right, Mr. Speaker. I am going to be dealing with Motion No. 1.

Why in heaven's name would we be concerned about royalties if we were not concerned about ownership? One of the ways in which the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke has decided to try to help this minister to protect Canadians and protect their investments is in fact by way of Motion No. 1. His suggestion is a very reasonable one. It is that we have royalties.

What is wrong with that? Why is that some sort of an improper suggestion? I have not heard the minister come back and explain to us why it is inappropriate for the people of Canada to expect that once they have paid money into a corporation and helped it to become strong

and competitive that we the Canadian people should not expect a little bit of return for our money. No, we are going to go ahead and sell this corporation. We have heard it from other members, it is to be sold at bargain basement prices. For goodness sake, if we are going to do that, if we are going to hand it out on a silver platter, surely the least that we could suggest to ourselves is: "Why do we not get some royalties"?

We know that when an inventor sells an invention it is almost *de rigueur* to request royalties in addition to a sale. We have built this corporation into a world-wide leader. When I say "we", I mean Canadians. We are all Canadians on both sides of the chamber. What we simply ask is a little return on our investment. The Conservatives should understand that philosophy. It is called business, return on investment. You do not sell a profitable corporation at bargain basement prices, first. If you do, at the very least let us get some royalties from it.

• (1650)

Let us examine the motion. The motion calls for royalties if any of the profits of either corporation exceed the sum of $10,000 in any calendar year.

First, what is the operative word? The operative word is "profit". Obviously if we do not have any profit in the corporation, we are not going to get any royalties. Surely we have enough faith in these corporations, since we are selling them and since we are going to be trying, we hope, to get the best price for them, that they are going to produce a profit. If they do produce a profit, why should we not get royalties? Ten thousand dollars is as good a figure as any other that we can pick. It seems to me that this is an eminently reasonable amendment proposed by my colleague, the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke. I do not see any reason why we should not support it.

But, no, the government wants to railroad, ramrod, push through, in any way it can a bill for which there is no hurry. What is the problem? Let us relax. Let us take our time. Let us make sure that what we are going to do is the appropriate thing to do. There is absolutely no reason to do it. Do we have five or six buyers waiting there with cheques in hand, but only if the company is sold tomorrow, not the next day or in January or in March? Of course we do not. There is no reason why we cannot wait or, if we are going to sell, get the best price possible.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands made another reasonable suggestion. He said: "Let's wait, let's wait a year". If you are intent on selling, let us wait until there is further and better corporate profits. Then we will get a better price and still get royalties.

I suggest that there are very few people in this country who would think that the idea of selling a Crown corporation, a profitable and world renowned corporation, and getting from that sale something more than some excess baggage cash to throw into this huge miasma of swamp land that we call the debt, not to have any effect but to get a yearly royalty in perpetuity or for as long as we can, is perfectly reasonable.

But, no. This government does not want to have anything to do with any reasonable suggestions. However, when we make a reasonable suggestion, when we put forward an amendment, what is the first thing that happens? It is immediately opposed. On the other hand, members of the government are constantly calling on us in these history lessons in every debate that we get involved in: "What would you do? Make a suggestion. Give us an idea". Then when we do, it is pooh-poohed.

I am afraid that what we should do is consider these amendments. Instead of browbeating, instead of heckling, instead of discussing the matter in an offhand and flippant manner, we should say that these are Canadian corporations and we will try to keep them Canadian. We will say that we will make sure that when we sell them we will get the best price possible, and even after we sell them we will get royalties. There is nothing wrong with that.

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, I hesitated to rise because I fully thought that the minister had stirred himself. I had heard some utterings a few minutes ago and I was fully expecting him to give the House some of his wisdom.

Mr. McDermid: We want to hear all the arguments first.

Mr. Simmons: There is a pleasant change, Mr. Speaker. The minister now wants to hear some arguments.

We have given him several arguments already. Of course the one that was so eloquently put by the gentleman from Scarborough West and the others who preceded him was the argument that the Canadian people who over the years have made possible the successful enterprises of Nordion and Theratronics initially through AECL, the same people who funded the research and who provided, if you like, the seed money are the ones who ought to be the benefactors. That is the burden of the resolution put down in Motion No. 1 by my friend for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke who sits here now beside me.

He has put down a number of good motions, including Motion No. 1 which gives an idea to the government as to how it can handle this situation and handle it to the benefit of the Canadian people. It is by ensuring that through a royalty process, an eminently sensible proposal I say to the minister, some funds will find their way back to AECL and *de facto* to the Canadian people to whose benefit they will be.

I wish that we had more time, but it will run out today in about four minutes. We have a number of other speakers and a number of other ideas. Let us be clear on what it is we are doing here.

Mr. Thatcher: Filibustering.

Mr. Simmons: The member for Lethbridge is not only with us; he is awake. While we have his undivided attention and the attention of other members opposite, let me say why it is we are standing here one after the other and talking about this issue. We are doing in the House of Commons what the Tory majority prevented us from doing in committee. We are going to continue to do it until somebody over there gets the message.

The message is fairly simple. It is that if you are going to privatize—and we are not now at this stage discussing the principle of the bill—if you and your majority are going to have your way on that particular issue, at the very least do it in a way that is palatable and rebounds to the benefit of the Canadian people.

We have had a number of proposals. My friend for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke and I represented this caucus in the committee. We had a number of proposals as to how this bill could be improved. As you know, Mr. Speaker, none is so deaf as he who will not hear. In that committee we had only two hours to address an issue that has raised health and safety concerns among Canadians from coast to coast.

They wrote us, phoned us, faxed us and said: "Can we appear before the committee?" The Canadian Cancer Society would dearly have liked to appear. A number of other eminent experts in the fields that relate to these bills would have liked to appear before the committee, but they were cut off at the knees. They were not given an opportunity. Only the president of Theratronics, the president of Nordion and the two union heads—only four people—were called to appear before the committee.

My friend from Renfrew and I put down a number of suggestions as to others who could be called. We had the permission to have them called. They were enthusiastic and willing to be called. Our colleagues in the NDP as well put down suggestions as to a number of organizations and individuals who and which ought to have been called before this committee, and far whom permission they had also been obtained.

What did the Tory majority do? Blindly it came in and applied a vote after only two hours and after hearing only four witnesses. We would hear nothing about the concern of Canadians, about health issues, issues relating to food irradiation, issues related to nuclear medicine. If that is the expanded process that the Prime Minister talked about in—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret to interrupt the hon. member.

It being five o'clock, the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS—MOTIONS

[*English*]

LEADERSHIP CAMPAIGNS

DISCLOSURE OF FUNDS

Mr. Robert E. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): moved:

Private Members' Business

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider establishing spending limits and strict rules of disclosure listing all campaign contributions by source and amount for all Canadian political party leadership races.

He said: Mr. Speaker, we tried to put this resolution forward as far back as April 4, 1989, which is the date of the resolution. I must say that it is only a matter of coincidence that the resolution is now being debated, just after the NDP leadership contest.

However, it is probably instructive and supports the resolution to say that the NDP is probably the only political party in Canada that really has clearly defined rules with respect to campaign donations and disclosure of donations for leadership contests. In fact, these rules are set up and modelled after the Canada Elections Act.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, please accept my apologies to the hon. member who was speaking. I do regret that I have to interrupt my hon. friend and I hope that he will accept my apology.

I rise to designate tomorrow as an allotted day officially.

Mr. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): The rules that we set up for the NDP leadership contest with respect to maximum spending limits, campaign donations, maximum donations are modelled along the lines of the Canada Elections Act.

The reason that the New Democratic Party sets up these rules is so that leadership contests can be conducted on a fair and equal basis between party members who are contesting for leadership, but also so that the people of Canada who are electing probably the most important offices in the House of Commons can have absolute certainty and absolute assurance that these offices are not purchased by people seeking political favours and seeking the right to influence leaders, but people who are governed by the same kind of strict rules that apply to the election of all members under the Canada Elections Act.

We feel that the rules that we have adopted and the rules that apply to Members of Parliament should also apply to members seeking the leadership of their parties. Others would say that political parties are groups that are independent of the House of Commons and that we have absolutely no right to interfere in their operations. As I say, the people who are selected as leaders of these parties will be sitting in the House of Commons leading their parties and also will have the opportunity at some time in the future to lead governments in this country. We should be absolutely clear and certain, and we should make sure that the people of Canada are absolutely clear and certain that their leaders have not been purchased as a result of people who are able to make large donations, influencing the outcome of leadership conventions.

I recall a national convention a few years back that attracted a lot of play in the media and on television. A lot of stories circulated around that convention about derelicts being purchased off the streets and given convention credentials. You may remember these stories, Mr. Speaker. As a result those derelicts who were not even members of the Conservative Party—I was not going to mention the party—ended up going to the convention with credentials and supporting a particular leader, and they will be available for the next convention to come.

If we have clear and well defined instructions laid down under the Canada Elections Act to restrict the amount of money that is spent by leadership candidates and to require disclosure as to who makes those donations, and also have limits on individual donations, then Canadians can be certain that their leadership is not purchased, but that it is won by democratic means within the existing political parties.

Therefore, I hope that all Members of the House of Commons will support this private member's motion and would back it to the hilt.

As a result of the disclosure requirements at the NDP convention in Winnipeg last week, there was a limit established for our leadership candidates of $150,000. Only one of the leadership candidates spent more than half of that sum. I think the maximum sum spent was $80,000. Most of the front-runners in that leadership campaign spent $30,000 to $40,000, a third of the limit. This is money that they expended in travelling back and forth across Canada to speak to hundreds of constituents and at public meetings across Canada and dealing with the media across Canada, in addition to all the expenses they had in the convention itself.

I have seen other examples of conventions. I will mention one in British Columbia so no one in this House will take offence. The convention in British Columbia was held in a facility owned by a close friend of the front-running leadership candidate. During the convention, that close friend of the front-running leadership candidate also paid the full campaign expenses of the candidates as they dropped off the ballot in order to assure that their votes would go to the front-runner and assure his leadership. That person became the premier of the province without even holding an elected seat in the legislature of British Columbia. His name was Bill

Vander Zalm. He is still the premier but he is elected now.

The people of British Columbia got the idea as a result of that convention that the premiership of the province was up for sale and could be purchased by the candidate who had the wealthiest friends, and that is precisely what happened. That kind of thing should not be permitted to happen in Canada. This Parliament should be concerned that we have rules governing the election of leaders in political parties and that those rules are as strictly enforced as are the rules for all members under the Canada Elections Act so that we can be assured as well that the leadership of political parties is not up for sale and is conducted on a free, democratic and fair basis. Basically, all we are asking Parliament to do in this resolution is to make sure that leaderships are free and democratic within the major political parties in Canada.

I was reading the newspapers recently and saw that one candidate for the Liberal leadership was talking about raising $1 million in order to finance her leadership campaign. I will not mention her name, of course. She is not here today, but she was talking about raising $1 million to conduct a leadership campaign.

As I said, the person who spent the most in the NDP leadership campaign spent $80,000 out of a total expenditure limit of $150,000. She used that money to travel across Canada. She used that money to have her campaign workers make phone calls to all of the membership. She used that money to present herself and rent halls at public meetings. She used that money to buy all the necessary signs and trappings of a leadership campaign when it finally gets into the convention, and she only spent $80,000. What is a million dollars going to do? What is a million dollars going to buy that only required $80,000 in the case I just mentioned?

All we are asking is that that money be disclosed as to its source and that money be disclosed as to who donated it and what it was paid out for. We would not like to see money in leadership campaigns used as it has been in the past, to pay derelicts to come off the street and vote for people who may ultimately be the Prime Minister of Canada, or to pay members of youth groups to suddenly become members of a political party and end up on the floor of the convention voting for leaders.

We want to see this process be as fair, honest, and as straight up as possible. We want to see the people of Canada feel that their leaders have been elected democratically and not purchased by people who have big money and as a result those leaders are beholden to the highest bidders, to the highest donors. That is the reason for this motion. All members recognize that there are deficiencies in the Elections Act and in the expenditure provisions under the Elections Act. It does not cover that period prior to a nomination being obtained when a large amount of money can change hands and there is no real control over how that money changes hands in order to secure nominations.

• (1710)

The same is true of the way money changes hands at leadership conventions in order to purchase the votes of people who will vote at that convention. We want to make sure that it is as honest, as open and as up–front as possible. I hope that all members will support this very well advised private member's motion.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I of course rise to support the motion that has been proposed by my hon. friend from Comox—Alberni.

I know that he has laboured long in getting this motion before the House. I wish, frankly, that he had spent a little more time. One of the disappointments in having motions presented is that there is no concrete proposal on which we can vote. While I am happy to support this motion, it will not do anything. I wish he had worked and produced a private member's bill that we could send on to a committee. I know that my friends on the other side of the House would be glad to support such a motion because I know they have had difficulties with leadership conventions in the past where they have run into spending controls.

I wanted to talk about those briefly in proffering my support to the hon. member.

In 1983, as I recall, the Progressive Conservative Party had a leadership campaign and they announced certain disclosure rules in advance of that campaign. In fact, on July 16, 1975 it had certain rules for that particular campaign and they had the candidates all declare what it was they had spent. During the 1983 campaign, it has said there were no disclosure guidelines or spending restrictions, but certainly the press was able to give some estimates of the amount of money that was spent by each of the candidates during the course of the campaign.

It appears that they ranged from about $350,000 to about $750,000 which gives some indication of the profligacy shown by the hon. members opposite which, of course, has continued since they took office.

It amused me to see that the members opposite spent a lot of money making up songs. I was looking back to some old clippings in 1983. Perhaps some hon. members would like to hear some of them. The Prime Minister was alleged to have shelled out $3,000 for an original tune that was called Brian's Song. They used to sing this at the convention. I don't know the tune because I wasn't at that convention, I'm sorry to say. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, you could sing it for us.

The song had words in it as follows:

> We will win together, together we will win.
>
> With Brian as our leader, our future will begin.
>
> We will win with Mulroney, with Mulroney we will win.
>
> We will win together—

I suggest hon. members opposite take a look at their position in the polls today and see if that song is still true. I suggest it is not.

Let's look at some of the others. Mr. Clark also had a song. We don't know how much this one cost, but it was:

> Clark for Canada, Canada for Joe.
>
> Clark for Canada, we're behind him, don't you know—

Well, they weren't. Then we had another one. Mr. Crosbie had a song:

> Come on John, come on John, come on John —
>
> Oh clap with me, I'll clap with you and we will win together—

They didn't all win together on that one either, Mr. Speaker, and it doesn't say how much that one cost.

The Minister of Finance had one by a group called The Travellers which sang a song called *Join the Movement to Mike.* Well, that one didn't work either. He should try that one now with the GST. Perhaps he would get more support.

On a more serious note, I think that the proposal put forward by the hon. member for Comox—Alberni is sensible, but I have one difficulty with it in respect of what the New Democratic Party proposes. As we all know, it has just been through a leadership convention. It was one of the most lack-lustre leadership conventions I think we have ever had for a political party in this country. I know they are all excited today, because after all the voting did take place just two days ago. The fact remains that until Friday evening no one was paying the remotest bit of attention to what was proposed to go on in Winnipeg. Part of the reason for that is the New Democratic Party was doing its best to make it appear that it was spending less than any of the other parties.

We have heard figures bandied about here this afternoon by the hon. member for Comox—Alberni. The NDP was busy trying to downplay its leadership convention. I can understand why it would. When you are a national party you really have to spend. We know that is why the limits would have to be higher for our party than for the New Democratic Party.

The member for Comox—Alberni suggested that somehow people joined the Liberal or Conservative party in order to vote for the leader. I am sure that is true. I am sure they joined in droves. The hon. member knows that. He knows that we will probably have twice as many delegates as they had in Winnipeg at our Calgary convention next June. I think he is aware that we will have a large number of youth delegates, unlike the New Democratic Party which had less than 100 youth delegates at its convention. There are millions of young people in Canada who were unrepresented, as such, at that convention.

He also knows that there were less than 100 delegates from Quebec, which is Canada's second largest province by far. They just were not there. The imbalances on a regional basis, the imbalances in terms of our population in general and demographics were marked at the New Democratic Party convention. I suggest, that when you are a western rump, you do not need to spend a lot of money running for the leadership. Your travel is restricted to a smaller area, you do not have to generate a

national campaign. The hon. member for Comox—Alberni knows that to run for the leadership of the Liberal Party—and I will concede also for the Progressive Conservative Party—a national campaign is what is required.

Ms. Black: You only have one from B.C.

Mr. Milliken: The hon. member says we only have one from B.C.. But look at the quality of the person we have from B.C., and he happens to be the leader of the party.

Hon. members know that running a national campaign is a costly process. What I think the hon. member must do if he presents a bill on this subject at a future date, and I certainly hope he will, is recognize that the limit has to be realistic, not from the point of view of the New Democratic Party, but from the point of view of a national party in Canada. If he comes up with a figure that a national party can regard as reasonable and that the Canadian public would regard as reasonable from that perspective, he would come up with a bill that we would be happy to support and that we would find helpful.

I congratulate the New Democratic Party members for filing their donations. I think that is important. If we go back to the Conservative experience, it is that they are not making public the dollar amounts that have been put into these conventions. We know the difficulty it has led to.

We have all heard the allegations that have been made about the private dinner parties and the money that has come in from various sources. I asked a question of the Deputy Prime Minister just the other day about revealing the lists of persons who had received federal government contracts. It appears that there may be a list of this kind at the PC fund headquarters.

I invited the Deputy Prime Minister to tell the House, to take us into his confidence and let us know if in fact such a list is prepared and if it is sent over to PC fund headquarters in Ottawa or Toronto or wherever it happens to be. I do not know where it is. He declined to answer my question. He waffled, and we all know how he can waffle. The Deputy Prime Minister is a master at the art. He would not answer my question.

I asked a supplementary question. I said: "Would the Deputy Prime Minister instruct his bagmen to go to the commission that he has appointed and tell them all"? He would not answer that either. He suggested if I had ideas that I go to the commission and tell them what I thought they should hear. Well, I am happy to do that. I know the Hon. Member for Comox—Alberni would go with me to the commission. Perhaps we could make a joint presentation and ask the commission to investigate the sources of Tory fund raising for leadership purposes, among others.

• (1720)

Certainly it would be interesting to know who was on the list of donors who paid for the Prime Minister's leadership bid. He will not tell us about it. He would not even tell his friends in the Conservative Party about it. I do not know why he would not. All the other party candidates for that leadership campaign apparently revealed some of the information they had but the Prime Minister would not. I think had he done so, he would have allayed a lot of suspicion that I know the hon. member for Comox—Alberni feels and expressed in his speech. It would have allayed the suspicion we had in asking questions of the Deputy Prime Minister in this House the other day.

It is important that we bear in mind there is a commission established to look into these matters. I am hoping that the commission will make some firm recommendations to this House. In the meantime, if the hon. member who has proposed the motion would bring forward a bill, I would be happy to look at it and if it is satisfactory, support the bill. Certainly, the principles he has enunciated today would be helpful.

Mr. Murray Cardiff (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the motion of my colleague, the member for Comox—Alberni, proposes that the government should consider establishing spending limits and rules of disclosure listing all campaign contributions by source and amount for all Canadian political party leadership races.

Hon. members may recall that the government in its Speech from the Throne on April 3, 1989 announced its intention to appoint a commission of inquiry to make recommendations for needed changes and reforms to the electoral laws. On November 15, 1989 the Prime Minister in fact announced the establishment of such a commission of inquiry to be chaired by Mr. Pierre Lortie. Hon. members will be pleased to note that the terms of reference of the commission extend beyond the principles and process that should govern the election of

members of the House of Commons to the question of financing of political parties.

The commission will be examining the means by which political parties should be funded, as well as the provision of funds to political parties from any source, the limits of such funding and the uses to which such funds ought to be or ought not to be put.

It is clear, therefore, that the government agrees that the whole area of the financing of political parties should be examined and that the government should consider whether it is appropriate to modify existing rules and to introduce new regulations, as well as any other changes which may be appropriate.

The matter of the laws concerning election of members of the House of Commons and the rules regulating political parties and candidates is, of course, of fundamental concern to members of this House and to the Canadian public.

The importance that the government places on this subject is reflected in the government's decision to establish the commission of inquiry. Referring the matter of electoral reform and party financing to a commission of inquiry is both appropriate and consistent with past practice. In fact, the blueprint for federal election expenses legislation was the 1966 report of the Committee on Election Expenses, better known as the Barbeau committee.

The chief electoral officer in his annual report tabled April 17, 1989 stated: "I believe that the conduct of a study of the type undertaken by the Barbeau committee would be very useful now in charting future courses of action and that such a study would be best conducted before major amendments are considered to the election expenses provision of our legislation".

The government is committed to changes being made to Canada's electoral laws, to make improvements to those laws, to maintain the integrity of our political system and to make voting easier and more accessible to Canadians. The commission which has been established will be reviewing the existing system and suggesting improvements which can be made.

I thank the hon. member for his interest in this area and I close by indicating that the government looks forward to receiving the recommendations of the Lortie commission.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I believe there is agreement on this motion, is there not? Does the House agree with the motion? I do not see any disagreement.

Is there a contribution that the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell would like to make?

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak in favour of the motion that has been proposed to us today by our colleague from Comox—Alberni.

It is, of course, an opportune time in a way to be discussing this issue, a rather academic one if you happen to be a New Democrat and you are speaking with regard to your own party. However, that is more coincidental than anything else because we all recognize of course that the member had this motion on the floor of the House as early as April 4, 1989.

We know that there has been a royal commission set up to look at the whole issue of electoral contributions in Canada. The party to which I belong is also in the process of getting organized for a future leadership campaign to take place during the second last week-end of June 1990.

We know of course that leadership campaigns are very costly. When some people start talking to me about running a national leadership campaign for $80,000, and when I look at the travel expenditures of individual MPs in the Public Accounts listed at the end of the year a number of whom have airline ticket expenditures which exceed $80,000, then I begin to ask myself just how logical is it for any one candidate to pretend that he or she could travel the whole country and not spend any more than $80,000 when for only one Member of Parliament, travelling with no staff or anything during a year that is the amount that one spends?

Obviously a leadership campaign that lasts half a year, assuming that the candidate was going no further than he or she normally goes during a regular off year, if I can put it that way, a year in which there is not a leadership campaign, well half of that amount would be spent anyway just on travelling. Obviously it costs a lot more

than $80,000 if you happen to be a member of a national party with seats ranging from Newfoundland to Vancouver Quadra. It is indeed a very expensive proposition.

That being said, I am in favour of looking at this issue in the way that our colleague has suggested. I find it ironic for instance and perhaps sad to see that the laws at the present time are set up in such a way that contributions made to individual candidates for the leadership are not always fully disclosed. We all know of course that a party mechanism can be set up in order to ask various candidates to provide that information at the present time. Will it in fact happen remains to be seen in any political party. One has to remember that if funds are given to a political party, there is no way of knowing how much money actual riding associations collect at the present time.

For instance, if I or any other member is holding a fund raiser for our own constituency association of our political party, and we do that right now, sending the money to the central party for the purposes of receipting and then those funds going back to a riding association, which is the proper way of receiving those contributions, there is no way that the average person can find out which riding association benefited from these funds.

In my previous incarnation as a legislator in the Ontario legislature, the electoral laws in the province of Ontario provided .that each riding association had to make an annual declaration of funds that it received. When I was a provincial member it was easy for any citizen to find out what contributions my association had received during the year. Now that I am a federal member, there is no structure other than asking the riding association if it will volunteer that information, which we do of course in my association. There is no obligation to do that at the present time.

It would be a good idea for us to look at the implications of setting up systems like those so that we know how much not only leadership candidates are getting, but how much riding associations have in the bank, each constituency association of each party in Canada. I think that that should be public information. Right now it is not.

• (1730)

I think we should be able to find out that information in order to modernize the electoral financing laws that we have now. I suspect that most, hopefully all, of us are in a position where there is nothing that we want to hide and that being the case I hope we look at all of those issues, including the one of disclosure of campaign contributions for political party leadership races, amounts in the bank, amounts collected, amounts and sources of contributions held by constituency associations, in addition to the disclosure which we already have in terms of political parties.

Finally, it is interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, that at the present time constituency associations, or at least candidates' official agents during an election year are forced to disclose the funds that they generate or collect for the purposes of an election. But if it is outside of an election year the only information that is made available is to that political party for which the constituency association funds were destined.

In other words, we have a rather unusual situation right now in which we are being very careful, and appropriately so, during election years in terms of the amount of disclosure that is asked, but outside of election years the laws as I suggest need to be improved as well.

[*Translation*]

So I am pleased, Mr. Speaker, to support this initiative of our colleague from Comox—Alberni and I would hope that the House and maybe even the commission which has already been established to look into election campaign contributions will deal not only with the suggestion which the Hon. Member for Comox—Alberni has made to us but also with the suggesiton I made in the debate this afternoon.

[*English*]

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, I had not originally intended to take part in the debate but I think after hearing a point that my colleague from Comox—Alberni made earlier in his initial presentation, I wanted the opportunity to rise briefly to embellish what I think is a very critical argument in support of my colleague's motion here today in the House.

We did have some humorous moments earlier as our friend from Kingston and the Islands related some rather humorous songs that have been purchased at great expense according to the other side in terms of leadership campaigns and I was just going to say to the member that he can rest assured that we will be researching the history of his party, the Liberal Party, to assure ourselves that there are probably also some rather

interesting little anecdotes and songs that were presented in the Liberals, leadership contest.

I want to call this the "kingmaker" factor, or the "queenmaker" factor. There does seem to be in some leadership contests a critical need for a full disclosure of political contributions to those leadership campaigns. I want to go back to the point that my colleague had made earlier in his presentation when he discussed the leadership campaign of the Social Credit Party in 1986 in British Columbia.

To refresh everyone's memory, at that time then Premier Bill Bennett had stepped down from the leadership while he was still premier and had opened up the opportunity for a leadership contest for the party which essentially was paramount to the premiership of the province.

During that time there was a number of very influential business persons in British Columbia who got together and formed what was called the "Golden Twenty" club, a very influential corporate elite of B.C., getting together to basically hold court, and to call before them the corporate elite of British Columbia all the leadership hopefuls of the Social Credit Party to listen to their presentations as to why they should be anointed with not only the leadership of the party but the premiership of the province of British Columbia. Those 20 individuals, essentially, held the power in determining the outcome of that leadership convention that was held later on that year. Those 20 very influential individuals basically made the decision for the people of British Columbia, if you can believe it, as to who would be their next premier and which horse they would financially back in that leadership contest.

The concept of democracy, I suggest, went right out the window with that. The premier was anointed. The premier of British Columbia was anointed clearly by that inner sanctum of corporate elite. I suggest that this situation that happened in B.C. a few years ago would never have happened and could never have happened if the regulations had been entrenched in legislation that would force political parties to make public the corporation donations, financial donations, to the various leadership campaigns. There is simply no reason, no rationale, and certainly no argument in terms of democratic process, that this be allowed to take place.

Going back again, it was very clear that the premiership of the province of British Columbia was up for sale during 1986 and was clearly influenced by a very small handful of very influential, very powerful individuals who made the decision as to which horse they would back financially. I do not think that that is in the interests of any province and certainly not in the interests of Canada as a whole, or, in fact, any democracy when that kind of activity takes place. I think the legislation that is proposed through the motion would avert that kind of situation from happening in the future and that is why I am going to be supporting this motion today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I believe there is unanimous consent to approve the motion.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired.

SITTING SUSPENDED

I believe we will have to suspend the sitting until six o'clock because I do not see all the members in here for the late show. Therefore, I suspend the sitting until six o'clock.

The sitting of the House was suspended at 5.38 p.m.

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 5.55 p.m.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38(1) deemed to have been moved.

FISHERIES

Mrs. Coline Campbell (South West Nova): Mr. Speaker, as the House knows, on November 30, the U.S. Congress passed amendments to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Act that impose re-

strictions on the size of lobsters that can be sold in the United States. Specifically, no lobsters smaller than the designated U.S. body size of 8.1 centimetres will be allowed for sale. They call this conservation in the States.

We in Canada have had a size limit for lobsters for years. As long as I can remember, there has been a one pound lobster. In Canada there are seasons. It is only open for six months in South West Nova.

There are no limits on traps, no limits on entry in the United States, or on who can catch lobster. We in Canada have had a good conservation policy that has worked well. There have been plenty of one pound lobsters.

If and when President Bush signs this legislation into law, about 10 per cent of Nova Scotia's $130 million live lobster business may be seriously harmed. As Ron Bulmer, president of the Fisheries Council of Canada put it: "If you can't send $30 million worth of live lobster into the United States, where are you going to find a home for it"?

I first raised this issue in the House on October 18. I asked the hon. Minister of Fisheries and Oceans what specific actions his government had in mind to prevent these regulations from coming into effect. We know now that whatever actions the government did undertake were of no avail.

Last week, on the eve of his trip to Washington to visit President Bush, I raised this issue with the Prime Minister. I asked him then to assure the House that he would ask the President to veto the new legislation.

Neither the minister nor the Prime Minister have seen fit to let us know exactly what impact Canadian protests are having on the Americans. At least the only clear evidence is that Congress passed the law anyway.

Since the Prime Minister has clearly failed to use his friendship with the President to any positive advantage on this issue, I think we deserve to know precisely when the government will take more concrete action, specifically through the free trade agreement, to eliminate this offensive, trade restricting law.

Canadians are especially interested to know the government's plan in light of the recent free trade panel decision on our salmon and herring conservation program on the west coast. If that program were a restrictive trade practice then surely the dispute settlement panel would look upon the new lobster size regulations the same way.

This government has failed the fishery, both on the west coast and on the east coast. The Minister of Fisheries has been failing it as far as groundfish management and is now doing it in the very lucrative fishery of the lobster. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans did say that he felt the new regulations "would violate the principle of the free trade agreement". If he is being sincere, and if the government is serious about making sure that the free trade agreement is applied equitably, then we want to see action to back up these words.

It is a weak defence to say that we must wait and see what the President does before taking action since we know that the lobster regulations were attached as a rider to a large piece of legislation which the President cannot veto without throwing out the whole law. So it is unlikely that the President will do anything. Yet we have seen no action nor protest whatever from this government as to the lobster regulations in the States that were in that bill. We must be moving more quickly for a quick reference to the dispute settlement panel because the livelihood of some 6,700 Nova Scotia lobstermen and more from other Atlantic provinces is in jeopardy. If left unchallenged, the new regulations would seriously affect and continue to drive down lobster prices.

If there is anything we need in the Atlantic fishery, it is price stability. Fish prices have been fluctuating wildly this fall. The price of cod on the Portland auction, for example, fell from $1 a pound to 40 cents a pound in the space of one week in October, and that was our cod being caught off the Georges Bank by American fishermen, not Canadian fishermen.

If only as a bid to maintain price stability, we should work strongly to roll back these new regulations, not only for price stability, but because this is offensive legislation. It violates the free trade agreement. It shows that a senator from Maine was able to bring in, without any compassion at all a piece of legislation that will affect the lobster industry, in southern Nova Scotia and all of Nova Scotia without the Prime Minister knowing, having been assured by the President on Labour Day weekend that he would be told that there would be discussions. There have been no discussions with officials.

• (1800)

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that it is another example of the Minister of Fisheries' lack of attention to the east coast. It is another example of how the free trade agreement is affecting one small area in the fishery. I do not want to talk about farm stabilization boards or anything like that at this time.

You will have to admit that this legislation in the United States is offensive, Mr. Speaker. The government opposite has done nothing to oppose it. We are going to be faced with a lowering of prices that will be very hard to take.

Mr. Ross Reid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): I am tempted, Mr. Speaker, I am tempted. As a result of Canada's acceptance of the GATT panel decision on processing requirements for Pacific salmon and herring, it became apparent that there was a need for measures which would ensure the conservation and management concerns. Following acceptance of the GATT panel decision and extensive consultations with the province of British Columbia and the fishing industry, Canada announced a proposed landing system which would ensure that essential conservation and management concerns are met and the fishery remains viable into the future.

The United States expressed concern over the scope of the new landing regime and we undertook to discuss the new measures with it prior to implementation. During discussions with the United States, we explained the operation of our proposed landing system and that our view was that the system was GATT and FTA consistent.

The United States disagreed with our analysis and claimed that our landing requirement was trade-restrictive. Following further consultations, both parties agreed to submit the dispute to a free trade agreement chapter 18 panel.

The panel proceedings occurred during the summer months and its final report was received on October 16. The panel upheld Canada's sovereign right to conserve and manage the salmon and herring stocks on the west coast. The panel agreed that Canada could establish a landing requirement for salmon and herring but that the present requirements suffered from "overbreadth" in that it applied to 100 per cent of the stocks. However, the panel provided some useful suggestions for maintaining a landing requirement but permitting 10 to 20 per cent of certain fisheries to be exported at sea without compromising our conservation and management goals.

The situation respecting east coast lobsters is very different from that on the west coast where Canada implemented measures to ensure that conservation and management concerns were not compromised. The lobster measure passed by the United States Congress is a trade restriction inconsistent with either the GATT or the FTA which has been disguised as a conservation measure.

The United States has been advised that we will proceed to a dispute settlement panel under the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement or under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade if Canadian lobster are restricted from the United States market.

CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, my address this evening pertains to a question I asked the Minister of National Defence on September 29. The question essentially was with respect to the socioeconomic and the military impact studies that were done in relation to the announced closing of Canadian Forces Base Summerside.

The minister's response was limited by time. The Speaker had to move on, away from Question Period. I thought that I would like to examine some of the factors that were involved, looking at the military impact first. I want you to bear in mind, Sir, that it is not my purpose this evening to do anything with respect to the decision, other than to look at the impact study that I believe should have been done and some of the factors that certainly come to my mind with respect to this decision.

To begin with, looking at the military impact, I would remind the House that in Summerside, there are essentially a couple of main functions, one of which is 413 Search and Rescue Squadron consisting of three Buffalo helicopters and three Labrador aircraft.

• (1805)

Also there are two squadrons, MR-880 Squadron which essentially is a tracker or reconnaissance squadron, and 420 Air Reserve Squadron. The Air Reserve Squadron in fact is twin with the MRR Squadron and

consists of air reservists who fly on their own time to contribute to the defence of the country.

Looking at the decision itself, the impact on the expenditure for the military was almost minuscule. It was one-half of 1 per cent. One wonders really what savings were achieved through that. I understand the difficulty of trying to match infrastructure and national defence with the present size of the force. There is a problem there.

Specifically I am zeroing in on the military impact in Summerside. These tracker aircraft were designed for operation strictly at sea. They were aircraft that flew off an aircraft carrier so that the whole construction of the aircraft is such that they are well suited to do operations at sea.

Their air frame itself, I am told, will be good until the year 2015. What we were looking at was the decision to re-engine them. The decision was made that they would not be re-engined. Therefore there will be no tracker. What we have lost is a capability gap. This is a capability gap of a medium range patrol aircraft in Canada that is organized, manned, controlled and run by the military.

The impact of that was such that a comment was made by the commander of the maritime air group, the change of command, on August 11, 1989. He said that he needed 48 to 60 medium range patrol aircraft to give Canada the ability to patrol its coastal waters. In his view he said that the medium range patrol aircraft was of the highest priority today in the maritime air group.

I would like to talk about this loss of capability added to the relocation of the search and rescue squadron 413 from Summerside to Greenwood. It is a fact that Summerside is strategically located, and I am making reference now to the Cross report of 1982 which was done as a result of a serious search and rescue incident off the east coast of Newfoundland, in Gabriela in 1976, and another serious and tragic incident off Prince Rupert on Christmas Day, 1979.

DND did a study and the Cross report among many other things indicated that Summerside was the most optimum location for search and rescue in the search and rescue region on the Atlantic coast. I am now talking about an area that is about two million square miles. The strategic location for a search and rescue squadron on which lives are dependent is a very important aspect.

Members who have been close to this in the House are very familiar with the study that was done by Major Gary Naylor and Lieutenant-Colonel Hopping. Major Naylor worked for me directly as a major when I was chief of staff of operations in maritime command. I can certainly attest to his professionalism and his total expertise in search and rescue. Therefore, if Major Naylor indicates that there is a problem and the location in Greenwood is not as optimum or as many lives would not be saved as would be if this were in Summerside, surely it is a serious military impact. I believe this should have been brought forth more to the Canadian public.

As far as the socioeconomic impact is concerned, I do not have to remind this House that we are looking at 1,300 jobs on the base, around 1,300 jobs in the community. The community size is 8,000 people. I am told by the experts in the business that this has the impact of 100,000 jobs in the metropolitan Toronto area. Were that to happen, I can assure you that there would be many members on both sides of this House asking for a military impact study, a socioeconomic impact study and every other kind of an impact study which has not yet been fully disclosed to the House.

I am going to close by mentioning the wind up of the Minister of National Defence in response to my question. I know the Minister of National Defence, probably because he ran out of time, did not mean what he said and would have liked to have added to it if he had not run out of time.

• (1810)

In reference to the devastating socioeconomic impact on the Summerside area, the minister said that we did not identify replacement opportunities or replacement economic activity and that. This is not the responsibility of the Department of National Defence. Well, no question, this may not be the responsibility of the Department of National Defence. But I believe it is very safe to say that it is the responsibility of the government to find something to replace that tremendous gap that is going to be there in 1991, 1992 or 1993, whenever that base is closed.

I believe the Canadian public, certainly the people of Summerside, the people of Atlantic Canada, the people on both sides of the House and everybody else needs to know what the impact of this is going to be.

Mr. Jean-Guy Hudon (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, while no specific study was undertaken on the impact of the reductions and closures, a costing methodology was used to determine the projected savings of the base reduction and closure. This methodology examined such items as the impact of the reduction or closure of bases in the past on operational support, personnel and major equipment and facilities. In addition, experience gained through Cadin-Pinetree closures made it possible to keep any likely impact to a minimum.

To this end, DND and Employment and Immigration Canada are co-operating closely and, as the hon. member knows, local committees have been established to provide assistance to affected employees.

The hon. member should also be aware, and I am sure he is, that DND is co-operating fully with other agencies of the federal and provincial governments in their endeavours to identify suitable re-use for any facilities on bases to be closed or any surplus facilities on bases being reduced.

With regard to specific studies on the impact on military effectiveness as a result of closures or reductions, I am surprised that the hon. member would ask such a question. Indeed, the hon. member had a long and distinguished naval career and I am certain that he knows that every decision taken by the Department of National Defence is based on this very essential consideration.

For some time, Canada has maintained military installations in excess of the requirement of the current size of the Canadian Forces. The aim, therefore, is to achieve more efficient use of resources through the reduction or elimination of sites which no longer fill an operational need. I would add that this will not reduce our military effectiveness.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to again get involved in the question that I asked of the Minister of Transport on Monday, November 21, as it relates to VIA Rail and, more specifically, the elimination of the VIA Rail passenger route called The Canadian.

On that particular day, the question I raised was basically a question as it related to the figures I had been given by the VIA people in Winnipeg. Those particular figures that I suggested to the minister showed some very interesting and puzzling scenarios for the people of northwestern Ontario and, more important, for the people who ride on The Canadian.

Again I would like to relate those numbers to the government opposite and to the people of Canada to show that there seems to be some difficulty in the rationale put forward by the government which is, as the Prime Minister has said: "Use it or lose it".

I explained to the minister on that particular day that eight months is not a short period of time. The minister at the time said: "Well, if you want to put two weeks together or a month together, anybody can play with numbers". Eight months is a long period of time on a particular VIA run which, in essence, shows whether someone is using a particular route or not.

• (1815)

Just for the record, I would like to state the figures. The over-all ridership on The Canadian for that period of time was 93 per cent which is in all estimates pretty well full capacity. It has also been told to us by the people in VIA that it is considered that by 1993 they will be over capacity and will have to do something about that particular run and in essence put on more cars.

The Montreal to Vancouver train carried over 34,800 passengers, a load factor of 98.8 per cent. Travelling from the west to Montreal, the Vancouver train carried over 33,000 passengers, with a load factor of 98 per cent. In northwestern Ontario, the Toronto to Sudbury train which connects with the Montreal train carried over 8,580 passengers which is 85 per cent capacity while the Sudbury to Toronto train carried over 8,890 passengers which is 93.3 per cent capacity.

The reason I raised the question in the House of Commons was because of the scenario that the government has put forward on numerous occasions, that the reason these particular runs were eliminated was that nobody was riding them. As an ex-railroader I had a little difficulty with that particular scenario because I happen to know a lot about trains just in common practice. I went and did a little checking and found out from people

who I know in the industry that lo and behold, this particular run is the most efficient run in all of Canada.

I was a little bit at a loss for words to understand what the scenario was. Then I found out something very interesting that happened during the cuts to VIA. Under the revamped network, VIA trains will travel on CN tracks 96 per cent of the time and on Canadian Pacific routes 4 per cent of the time in comparison to the 77 per cent and 23 per cent under the previous arrangements.

There has been a switch to running on CP tracks which happen to be the ones that are the majority of the track that The Canadian runs on in the southern routes to the northern CN route which also has a lack of people riding on these trains for one particular reason. It is not that people do not want to. It is just that in the northern route, fewer people live there. It makes me wonder what the scenario really is.

There are two reasons obviously. One is that if fewer people use the 50 per cent that is left, then they can justify getting rid of it and the other factor is that if they take a look at the amount of money that is paid to CN as far as rental of track per year, and if they took that away, CN would be in the hole. It would not be making a profit so there are two reasons why Mr. Lawless decided that this would be the best scenario for VIA.

I brought this matter up today because I wanted to give the government the opportunity to explain to me and Canadians, and particularly the people in northwestern Ontario, what its rationale really was for eliminating this very important piece of trackage. The figures show that there is no necessity.

There has been no environmental impact study. Again, I brought that up at a meeting of the environment committee and I asked environment officials if they could tell me exactly what the level of CO2 emissions would be once that roughly one million passengers would be using vehicles when the cuts went into effect. Basically they said: "We don't know that number," whereas the minister stood in his place in this House and said that the environmental impact would be negligible. If you do not know what the upper limit is as far as CO2 emissions are concerned, how can you say that 1 million cars more is negligible? In essence, the people in the Ministry of the Environment told me that that is an unknown factor, therefore, we cannot really tell you that answer.

I think that the government opposite has pulled a fast one on the Canadian people and has not shown the impact on the environment that this will have. Therefore, I think it is important that the government take a look at this particular route that I am talking about today which is The Canadian because it did not even look at options to improve the run. For example, in the summer, it is so full you cannot get on.

I suggest that if you want to eliminate the subsidy on a route like that, put more cars on in the summer when the tourism season is at its peak instead of just cutting the route completely and throwing hundreds of people out of a job, as well as affecting the tourism trade in an area of northern Ontario which I know for a fact foreigners come to on a regular basis by train because of its beauty and the magnitude of that particular geographical area.

• (1820)

In conclusion, I ask the parliamentary secretary to explain to me and to northwestern Ontarians and people who had The Canadian and no longer have it, what the rationale really is behind this particular cut-back to VIA and to what we call The Canadian.

Mr. Ross Belsher (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Kenora—Rainy River for again raising this very important subject not only to his area, but also to people across the prairie provinces as well.

I might say to the hon. member that the decision to discontinue the passenger service provided by the western transcontinental train, or better known as The Canadian, was taken because the country cannot continue to provide the large subsidies required to operate the total service of VIA Rail and so there had to be cuts made within the VIA Rail system.

In 1988, The Canadian service carried approximately 545,000 passengers and had a load factor of some 70 per cent. The cost for this service exceeded revenues by $109 million. That was in 1988. The subsidy for each passenger who travelled on The Canadian was $199. Between January and October of this year The Canadian carried 466,000 passengers, an increase of 16 per cent over the ridership for the same period of the year before. The load factor for the first 10 months of this year was increased to 83.5 per cent.

It is true that during the summer months demands for space on these trains has exceeded supply, which the hon. member alluded to in his previous remarks. This is

not a new situation. It has occurred in varying degrees for a number of years. However, it is not economically feasible to spend millions of dollars for passenger cars which are only used during the summer.

Even with the increased level of ridership, the service will require a subsidy in excess of $100 million for 1989. On the basis of this financial reality, the government stands by its decision to discontinue The Canadian. While the service over the route followed by The Canadian between Toronto and Vancouver via Thunder Bay and Calgary will be discontinued, transcontinental service will continue to be provided as stated in the October 4, 1989 announcement. The government has decided that a tri-weekly service will operate between Toronto and Vancouver via Sioux Lookout and Edmonton.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 11 a.m.

The House adjourned at 6.23 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, December 5, 1989

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table in both official languages the government's responses to several petitions.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

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INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION

REPORT OF DELEGATE ON THIRTY-FIFTH COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE

Mr. Girve Fretz (Erie): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to present, in both official languages, the report of the parliamentary delegation which participated in the thirty-fifth Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Barbados, October 6 to October 15, 1989.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

Mr. Speaker: Introduction of government bills.

* * *

POINT OF ORDER

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I recognize the important issue that we are going to be discussing today on the motion of the Official Opposition.

Some time back I wrote a letter on behalf of my caucus to the Government House Leader indicating that if there was a need to introduce legislation to continue the variable entrance rates for the Unemployment Insurance Act, we would be prepared to do that expeditiously, and we would pass it with virtually no debate.

The point of my intervention is that I think we all appreciate the importance of the opposition day motion and I wonder if we could not save time and get on with other business by simply agreeing unanimously, if the need arises, to pass this legislation with no debate before the Christmas recess. It would allow us to get on with other business.

Just to ensure that my colleagues in the Official Opposition do not misinterpret what I am saying, I recognize this is their opposition day. We would be prepared to give up one of our opposition days to them on some other issue.

I wonder if we could perhaps seek unanimous consent to see if we could agree to introduce this necessary legislation without going through and spending a whole day debating its merits.

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this new approach from the New Democratic Party. Obviously it was brought on by the election of a new leader, with an open approach where there is not going to be any more stalling of the past, where there will be no votes for leave to introduce bills or for first reading, where there will be very little debate and examination.

I am not sure from which position my hon. friend speaks because as of last night we learned there was quite a bit of deal making at the NDP convention. I am not sure, but one should check the tape to see if one is still the House Leader or the Whip in that particular case.

Despite the fact that this is such a generous offer, I have a little trouble handling it this early in the morning. What we will do is wait for the piece of legislation we sent to the Senate, one which was overwhelmingly supported by this House, and I know my hon. friends would have supported it had it not been for one or two adjustments. That was sent to the Senate some time ago.

We expect that the folks in the other place will want to deal with that expeditiously so that there will not be any unnecessary anxiety in the minds of people who are unfortunate enough to find themselves unemployed at this time of year.

We anticipate as it is such a good piece of legislation that it should come back virtually unamended because, after all, we the elected representatives sent this piece of legislation there. I expect we will get this piece of legislation back very soon. Despite the fact that I will accept the offer to give up an opposition day—we will try to use it expeditiously on government legislation—I do not really see any need at the present time to accept my hon. friend's offer.

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I want to make a few comments. First, one can hardly give up something one does not have. The two opposition days, today and tomorrow, happen to be days for the Official Opposition, not the third party in this House. I remind the government that it cannot start negotiating on the floor of the House something that it does not have.

• (1110)

Second, with respect to the overwhelming support of Bill C-21, I remind the minister that on both occasions they had to invoke closure to get the bill through the House. That is hardly what I call overwhelming support. It was a Tory promotion, a Tory—supported bill. It was not supported by the opposition nor by the Official Opposition. The minister's memory is getting shorter as he gets a little older. Indeed, closure on these matters is repugnant to Canadians and we will make that message clear in today's debate.

The point of today's debate is to get this government to understand that there are Canadians who will suffer because of this government's lack of trying to answer a very serious situation in this country where those who may be on the unemployment insurance program will not get the benefits of that program next year because of this government's failure to come to grips with legislation that is required urgently.

Mr. Riis: I regret that my hon. colleague did not see fit to accept my recommendation but perhaps that will be possible on another day. I want to echo the words of the opposition Whip that Bill C-21 is not a bill that this House unanimously adopted by any stretch of the imagination. Any piece of legislation that would adversely affect over one million Canadians financially is something that we, on this side of the House, certainly want nothing to do with. In an effort to co-operate and to get on with some good legislation eventually, we thought we would make this offer today. I appreciate that the government House leader will at least give it some thought in the future.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PETITIONS

OPPOSITION TO TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS ON FISCAL COMPENSATIONS GRANDED TO ISOLATED AND NOTHERN AREAS

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, today, in accordance with Standing Order 36, I wish to table a petition signed by men and women from Lebel-sur-Quévillon, directed against the task force on tax benefits for isolated and northern areas which has recommended that deductions for travel by northern workers for medical reasons should be phased out a year from now and that eligibility for tax benefits for isolated and northern communities should be restricted to areas north of the 51st parallel, 51:05oN.

Madam Speaker, the people of Lebel-sur-Quévillon reject the recommendations of the task force which failed to consider that according to the Government of Quebec, the north in Quebec, starts at the 49th parallel.

OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICE TAX

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Madam Speaker, today I have the honour and the privilege of tabling another petition against the goods and services tax.

[*English*]

Madam Speaker, the people here join the many thousands of other Canadians in protesting strongly this government's intention to impose a hidden 9 per cent sales tax on goods and services starting in January, 1991. The Canadians who signed this petition maintain that to have hidden taxes applying virtually to everything is a

new imposition on Canadians. They strongly oppose this tax as an unprecedented tax grab from the pockets of Canadians that not only will result in higher taxes for those who can least afford it, that is those on low and middle incomes, but will produce higher inflation, higher interest rates and higher unemployment in this country, things we hardly need today.

Mr. Réginald Bélair (Cochrane—Superior): Pursuant to Standing Order 36 it is my duty and honour to present this petition which has been certified correct by the Clerk of Petitions.

It contains signatures of constituents in my riding of Cochrane—Superior, more specifically the town of Kapuskasing. They call on Parliament to reject the proposed 9 per cent goods and services tax as it will cause unfair hardship to low and middle-income Canadians, namely those of northern Ontario and northern Canada.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): I have the pleasure to present a petition pursuant to Standing Order 36 signed by several hundred members of my riding concerning VIA Rail. The bulk of these petitioners are old age pensioners who are concerned about the reduction in rail service, including such very prominent people as Mrs. Len Shepherd, the wife of the former MLA.

They petition this government to not only stop the destruction of VIA Rail, but call upon the government to increase support for VIA Rail, to upgrade VIA Rail service and to guarantee the support necessary for a vital passenger rail service in this country.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to present a petition pursuant to Standing Order 36 and certified correct by the Clerk of Petitions that points out a whole variety of reasons why the petitioners from British Columbia are opposed to the government's goods and services tax. They ask that Parliament encourage the government to step down from proceeding with this tax and to introduce a taxation system that would have a minimum corporate tax and ask that wealthy Canadians and corporations pay their fair share.

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Madam Speaker, I, too, want to present another in a series of petitions from Burin—St. George's on the issue of the goods and services tax.

The good people from the communities of Doyles, South Branch, Codroy, St. Andrew's, Searston and Tompkin's believe that 31 tax increases by this government are enough. People of Millville, Parker's Cove, Stephenville Crossing, Port aux Basques, St. Vincent's, Robinson's, Highlands, St. David's, Grand Bruit, and Burnt Island, believe that this government which has already increased the manufactures' sales tax from 9 per cent to 13.5 per cent has done enough damage already.

Finally, Madam Speaker, the people in Milltown, Rose Blanche, Jeffrey's, Hermitage, Sandyville, St. Alban's and Burnt Island believe that this being a hidden tax is not the way to go, given the undertaking of the Minister of Finance.

I have great pleasure in presenting the petitions. I appeal to the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs to listen to what tens of thousands of Canadians are saying to him in petitions and to get behind this move to cancel this terrible tax.

ROUGE RIVER VALLEY

Mrs. Pauline Browes (Scarborough Centre): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to present to the House of Commons today a petition that is entitled "Help Save the Rouge". The petitioners are from Scarborough, Aurora, Toronto, Ajax and Markham. The petitioners are calling upon Parliament to work with the province of Ontario to establish the Rouge River Valley as a provincial park.

They have joined with the Hon. David Crombie, who is the commissioner on the royal commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront, who has recommended that this be a park, the mayor of Scarborough, and the federal Minister of the Environment who has committed $10 million to save the valley. They are calling upon this government to work with the Ontario government to save the valley as a park.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to present a petition duly authorized under Standing Order 36. My petition is signed by people all the way from Saskatoon to St. Catharines; Welland, Ontario; Prince Albert, Saskatchewan; and Moose Jaw; Saskatchewan, who are pointing

out that there will be millions of Canadians excluded from unemployment insurance claims if Bill C-21 goes forward.

They decry the fact that the government did not make any mention of these proposed changes during the past election and are calling on the government to adopt the recommendations of the Thirty-Third Parliament, Second Session, which much more adequately addresses the concerns of unemployed people.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain): Madam Speaker, today I have the honour and privilege to present another petition signed by hundreds of residents of Hamilton Mountain.

These petitioners have spoken out overwhelmingly against the government's proposed 9 per cent goods and service tax. They believe the tax is unfair, that it places an unnecessary additional burden on low and middle-income Canadians. These petitioners humbly pray and call upon this House to reject the 9 per cent goods and service tax proposal.

AIR INDIA FLIGHT 181

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, I have the pleasure to present a petition that is a substantial one. I have a great number of signatures on this petition. It was collected by constituents in my riding of Kingston and the Islands who were concerned about the bombing of Air India Flight 181 and the fact that no inquiry has been held into the cause of that incident.

• (1120)

The petitioners call upon Parliament to urge the Government of Canada to immediately take steps to establish a public inquiry into the bombing of this Air-India flight to ensure that all the facts surrounding this very unfortunate incident in our aviation history are looked into at the earliest possible time.

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Madam Speaker, it is my honour and duty to rise today to file a petition with respect to the removal of oats from the Canadian Wheat Board.

This is a petition signed by a number of petitioners from Saskatchewan. They are concerned that the government removed oats from the jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board without proper consultation with either the Canadian Wheat Board Advisory Committee or the major farm organizations in western Canada. They are concerned about the future of farm marketing boards and orderly marketing generally.

They call upon this government to replace oats under the jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board and to give oats and barley the same protection under the Canadian Wheat Board that wheat presently has.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Any more petitions?

Some Hon. Members: No.

* * *

[*English*]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Shall all questions stand?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): On a point of order, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

* * *

POINT OF ORDER

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, I believe Your Honour is about to call Orders of the Day.

I want to raise a point of order because I think we in the opposition have a legitimate objection to voice today concerning the procedure that has been adopted by the government.

On Wednesday last when we were sitting, the government announced the order of business for today as being, as I recall it, the continuation of report stage and third reading of Bill C-19 followed by report stage and third

reading of Bill C-15, the plant breeders' rights legislation.

Yesterday at five o'clock, the Minister of Justice came into the House. In fact it was shortly after five o'clock. He designated today as an opposition day. I recognize, as do all hon. members, that the government has the right to decide the order of business, but if we are to conduct the business of this House in anything like an orderly way I fail to understand why the government would even presume to make a change of this magnitude in the order of business to force an opposition day by surprise on us at five o'clock the previous day.

Members know that we have to give notice of our motion, and we managed to do that by six o'clock as required by the rules, but I submit that this is a totally unprecedented and improper way to deal with the business of this House.

If the government expects co-operation from the opposition in orderly debate as they have been getting—bills have been sailing through this place it seems to me—I do not understand why it would take this step. I recognize the right is there but I want to express, on behalf of the opposition, our complete abhorrence of this procedure that has been followed.

Had I known last night when the minister stood up and made the announcement that there had been no discussions about that possibility in advance of it, I would have been on my feet and objected. I was in the House at the time but I had no idea—I only assumed that there had been negotiations. I understand there have been none. That was a completely irresponsible act on the part of the government that, in my view, was uncalled for. I know the minister would apologize if he were here. I hope he will have his parliamentary assistant apologize for really an unprecedented and improper use of the rules of this House.

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I do want to make a couple of comments in response to this particular point of order.

First of all, I would like to say to the hon. member that I am not happy that we were required, on such short notice, to make today an allotted day. There are a number of circumstances that have been occurring. There were discussions going on between the three parties yesterday and a decision was made at the last moment that did not allow myself or my minister to touch base with the opposition parties.

I would also like to emphasize that the hon. member should know that there have been discussions going on in terms of a parliamentary schedule and calendar for over four days now. I think it is almost a week. We have been waiting for a detailed response. When we get that detailed response it makes it much easier for us, as a government, to lay out the agenda. It makes it much easier for the opposition, whether they be the Official Opposition or the third party, to plan their own lives and their schedules.

We are making every effort we possibly can to accommodate all the members of the House, to lay out a schedule that all of us would find acceptable and be able to live with. We are simply at this point waiting for a response and as soon as we have those responses then we can very likely avoid, except in very unusual circumstances, ending up in a situation where any member or any party is caught off guard by the legislative agenda for the next day or for the next hour.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I suppose the reply given by the parliamentary secretary will at least partially satisfy the hon. member who raised the point of order.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S. O. 81—UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should give urgent consideration to introducing in the immediate future a bill to extend the variable re-entry provisions of the Unemployment Insurance Act in order to assure full protection of workers in economically distressed regions;

That this House declare its willingness to pass such a measure in no more than one sitting; and

That, for greater certainty, this House declare that the passage of this motion does not constitute a vote of no-confidence in the government.

He said: Madam Speaker, let me explain the purpose of this rather complicated motion. I want to say immediately that there is a slight typographical error in the motion. In the fourth line where it says "extend the variable re-entry provisions", that should read "the variable entry provisions". But the principle of the motion is the same and I think most members understand that we mean variable entry provisions.

According to Section 6 of the Unemployment Insurance Act of 1971, individuals need 14 weeks to qualify for unemployment insurance benefits. They need 14 weeks to qualify unless, of course, they are new entries into the workforce and then they need 20 weeks to qualify.

However, in 1977, the government of the day, a Liberal government at that time, introduced what is known as the variable entrance requirement whereby individuals would only need from 10 to 14 weeks to qualify for unemployment insurance benefits, depending on the rate of unemployment in their region. If they were living in a region which had very high unemployment, then they would only need 10 weeks to qualify for benefits. If they were living in a region with rather low unemployment, they would need 14 weeks. If the rate of unemployment was somewhere in between they would need 11, 12, or 13 weeks to qualify.

That was known as the variable entrance requirement and that was introduced in 1977 in a short one-page bill, but it was only introduced for the following year, 1978. It terminated at the end of the year.

From that year on, every year the government of the day re-introduced the variable entrance requirement for one year only, usually in the month of December, and it did it with a short one-paragraph or one-clause bill which extended this variable entrance requirement for the following year.

For one reason or another that I do not understand, neither the Liberal governments of Mr. Trudeau nor the Conservative governments of Mr. Clark or Mr. Mulroney made this a permanent thing. They simply extended it from year to year, always doing it in the month of December in a short one-page bill, and there was very little debate on that bill, usually lasting half a day.

The last time that this variable entrance requirement was extended was with Bill C-158, on September 29, 1988, just before the call of the last election. Bill C-158 extended the variable entrance requirement for all of 1989, this year, until January 6, 1990, when it expires. So the variable entrance requirement of 10 to 14 weeks will expire on January 6, 1990. That is where we stand with the variable entrance requirement.

• (1130)

This year, as all members know, the government introduced and passed in this House Bill C-21 which implemented very extensive changes to the unemployment insurance program. It introduced rather massive cuts to the benefits, made it more difficult to qualify, increased penalties for those who quit without just cause and terminated the government's contribution to the unemployment insurance fund, which last year was $2.8 billion.

In other words, Bill C-21 brought about very extensive changes in the unemployment insurance program, including a change whereby to qualify for unemployment insurance, one would require 10 to 20 weeks. That provision in Bill C-21 which sets out the qualifying period as ranging from 10 to 20 weeks would replace the 14-weeks' qualification period which is found in Section 6 of the Unemployment Insurance Act of 1971 and would also replace the 10 to 14 week variable entrance requirement which we have had year by year since 1977.

Bill C-21 was passed in this House on the evening of November 6. Bill C-21 went to the Senate on November 7, but as hon. members know, Parliament did not sit from November 11 to November 19 for the Remembrance Day recess and immediately after that, the Senate started debate on the bill and sent it to its committee last week. Committee hearings have already started in the Senate.

The problem is this. As I said, Bill C-21 introduces rather extensive changes to the unemployment insurance program. There is a reduction of benefits of $1.5 billion, which money is allocated to other purposes. There is an increased cost to employers and employees. There is a shift to welfare systems because if workers do not qualify for unemployment insurance or their benefits are terminated sooner and they do not have work, then

they have to rely on welfare, and welfare is taken care of by provinces and municipalities.

There is a loss to provinces due to the fact that moneys which went into provinces in the form of benefits will no longer go into those provinces to the same degree, and consequently the provinces do not know whether some of the developmental moneys will go to them to the same extent as the benefits did. In any case, Bill C–21 implements very extensive changes to the unemployment insurance system and I think the government would admit that itself. The government thinks those changes are good. We do not think they are very good.

Last year, there were 2.2 million claimants under the unemployment insurance program. That is a great number of Canadians. Some claims were for regular benefits and some were for the special benefits. The program last year was an $11–billion–plus program. The unemployment insurance program is the largest income–support program in Canada.

As I say, the bill went to the Senate on November 7. There was the recess for Remembrance Day of one week, and the Senate has started its hearings. I received information this morning that the Clerk of the Senate has already received 159 requests from groups and individuals asking to be heard on this bill, because they feel it impacts, in one way or another, on them and on the people they represent.

I also point out that in the House of Commons while we had committee hearings in the fall for four weeks and we heard as many groups as we could, we still turned down a large number of groups. We turned down, in fact, 127 individuals and groups, some for good reason but some simply because we did not have the time, due to the fact that we had to report the bill back by a fixed date.

The Senate is faced with a situation where it has had a very high number of requests to be heard on this bill by people who seriously want to give their views, and these people will have to be heard before December 22 when the Christmas recess starts. It is impossible for the Senate to dispose of Bill C–21 by that date. To have proper hearings, it would have to advertise and it would have to give groups time to prepare their briefs and so on. That is just the proper thing to do.

We are not talking about the Senate blocking the bill or unduly delaying the bill. We are talking about giving the Senate a reasonable amount of time to deal with those groups that want to be heard.

While we heard from a lot of trade unions, social groups, chambers of commerce and so on in the House of Commons committee, we did not hear from any provincial governments or provincial ministers, although some wanted to be heard. The Premier of New Brunswick wanted to be heard. Ministers from Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Nova Scotia wanted to be heard. We had to make a decision that we could not hear them.

We also did not hear from Mr. Forget who was the chairman of the royal commission established by the Conservative government in the last Parliament. He had spent more than a year studying the unemployment insurance program, but we did not hear from him. We did not hear from the Economic Council or from the Canadian Council for Labour Market Productivity or from other academics. We heard from a lot of grass–roots groups, but we did not hear from a lot of people who wanted to be heard and should have been heard.

If Bill C–21 is not passed by January 6, and if the government does not bring in the usual bill to extend the variable entrance requirement, then it means that the standard flat qualification period across the country will be 14 weeks. If that is the case, that goes against the government's own policy of having a minimum qualification period of 10 weeks. It means that everybody will require 14 weeks to qualify until Bill C–21 is passed or unless the government introduces the variable entrance requirement.

The way to overcome this, and I say this in good faith and with the hope that the government will listen to reason, is to bring in once again either a one–page bill to extend the variable entrance requirement like the government did in September 1988 through Bill C–158, or put to the House a resolution which is provided for in Bill C–158 simply to extend the variable entrance requirement for two or three months. That is just enough time to give the Senate time to have a reasonable amount of time for hearings on Bill C–21.

According to my reading of Bill C–158, it allows the government to introduce a resolution which is approved by the Governor in Council to extend the variable entrance requirement for a time that could be open to negotiation, whether it was for two, three or four months or whatever. I suggest to the government that is another

way of doing this, either by a bill or by a resolution as provided for in Bill C–158.

We want to make clear that if the government did introduce such a bill to extend the variable entrance requirement, or if it introduced a resolution to extend it, we in this party would pass such a bill or resolution without any debate whatsoever. In the motion put to the House, we say we would pass it in less than one sitting. I give the commitment that we would not debate it at all. The motion or the resolution would be passed in a few minutes, as far as we are concerned.

We also say in this motion that we do not consider this motion to be a want of confidence motion. It is simply a plea to the government to do what it has done and what other governments have done year after year in the month of December, and that is to extend the variable entrance requirement.

7 I want to repeat that we are talking about the largest social income support program in Canada. It is a program that has ranged between $11 and $13 billion per year. This bill introduces massive changes to the program. The government thinks they are good changes, and we do not think they are. Some of them are good. Some of the provisions with respect to parental care and so on and benefits for senior citizens we approve of, but most of the bill we do not approve of, but that is beside the point. The point is that many Canadians are affected by this bill and they want to be heard. It is their democratic right to be heard.

I also point out to the government that it used closure at both second and third reading on this bill. At second reading, we only had one full day and two half days of debate. At third reading and report stage, we only had three and a half days of debate.

• (1140)

Another reason the government should consider introducing the variable entrance requirement or extending it for a period of time is that the government itself in Bill C–21 accepted that the minimum period for qualification should be 10 weeks, and I cannot understand why it would penalize people by allowing the 14–week minimum to apply for a month or two while Canadian groups are being heard on Bill C–21. If government members really believe that 10 weeks should be the minimum period for qualification in high unemployment regions, then they should introduce the variable entrance requirement bill.

Another reason why they should do this is that the day after we completed the debate and the vote on third reading on Bill C–21 in this House, the government produced its new program for new unemployment insurance regions. This means that when we were discussing and debating Bill C–21, we did not know what those new regions would be.

When the groups that appeared before the House of Commons committee made their points known, they did not know what those new regions would be. As a matter of fact, those new regions changed the impact of Bill C–21. This is a further reason why we should allow the Senate a reasonable period of time to hear views on the bill now that those many groups know the proposals for the new regions.

In conclusion, let me sum up by saying that by this motion we are asking the government simply to extend the variable entrance requirement as it has done every year since it has taken office, as Liberal governments before it did, as the Clark government did. We ask the government to extend the variable entrance requirement by a bill or by a motion but not necessarily for a year as in the past, but simply for a fixed period of time which is a reasonable period of time to complete the hearings on Bill C–21 in the Senate. I am sure that that extension can be negotiated in a reasonable way in good faith.

We are asking that the government extend the variable entrance requirement because it is totally unreasonable to ask the Senate to finish its debate on Bill C–21 before Christmas. It is unreasonable to ask that because 159 groups have asked to be heard. I am not saying that all those groups deserve to be heard but at least half of them will be reasonable.

I have the list of groups wishing to be heard here. I could go through the list. They are from all parts of the country. Some of them are associations of adoptive parents, some of them are consumer counselling groups, some of them are trade unions, some of them are business associations and so on. I am not saying that all the groups that have asked the Senate to be heard should be heard, but certainly a good number of them should.

We are asking that because these people want to be heard on a major matter. This is not a minor matter. This is a very important bill. As I said, it deals with a program that last years was worth $11 billion. In the bill, the government cuts back benefits by $1.5 billion and relocates those moneys. Last year, there were 2.2 million claimants under the unemployment insurance program. That is a lot of Canadians and these people have a right to be heard.

With respect to the regions and the provinces, the impact will be considerable. For example, in Newfoundland, according to the Canadian Labour Congress study—I know the government does not agree with it but even it agrees that there will be a loss of money in the form of benefits to Newfoundland—it estimates that the loss to Newfoundland would be $51 million in benefits; the loss to Prince Edward Island, $32 million; the loss to Nova Scotia, $29 million; the loss to New Brunswick, $148 million; and the loss to Quebec, $224 million.

The government will say that it intends to put back some of those moneys in the form of training and development but there is no assurance in the bill that those moneys will go back to the province that is losing them in the form of benefits. If there are people unemployed, for example, in Nova Scotia and their benefits are cut and the total loss to Nova Scotia in the form of benefits as a result of a more difficult qualification period and a shorter benefit period is $29 million, the province is concerned that that money is not going to be going to Nova Scotia with all that unemployment. It wants some assurance that the money is going to come back and that is why the provincial ministers wanted to appear. By the way, they have already applied to appear before the Senate committee. They want time to prepare themselves and so on.

There is good reason for the government to extend the variable entrance requirement for several months but not necessarily for the whole year. There is good reason to accept the fact that many groups that have not been heard should be heard on this bill, if they believe in democracy on that side of the House. There is good reason for the regions to be concerned that they will be short-changed as a result of Bill C-21.

I emphasize that what we are asking for today is not to be considered a vote of confidence. What we are asking for is a motion or a bill to extend the variable entrance requirement and we in this party make the commitment that we would not debate the measure at all. We would pass it immediately if the minister brought it in as has been done in previous years in the month of December.

As we approach the Christmas season, I appeal to the government to be sensible on this, to show some kindness and understanding and to accept the fact that both Houses of this Parliament need to debate and consider measures. We hope that it will bring in, as it has done in previous years, the variable entrance requirement measure to extend it for three or four months or whatever is reasonable in the circumstances. I hope before the day is over and after listening to the minister, she will agree to that.

I know she may say as the House leader said, "Well, let the Senate pass it in a few weeks". I hope that she would reconsider that because if the Senators do that, they are going to turn down many serious groups that want to be heard on the bill. As I say, let us just give them a few weeks to discuss this and have hearings on a bill of such importance.

Members opposite agree that this bill is of great importance. They think it is one of the major planks in their reform as they see it. If that is the case, if they have great confidence in their measure, then I suggest they should give ample time, not unreasonable time and not time to block the measure, but reasonable time to deal with this.

I plead with the minister to bring in a measure to extend the variable entrance requirement. It will not be a question of confidence in the government and we will pass it without any debate whatsoever.

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): As the member for Kamloops mentioned earlier this morning, he wrote a letter to the government House leader. With the permission of the House, I would like to read bits of it. There is no use reading it all:

> For years all parties have cooperated to give swift passage to an annual bill which provides entrance requirements for UI, and enabled Canadians living in regions of high unemployment to receive benefits with a shorter eligibility period. C-21 was expected to obviate the need for such a bill this year.

He concludes by saying:

> I suggest it would be most prudent for the House to pass in the customary one-sitting fashion a bill to extend varying entrance requirements until such time as C-21 is proclaimed.

I would like to commend the Official Opposition for having brought this matter before the House today on its opposition day. I think it is worth repeating parts of that motion as well:

> That this House declare its willingness to pass such a measure in no more than one sitting; and
>
> That, for greater certainty, this House declare that the passage of this motion does not constitute a vote of non-confidence in the government.

From the point of view of the opposition, I cannot think of anything which would be more indicative of the desire of the Opposition to co-operate with the government in alleviating what is going to be a very severe situation for some people who become unemployed if the action which has taken place in previous years is not also taken this year.

• (1150)

I have no idea what the Senate will do with Bill C-21. I do not know if what the Senate does with Bill C-21 is the pertinent issue facing us today or over the next few weeks. The pertinent issue is that there are going to be people who need unemployment assistance, and unless we make the usual yearly accommodation for the varying rates, people are going to suffer. That is the issue.

The fact of the matter is, of course, that Bill C-21 is also an issue in this and I suspect that what really is occurring is that the government is using the fact that the bill is in the Senate and may or may not be held up as a weapon to force the Senate to come back quickly with the legislation so it can be in place by January 6. I think that is shameful, shameful but I guess understandable.

This is not all that much of a departure from the actions of the government over the last six or seven months since Bill C-21 was first introduced. Bill C-21 itself is a very severe measure and I think it can be interpreted in almost all respects as being a measure to punish those who become unemployed. There is no other way to see it, in spite of the fact that the government claims it is a new measure which will take Canada into the 21st Century.

In a previous speech I made in the House, I referred to it as being into the 20th century. I think that is far more applicable. We are not going from the 19th to the 20th Century, but probably more likely from the 20th back to the 19th. We certainly are not going into the 21st century with this legislation.

At every stage of the passage of Bill C-21 through the House, the government introduced closure. I do not know in this context if it is acceptable to use the word "lie" or not, but it gives the lie, I think, to the government's assurance that it had unanimous approval of the House when the bill went to the Senate. If I cannot use that word, at least it certainly casts into a great deal of doubt whether or not the bill going to the Senate had the unanimous approval of this House. It certainly was not overwhelming at all, it was overwhelming opposition, not only by the members of the opposition, but by the Canadian public expressing itself before the committee as the committee did its work across the country.

The fact that the government is doing what it is doing in relation to the non-extension of variable entrance requirements and the fact that I think it used closure—I think closure is also one of the things which ties in so closely with what the government is doing—is a very good example that indeed this is not a progressive measure at all, at least in so far as those who have become unemployed are concerned. It may be in so far as some yet to be explained, yet to become obvious agenda of the government. It may be beneficial in some sense but not in so far as the unemployed are concerned or even as the training which the government so frequently expressed as being one of the underlying reasons for it to do what it is doing is concerned.

What is really happening as far as Bill C-21 is concerned, as far as the non-approval of the varying entrance requirements is concerned, is that the government is indicating in no uncertain terms to the House and to the Canadian public where it stands.

Where the government stands is not at all on the side of the oppressed, but it is in fact becoming one of the major oppressors in the social fabric of Canada by using people who are in such an unfortunate situation as pawns in what is only a perceived argument between itself and the Senate.

Oppressed may possibly be a strong word, but let us look at the group of people who will be primarily affected by Bill C-21 and as well by the non-passage of the variable entrance requirements for people who become unemployed.

I have a list here of some of the jobs that are available. We keep hearing reference made to all these jobs that are available. If time permits, I will probably be making reference to those a little bit later, but for the time being, I would like to refer to some of the hourly rates that are available for some of the jobs that one would find if you went to the local unemployment insurance office: A delivery driver, $5 an hour; a landscape worker; $7 an hour; a seamstress, rather a highly skilled person, I would suggest, a mere $5.50 an hour; and floorwalkers, $5.25 an hour.

An Hon. Member: Did he say streetwalker?

Mr. Fisher: If we go into another region of Canada, we find that waiter/waitresses are making the princely sum of $4.50 an hour.

I think that was an uncalled for reference. Streetwalker, no, I think not. I doubt if too many members of the opposition have much of an idea of what a streetwalker would be making.

A fish plant worker—the list goes on and on and the rates go on and on. I would like to point out that those are an extremely disadvantaged group of people when we are talking about unemployment insurance which is precisely what we are talking about. These are people who are making those rates, the highest of which I see on my list is $8 an hour which in a year is somewhere around $16,500. For even a single person, that is below the poverty level in most regions of the country.

Even at that, if you become unemployed, that is not the rate you receive. If you were making $5 an hour when you were working and you become unemployed, the rate you now receive is $3 an hour because you receive only 60 per cent. Part of the rationale of the government bringing in Bill C-21 in the first place was because the system was being so severely abused. Can you imagine anyone quitting work intentionally, making $5 an hour so that they can subsequently earn $3? I think it shows how abusive, crass and uncaring, and, yes, how oppressing, Bill C-21 is.

Speaking of quitting, on that same job of $5 an hour, going to $3 an hour under ordinary circumstances, after a waiting period, of course, which will be increased by Bill C-21, if you quit voluntarily without just cause which, with all due respect to some changes in Bill C-21, is still going to be difficult enough to substantiate even in the most extreme cases of unsafe work places, racial and sexual discrimination and so on, the rate you would be receiving on unemployment insurance would be $2.50 an hour. It varies accordingly if you happen to be fortunate enough to make $6 an hour. At the 60 per cent rate, you would be earning $3.60, but if you quit for any of the justifiable reasons, then, of course, you do not receive a penalty after you have established that it was justifiable, you would receive the $3.60. But if you could not substantiate it, you would receive a mere $3 an hour. That is not a lot of money, and certainly not something that anyone is going to get wealthy on.

• (1200)

These are the people whom the government is holding to ransom with respect to the non-voluntary passage today, if you will. Certainly the New Democratic Party is willing, as is the Official Opposition having already stated so, to pass that legislation with no interference whatsoever. I suspect that if we were to do it in the usual manner, you may possibly miss it if you blinked. It could be accomplished that quickly.

Another disturbing aspect of what I have just finished describing is that most of these people are women. Many of them are single-parent mothers who, in addition to not making very much money and having a tremendously difficult time supporting their families on low rates of pay, are also working part-time jobs.

I know the government has reiterated many times that it has created more than a million jobs, but the fact of the matter is that statistics show that most of these people are still working part time. The way statistics operate, the way Statistics Canada does its reporting, one has to work the required number of hours a month to be able to qualify as a full-time worker.

Many of these people are working at two and perhaps three jobs and, believe it or not, the hours are cumulative in so far as the reporting of the numbers are concerned. Persons working at perhaps as many as three jobs would be classified as being full-time workers if they put in the required number which I believe is 28 hours per week. These are the people who are being held to ransom as a result of the non-voluntary, quick passage of the legislation which has gone through so expediently in previous years.

We have not really talked about another group of Canadian citizens who are going to be tremendously adversely affected should this not receive quick passage. I refer to the single- parent mothers and of course that implies there are children involved. I refer not only to single-parent mothers. Of course there are men who work at these low-paying jobs as well. Not being able to qualify for unemployment insurance in a reasonable length of time in an area with very high unemployment will severely affect even more children than it will people unemployed.

The number of people who will be unemployed is a rather interesting subject to talk about. Earlier on in history, not early in the history of Bill C-21 but about midway through, after the opposition parties had been trying for a long period of time to get the impact figures on the changes to the Unemployment Insurance Act, government numbers showed that somewhere around 30,000 would be totally excluded. Subsequent studies have shown that the numbers are much greater than that, ranging as high as 150,000. Probably a figure of 130,000 would be very close to the number of people excluded all together from receiving unemployment insurance, bearing in mind that the people we are talking about are very low-paid workers, part-time workers, mostly women.

Again I remind the House and Canadians that that is only the number of individuals who will not be receiving unemployment benefits. It does not—and I want to emphasize this—take into account the numbers of children who will be so adversely affected by these changes in Bill C-21 and by the non-passage of the variable entrance requirements rates.

I would remind the House that a week or a week and a half ago we had a New Democratic Party opposition day with reference to the plight of children, the tremendously dire conditions in which so many of these absolutely defenceless Canadian citizens find themselves through absolutely no fault of their own. I would suggest that their unemployed parents find themselves in that position for the most part, for the overwhelming part, through no fault of their own as well.

I would certainly commend the previous leader of our party for having spoken so eloquently on the subject of starvation among children in Canada and their plight. I think that is something we must remember when we talk about the issues before the House today.

I guess it becomes part of the social balance sheet. When the committee travelled across the country we heard representations from a large group of people. There is no question about that. When we were in northern Ontario reference began to be made by cities and municipalities which were speaking not only for themselves but for the provinces in which they were located. The city of Vancouver felt so strongly about the changes which were going to be occurring and the adverse effect which was going to be felt by it that the mayor of the city of Vancouver made the presentation on behalf of the city.

The imbalance in the social balance sheet is going to come about as a result of not implementing the variable rates for however long a period. I would not even want to put a time limit on it, for however long it requires for the democratic process to wend its way through the system it is going to be tremendously severe as are the changes to Bill C-21. We have these two things going along in an almost parallel fashion.

The government is going to have to one day wake up to the fact that it has made a tremendous mistake in judging the temperament of the Canadian people, in thinking that Canadian people would accept these changes to such a valuable social program.

I reiterate that the New Democratic Party is willing, as the member for Kamloops indicated, to pass this as speedily as possible so that the dire effects of not passing it do not necessarily have to come to pass. Certainly, if it does not happen, the government will have this down upon its head and will have to suffer the consequences.

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, without question this is a very important motion that we are debating today, and I do welcome this opportunity. I thank the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce for raising this issue because it is an important one.

I remind the House that it passed Bill C-21, an act to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act, last November 7. In so doing the House assured the full protection of all workers across Canada who found themselves in economically distressed regions or circumstances.

• (1210)

While I welcome the debate the motion is an unfortunate one. Year after year governments have extended the variable entry requirement each time for only one more year. In contrast, this government has presented Bill C–21 as a genuine response to regional variations. Bill C–21 not only provides for the variable entrance requirements but it does so on a permanent basis. In effect it provides all Canadians with fair access to income support in times of unemployment.

Yet, while this government has demonstrated leadership by introducing the Labour Force Development Strategy, our friends across the way are spinning their wheels in the mind set of a decade ago.

[*Translation*]

During the past five years, this government has taken measures that previous administrations had scrupulously avoided. The challenges of the 1990s demand genuine leadership, real solutions and at times, the ability to make difficult choices.

The government has shown that leadership, not only by making changes in the unemployment insurance program but also by setting up agreements for regional economic development, obtaining the free trade agreement and providing for prosperity and growth, a fact that did not escape the OECD. And on top of that, we have created jobs, real jobs, more than one million since 1984.

[*English*]

We have replaced the former make–work programs of the former government with concrete long–term strategies for job creation that spell greater opportunities for the development of our human resources and for individual achievement. Bill C–21 is part and parcel of this government's Labour Force Development Strategy which provides for an additional $775 million in new programming to meet the needs of the unemployed and to upgrade the skills of the labour force.

Bill C–21 calls for change, yes, but it does so in a balanced and fair manner, and it does so in particular by providing for a flexible variable entrance requirement.

Let me remind the House of the other ways that Bill C–21 will help Canadians. With the goal of developing our human resources, Bill C–21 significantly increases funding for training under section 26 and the new subsection 26(1) of the UI Act. In total $1 billion will be available from the UI account for income support and courses for UI recipients.

Bill C–21 allows UI recipients with viable business plans to capitalize their benefits to help defray business start–up costs. The spin–offs from such support go far beyond simply getting claimants off UI and on to their feet. Whole communities will benefit economically. In the experience of other countries which have this kind of provision, such entrepreneurship has created an additional job for each new business start–up.

As well, the bill allows UI recipients to receive their UI payments in a lump sum, another flexible way in which recipients can benefit. That will allow some of them who wish to move to areas with better job prospects to do so. The changes also provide older workers with expanded retraining and job–finding services.

The government was determined to bring the UI Act into line with the realities of today's work patterns which have changed and with the equity provisions of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I remind hon. members that Bill C–21 provides for 15 weeks of maternity benefits during the period surrounding the birth of a child, but it also makes available 10 weeks of parental benefits for natural and adoptive parents, for either mother or father or shared between them.

Furthermore, Bill C–21 ensures that claimants have the flexibility to draw a combination of special benefits up to a maximum of 30 weeks. I would remind hon. members that until we introduced these changes or until these changes are passed it was not possible to be pregnant and also sick. We have made that much better for women who have need of special benefits. Indeed we are getting many phone calls now from women who are looking forward to the new benefits that they will receive, hopefully in January.

Finally this bill extends UI eligibility to those who work after they reach age 65, something else that will bring our unemployment insurance in line with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and will also benefit those who are leading active and vigorous lives in the workforce beyond age 65.

All these changes made Canada's unemployment insurance program more equitable, more flexible, and more relevant to evolving social and work patterns. At the same time it sets out to reduce disincentives to work,

particularly in areas with strong economies and with low unemployment.

We have reached a time in Canada where we cannot afford to sacrifice a large part of the population, individual Canadians, to unemployment or to underemployment when that is not what those Canadians are seeking.

Canada is in the midst of one of the most exciting and challenging economic transitions in our history; the transition from a traditional resource-based economy to one where knowledge and skills and human resources play an increasingly central role. This transition not only confronts Canada but the entire industrialized world, and Canada has to be ready. Our competitive standing in that world will depend on how well we prepare ourselves over the next few years. It is especially important that we continue to adapt our labour market programs to the reality of a changing economy.

Canadians face a future where change is the only constant and where constant adaptation to new technologies, new market conditions and new skill requirements is imperative for the workers themselves to lead satisfying lives and for small businesses and for large companies, but most particularly of course for individual Canadians.

Bill C-21 is part of Canada's adaptation to change, as is the rest of the Labour Force Development Strategy which we announced in April. It works to develop and manage our human resources more effectively with the help of our private sector partners. All told for unemployed Canadians the strategy represents more support of activities like training and skill development that lead directly to jobs.

For Canadians who have jobs the strategy represents a chance to maintain and upgrade skills in response to changing demands. It encourages government's partners—labour, business and educators; we are not in this alone—to work together and build a workforce that is equipped for the future.

Because the co-operation of our partners is so important we tailored Bill C-21 as closely as possible to the labour market needs of Canadians. The contents of this bill, contrary to what hon. members opposite have insinuated, have been scrutinized from every conceivable angle. I would remind members that there were over 200 presentations to the committee when that legislative committee travelled across the country.

In designing the bill we considered as well the Macdonald Commission, the Forget inquiry, the Standing Committee on Labour, Employment and Immigration, and the de Grandpré advisory council. We listened to Canadians and parliamentarians and we did make several amendments, I would remind members, in consideration of their suggestions.

Currently I am consulting with business, labour, non-governmental organizations and community groups to design new training programs. I must say that that is a real breakthrough in terms of the co-operation and the partnerships that can be built to deal with the realities of the workplace. I would certainly say that we have given Canadians a more than fair chance to tell us what they think about the bill.

The government, as always, had to make some difficult decisions when this bill was drafted. In a country so diverse, I think it is accurate to say that compromise is almost always a part of the solution to our problems. We believe strongly that this bill reflects the demands that Canadians presented to us.

With respect to the entrance requirements that we are debating today, it brings the UI system into line with new economic situations such as, for example, the booming area around metropolitan Toronto. Certainly Bill C-21 allows the UI system to differentiate more fairly between regions that need lots of support and those that need less support.

• (1220)

I think it is quite unfair that neither the Senate nor the opposition recognizes that the solution to the present variable entrance problem already exists in Bill C-21. Instead of taking that solution to its logical conclusion they choose to ignore it.

Let me remind the House that it was always our intention to use UI changes to help free up the necessary resources to expand developmental programming. We think this is a good use of the fund. I should point out, although I hate to say it, that this is not a new idea. It has been done before. The objective of these modest changes that we are making was to encourage a greater commitment to the labour market.

I would remind members that the former government did exactly the same thing. At the time when the member for Winnipeg South Centre was the Minister of Employment and Immigration he signed a report called *Unemployment Insurance in the 1980s* which said that when the 10 to 14-week variable entrance requirement was introduced in 1978, 87 per cent of people affected in the Atlantic provinces found the two extra weeks needed to qualify and 40 per cent of those affected elsewhere found the up to six weeks they needed. When the entrance requirements for new entrants and re-entrants were raised to 20 weeks in 1979, there was an immediate sharp rise in the number of claimants applying with exactly 20 insurable weeks, especially in the Atlantic provinces.

As an example, the number of claims established in New Brunswick with exactly 20 insurable weeks virtually doubled between 1978 and 1980. Those additional work weeks in both years were secured in spite of continuing unemployment in the range of 8.4 per cent, somewhat higher than we have today.

Now that is a report on what happened when the variable entrance requirements were changed before. It is signed, as I said, by the neighbour of the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, the member for Winnipeg South Centre.

By expanding the active program assistance we are going much further and doing much more for people, because UI recipients will be in a better position to secure long-term and productive work.

Let me also remind the House that workers in areas of high unemployment often must fight tenaciously to preserve their places in the workforce. If Bill C-21 continues to be delayed until it is too late to make the necessary changes for the new year, some workers in Canada will find themselves facing difficult times, and that is not why I entered public service. We are thinking about the needs of unemployed Canadians.

Clearly the opposition and the Senate have the ability to permit the changes that we have proposed in Bill C-21. If they choose not to let the bill through, the consequences are evident. The government has provided the solution to the existing variable entrance rate which we believe has been an inadequate response to Canadians who find themselves out of work. We have modernized the entrance requirements to suit the current economic situation of our communities.

In addition, we are altering the UI program to allow those Canadians most in need to get training and other types of help so that they can find lasting, secure and satisfying jobs.

[*Translation*]

Bill C-21 arises from the demands that our country must meet in order to respond to new challenges on a more competitive world market. Thanks to this bill, the government has been able to provide a fair program that will ensure income security is maintained during periods of unemploymnent. We worked very hard, we put our solution before the House of Commons, and the House approved that solution.

[*English*]

The hon. member for Saskatoon—Dundurn was talking about what would happen to Canadians if we do not support the motion of the opposition today. However, what Canadians are waiting to see is whether its representatives follow the lead this government has provided to ensure that deserving Canadians receive what they are entitled to in the coming year.

Let me remind hon. members that this is not just the variable entrance requirements that are at risk if they do not proceed expeditiously in the other place. The benefits to expectant mothers, to fathers, to those over 65, and the expansion of the Community Futures Program which is there to help people in regions that have particular needs will not be expanded unless Bill C-21 goes through. The expansion of the program for social assistance recipients will not go through either, unless we have some sensitivity to all the reforms we have put into Bill C-21. I may remind hon. members of the withdrawal of the repeater provision for seasonal workers which will help many of the people in the regions of Canada through our new bill.

I have already pointed out that when this same approach was taken under the former government, whose members are sitting over there snickering at what we are trying to accomplish, the people did find work; they were better off.

I would hope that members would join me today in urging the other place to hasten the passage of Bill C-21 so Canadian workers will not only have their variable entrance requirements but can develop their skills for the 1990s and will be able to take advantage of all of the advantages that we have put into Bill C-21.

Mr. Allmand: Madam Speaker, I have some questions for the hon. minister. There is no doubt that the minister believes that the provisions in Bill C–21 are good ones. They are her proposals; it is her bill. She believes in them strongly and thinks that they will be good for the Canadian people, but she must recognize that many Canadians do not agree that all the measures in that bill are good. As a matter of fact, when the House of Commons committee sat throughout the country, 157 out of 202 groups opposed many of the measures in the bill and opposed the bill.

The minister must recognize that there are people who in good faith do not accept her point of view with respect to that bill. The minister must recognize as well that many believe that the bill will impact on them in a negative way. As I pointed out, there were 2.2 million claimants under the unemployment insurance system last year, and many of them believe that they will be impacted upon in a negative way as a result of this bill.

The minister must also accept that a lot of individuals, groups and experts were not heard by the House of Commons committee. We did our best in the committee. We heard many trade unions, many chambers of commerce and many social groups but, as I pointed out, we made a decision that we could not hear provincial government representatives. We heard very few academics and we did not hear the Economic Council, the Canadian Council for Labour Productivity, and so on. The minister must recognize that there are many people who would like to have their say on this bill who have not been heard. There are many people who feel it impacts in a negative way and many people who do not agree with it.

My first question is: Does the Minister not accept that those people who are concerned about the bill should have a right to be heard?

My second question is: What is wrong with a temporary extension to the variable entrance requirement? We are not suggesting in this party that the answer to unemployment insurance problems is a 10 to 14–week variable entrance requirement. As a matter of fact, I was a member of the Standing Committee on Labour, Employment and Immigration in the last Parliament which passed a unanimous report with a Conservative majority. The chairman of the committee is the present Whip of the Conservative Party. We recommended that there be a flat 10 weeks, entrance requirement right across the country no matter what the rate of unemployment because we felt it was too difficult and unfair to have a variable entrance requirement. That was after a lot of study and many hearings before that committee.

All we are asking is that the government extend the variable entrance requirement for a reasonable period of time to allow those who want to be heard in the Senate to be heard. I am asking the minister: What is wrong with such a temporary extension?

I would not support that the Senate, the non–elected body, block this bill on a permanent basis, but I think they have a right and a duty to give reasonable attention to those who want to be heard.

• (1230)

Finally, the minister says there has been a lot of consultation on this bill. Does she not understand that consulting on a selective basis in her department or in her office with her officials is not the same as consulting publicly before a House of Commons or Senate committee where the proceedings are open to the public, the press and are reported? There is quite a difference between that kind of consultation in a public, open way and consultation in her office.

I ask her what is wrong with giving a right to be heard to those who ought to be heard and must be heard? What is wrong with a temporary extension of the variable entrance requirement? Can she not see the difference between public consultation and private consultation in her office or in her department?

Mrs. McDougall: Madam Speaker, I do not think this government has anything to learn from the opposition about the right of people to be heard. It is not a case of having consultations behind closed doors in my office. That is certainly not the way we have approached it. In fact, there is a series of public discussions and forums going on right across the country with labour and management even as we speak. They are being organized by the Canadian Labour and Management Productivity Centre in order to get a variety of opinions on the training programs and the skills development side. This is a real breakthrough. It is not something the opposition ever did when it was in government.

We have made a real point of ensuring that the voices of labour, business, and educators are heard and particularly groups such as the Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women. We will be consulting with a number of people within the native and disabled communities who will also make their voices heard as we develop the training part of the program.

Let me say as well that I have no objection to the people in the Senate calling their witnesses and hearing people they believe would be helpful to them. Since the other place is not sitting this week they have some considerable time in which to do that in committee. I understand they will hear before they are finished—and I respect not only their right to do this but the responsibility they have to do this—a variety of points of view. In fact there are some people, as I have been told by some of our members in the other place, who can come to explain just how the benefits will work.

It is also important to point out to the 2.2 million claimants last year, some of whom are concerned that they will be impacted on negative ways, that the average usage of unemployment insurance was really well below the maximum number of weeks that people are allowed to utilize. Under the new bill in Newfoundland, for example, the maximum duration of benefits under Bill C–21 is 50 weeks in all three regions. That is exactly what it was before. The variable entrance requirement in the new bill is exactly what it was before. What we are going to see is some improvement in places like Atlantic Canada in terms of the flexibility that we are putting into the program and how it is going to be so much better for people.

I am sure when people come to the other place that they can call the witnesses of their choice. If they choose to hear provincial governments, academics or whomever, I am sure they will do that.

I am very proud of this bill. I am looking forward to hearing the kind of debate and the kind of people who do come forward to the committee.

When you talk about the 157 groups who are opposed to the bill, I know that they are all opposed to it for different reasons. Some support one part while the next person who comes in is against it. It is up to the government to make the decisions and the compromises, having heard those opinions from a wide range of Canadians.

Mr. Baker: Madam Speaker, I think the minister inadvertently said a moment ago that the qualifying period for the three new regions in Newfoundland would be exactly the same as it is now. She also said that they can still draw for 50 weeks.

I am sure that the minister must have been looking at figures for a different province and not for the province of Newfoundland. If the minister would examine her notes concerning the three new regions in Newfoundland, she would find that the entrance requirement will vary considerably in metropolitan St. John's from what it is outside of metropolitan St. John's.

Mrs. McDougall: Madam Speaker, I am sorry if I confused the member. I will have to check the "blues". I thought I was talking about the maximum duration of benefits under Bill C–21, at least that was the reference that I was making, which continues to be very favourable to the people of Newfoundland.

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Madam Speaker, I rise today to support most strongly the motion brought forward by the hon. member for Notre–Dame–de–Grâce and seconded by the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands. I rise to call on the government and in particular on the minister to prevent hardship in the high unemployment areas of Canada.

On January 6, if the unemployment insurance bill, Bill C–21, has not received Royal Assent, then, as we all know, the uniform entrance requirements will come into force on a nation–wide basis. In certain areas of this country this will add to and create a hardship. I refer most particularly to those areas in Atlantic Canada, in Cape Breton, in Newfoundland and in New Brunswick. Indeed, many of the areas of the Atlantic, already hard pressed by this government, will suffer untold exacerbation of difficulty.

There are two points to be considered. One is the usual parliamentary process involving the other place. The second is the fair treatment of Canadian workers while Parliament does its work in its normal course.

The people in my riding of Halifax will not suffer greatly in the short term if Bill C–21 is delayed without the introduction of the usual variable entrance requirement bill. Indeed, they will be better off in the short term than they will under Bill C–21.

As it stands right now, 13 weeks is the entrance requirement for Halifax. If the national standard kicks in without the VER, then 14 weeks will be the entrance requirement. Under Bill C-21, in the city of Halifax, 19 weeks will be the entrance requirement.

The minister stated that this bill was a fair bill and one that was accepted by the vast majority of Canadians as a compromise. I disagree with that. My major question is this. Why this unholy rush? Indeed, this bill has been characterized from the beginning, from its introduction, as one that required an unholy rush. If the government is in such a rush to pass this bill, then the average Canadian is going to think there must be something severely wrong—and the average Canadian would be right.

There was closure moved on this bill, a limiting of debate, as my hon. colleague from Notre-Dame-de-Grâce has already noted. There was a limiting of the number of groups who could come before the parliamentary committee as it went across the country. Indeed, in the debate that was allowed—and I use the term "allowed" advisedly—in the House of Commons, we did not know about the changes in the regional areas and the changes that would again inflict more hardship on the people in the hard-pressed areas of Canada.

Since 1977, Liberal and Conservative governments have introduced a short bill in December of each year amending the entrance requirements for unemployment insurance. Indeed, it was done by this government last year on September 29, 1988. It was one of the indicators to the political pundits that an election was coming. It was so important that the timetable was moved up so that these variable entrance requirements could be brought in. Is it less important in 1989? Is it less important to the people of the economically depressed areas of this country that they have an opportunity to survive—and I use that word advisedly, too—the very hard winter that lies ahead of them?

• (1240)

The terms set in December of each year were a minimum of 10 weeks and a maximum of 14. Today Bill C-21 is in the other place, having passed, albeit reluctantly, third reading in the House of Commons. But it seems unlikely, if the usual parliamentary process takes its course, that the bill will be given Royal Assent before February. This is not a delaying tactic on the part of the members of Parliament in the other place—this is the usual parliamentary process.

Again I say to the government, what is wrong with the usual parliamentary process? Why does it need to be speeded up? What is the great rush? What is the benefit when thousands and thousands of Canadians are going to suffer if the government does not act in its normal fashion? God knows they suffer enough when the government is acting in its normal fashion.

The government has not moved any bill which would check the entrance requirements in the event that the other place does not ratify Bill C-21 before the variable entrance requirement of 1989 expires.

Mr. Robichaud: They want to penalize the families.

Ms. Clancy: That is right. My learned colleague from New Brunswick says they want to penalize families, and that is what is going to happen.

The terms of entrance would become the ones of 1977, a flat 14 week entrance requirement should the government not pass a VER bill and Bill C-21 is held up. The hold-up, however, and I reiterate this, is not one of some diabolical plot. It is merely the right and the duty—the constitutional duty—of duly appointed members of Parliament in the other place to hear as much as they possibly can from interested groups who have something to say, particularly when interested groups who had something to say were stifled through the parliamentary committee that travelled this past summer and fall across this country.

I had the dubious pleasure of sitting on that committee when it came to my riding of Halifax. I can tell you, Madam Speaker, that I heard something in that committee from a member on the government side that appalled me. I heard the president of the Acadian Federation of Nova Scotia talk about the fact that with this bill young Acadian Nova Scotians will no longer be able to stay in their home regions. They will no longer be able to stay in a home land that they had been driven out of once before and to which they had returned. I heard an hon. member, and I use the term loosely, say, "Well, I guess your choice is to move or starve". I can tell you, Madam Speaker, that the move or starve ultimatum does not sit well with Nova Scotians. It does not sit well with Atlantic Canadians, and it does not sit well with Canadians in general.

The hon. minister calls this motion unfortunate. Bill C–21 is unfortunate. It is unfortunate for fisheries workers. It is unfortunate for rural seasonal workers. It is unfortunate for the urban poor, and it sure is unfortunate for Canadian women. In fact, this bill is an institutionalized misfortune for our country.

The hon. minister says that we in Canada are going through an exciting transition. That must be a huge comfort to the people of Summerside. I am sure that it engenders great joy in Lunenburg and Lockeport where the fish plants are closing. Indeed, this transition is so exciting that it is a wonder that Atlantic Canadians are not dancing in the streets.

The minister tells us constantly, and we have been hearing it ever since the introduction of this unfortunate bill, about the training programs in Bill C–21, particularly the training programs as they affect women. This is another fiction that is being perpetrated upon the people of Canada.

I spoke last week to the operator of a medium–sized business in my riding of Halifax. I asked him about the training programs for women. He said, "Yes, it is going to be great. I can train my receptionist to work on the word processor and I can train my secretary to become a bookkeeper". I said, "Are you not going to be going outside and training new people so you can hire them and add to the number of employed?" "Oh, no, I don't have to do that", he said, "I can train in house and save myself a whole lot of money". That saving will be on the backs of the taxpayers of Canada, without assisting in any way the unemployment rate, particularly for women. It is great stuff.

The bill itself will make it more difficult, as we already know and as we have already heard, to qualify for unemployment insurance by increasing the qualification periods. We know it will cut off claimants sooner by shortening the benefit period. It will increase the penalty for those who voluntarily quit. Of course the whole voluntarily quit provision is a fascinating one

I spent four years in a previous life chairing the Unemployment Insurance Appeal Board in my riding of Halifax. I heard about some of the voluntary quits, the voluntary quits that had to do with everything from sexual harassment to absolutely untenable working conditions. Sure, the unemployment Insurance Act needs reform. It needs lots of reform. But the reform should go in favour of the workers of Canada and not against them.

It should not be a punch in the stomach or a belt in the jaw. It should be some form of support and some recognition by the government that the workers of Canada do suffer stoppages of employment from time to time. This is an insurance program

The injustice from the voluntary quits arises when someone quits a job for what he or she believes to be just cause, but just cause under this bill is something that will be increasingly difficult to prove.

I mentioned earlier that in my riding of Halifax if the VER does not go through, if the government does not bring in this bill as it has traditionally, and if Bill C–21 does not pass until after the other place has followed its duly appointed constitutional itinerary, then Halifax will not suffer all that badly. But it sure will suffer in the long run if Bill C–21 becomes law.

Halifax suffers from a disparity in incomes. Because of this disparity in incomes there is an almost false rate of unemployment. To be unemployed in Halifax is every bit as bad—sometimes worse—as it is to be unemployed in Cape Breton because you do not have the support systems and the family support that is traditional in Cape Breton Island and in the rural areas of Nova Scotia. All of the problems of urban alienation affect the poor and the unemployed in a city like Halifax.

The rate is skewed because of this disparity. We have an area that covers my city of Halifax, that of my learned colleague from Dartmouth and down the eastern shore of Nova Scotia where employment opportunities outside the fishery are rare. Of course we know what has happened to the fishery in Atlantic Canada. Consequently, there is a grinding poverty facing unemployed workers in the urban regions of Nova Scotia this winter. This government is not prepared to do anything to assist that while the Parliament of Canada goes through its normal process.

Why is the government not moving the VER bill this year? Is it an attempt to make the duly appointed members of the other place look like the villains? Is it an attempt to make it seem as though this bill was stalled there just to flex its muscles with a complete disregard for Canadians on UI? If this is the case, then a fraud is being perpetrated on the people of Canada because the

other place is doing its duly constitutionally asked for job.

Is it to make it appear as though we in the opposition are stalling? Sure we would like to stall this bill. We would like to stop this bill. We would like to trash this bill. But unfortunately the numbers are against us. We do not want to see the non-elected members of Parliament use a power that the people of Canada do not want them to use. We do want to see them do their jobs.

One hundred and forty-seven groups oppose this bill. If only half of them have a good reason to be heard, then there is an obligation on the committee from the other place to hear them, particularly when the vast majority were unable to be heard by this House and its committee.

• (1250)

What is the solution? The government should not play with the constitutional mechanisms that are currently in place. This is a crucial bill which warrants the sombre and sober second thought that the upper chamber is there to provide.

However, while this is going on it is absolutely crucial that the hard-pressed regions of Canada and the people depending on unemployment insurance are protected by moving the usual variable entrance requirement bill which is available and ready to be moved and which both opposition parties, the Official Opposition and the New Democratic Party, have assured the government they will co-operate in passing.

I cannot imagine what is on the minds of our government masters by refusing to take this opportunity to ensure that Canadians are protected and that Canadians in Atlantic Canada, northern Ontario, parts of Quebec, in the north and so on will not have to look toward January and February with fear and trepidation because they fear for their very survival due to the actions of their government.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, unless the regional entrance requirement is implemented, we will have regional tragedies, especially in the Atlantic region, among fishermen, steel workers, miners, and all the people working in fish processing plants. The winter will be very difficult for families in our region.

The federal government must not make the situation any worse. It is time to show compassion and understanding for regional disparities.

[*English*]

It is time for the government to show that it cares something for the hard-pressed people of Canada. It is time, after the disastrous actions of this government in its budget and in other actions taken in the spring and the summer, to say, "We understand what the people of the Atlantic in particular will go through this winter without the normal bill on the variable entrance requirement".

Here we have a *cri de coeur* which goes to the government and says, "For God's sake, do something for the people who deserve your protection".

Mr. Allmand: Madam Speaker, I am sure the hon. member who just spoke, and spoke so well, understands that a solid unemployment insurance system is not only good for the workers who are unemployed but also extremely helpful to the communities in which they live when they are unemployed.

When an unemployed worker receives unemployment insurance he or she spends that money on groceries, on rent, on fuel for automobiles, on children's clothing and so on. The money is spent and it circulates in the community. During the great depression before 1940 when we did not have unemployment insurance and people were unemployed and did not have that money to spend, the recession, or the depression, the slow-down, snow-balled and galloped and the corner stores that used to sell to those people went bankrupt. The whole economy went further down the drain. That is prevented with a solid unemployment insurance system. Therefore the member probably knows and would admit that it is important not only for the individual unemployed but also for the community.

As a result of Bill C-21 unemployment insurance benefits will be reduced by $1.5 billion. The government is taking $1.5 billion away from regular benefits.

When you break that down, it means that her province, the province of Nova Scotia, will lose $29 million that would have gone into that province in unemployment insurance benefits. That money will not be going into the province. Perhaps the government might spend some of

that money on training in the province, but there is no assurance of that.

We were not able to hear in the House of Commons committee provincial government representatives. We were not able to hear people who looked at the impact on the provinces from a macroeconomic point of view.

Does the hon. member not agree that it is reasonable now for the Senate to hear these people, especially since they have the new maps of the new regions, who can inform Parliament as to what the impacts will be from an economic point of view of withdrawing these moneys from provinces like Nova Scotia or New Brunswick? Can she not make the point that it is not we Liberals, senators or members of Parliament, who want to be heard, that it is the people from these regions who want to be heard to make their points with respect to these economic arguments?

Ms. Clancy: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Notre-Dame-de-Grâce for his comments. Indeed, with respect to the first point concerning the injection into the economy of the unemployment insurance moneys, it is absolutely crucial to a province like Nova Scotia. In the rural areas of Nova Scotia, but also to a great degree in the urban areas as well, seasonal work is something with which we all live.

In my previous life when I practised law, I had a number of clients who did a little fishing, a little wood cutting, a little repair work for whoever was around. This took place as much within the environs of the city of Halifax as it did in the rural areas. It is a way of life and it is what happens.

Consequently, the impact of Bill C-21 and its changes on the provincial economies is going to be massive. I ask you all to think of a province the size of Nova Scotia with the difficulties that it is facing, with the cut-backs in the fishery, the closure of the fish plants and on and on, losing $29 million. I am not a mathematician but I am sure if we were to take that and change that figure on a per capita basis to what it would mean in the province of Quebec or the province of Ontario the numbers would be staggering. Believe me, as a Nova Scotian, they are staggering for us. It is absolutely crucial that the voices of the provincial and territorial governments be heard as to the impact of the changes that Bill C-21 is going to bring to their people.

In the province of Nova Scotia let us look at the fish plant closures. We have already talked a bit about the retraining the minister has promised so succinctly. Well, that is not going to do any good for the people of Lockeport who are losing their fish plant, or for the people of Louisbourgh who are losing theirs, because there are no other jobs. What are you going to train them for?

Again, we go back to the horrific statement that I heard at the committee—"move or starve". That is not right and it is not fair. It is not something that Nova Scotians or Canadians generally deserve to hear.

Indeed, all of the groups that have a vested interest, and there are many, have a right to have their ideas, their suggestions and their concerns heard in the fullest possible public debate setting. We did not hear them because of the truncated House of Commons agenda on the UI bill. The very least we can do is ensure that our citizens do not suffer while we allow the other place to do its job.

Mr. Funk: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for her excellent speech. I would like to point out to her that we cannot just look at this as an individual action taken by this government. There are several other actions which have been taken by this government that impact unfairly on those communities as well and which discriminate against a lot of them.

I want to make reference to northern communities where the goods and services tax proposal will have an unfair impact because the cost of many items are two or three times higher in those communities. They will be paying two or three times as much through the GST proposal.

As well, there is a recommendation that takes the northern tax benefit away from 2,000 or 3,000 communities in this country. Those are the same ones that will also be impacted upon this UI bill. I was just wondering if the member has examined the cumulative impact of these three measures when taken together.

Ms. Clancy: I will be very brief, as I know my time is short, Madam Speaker.

Without considering the hon. member's question to be anything but serious, as I know it was, I can only say that there comes a point for Atlantic Canadians, as I am sure there does for northern Canadians, where we look at the actions of this government, proposed and already taken, and we wonder if we are living in a bad dream.

I referred in earlier comments in this House on another matter to the juggernaut of the budget. Indeed, juggernaut is what it is. The possibility of the implementation of the goods and services tax in Atlantic Canada could well be the straw that breaks the camel's back. It could well be the *coup de grâce* to the Atlantic economy. This is why over 80 per cent of Atlantic Canadians continue to voice their opposition and, indeed—to this the government should pay heed—their rage that this should even be contemplated, given all the conglomerate attacks on Atlantic Canada by this government. As was said in a motion picture not long ago, "We're mad as hell and we're not going to take it any more".

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until two o'clock this afternoon.

At 1 p.m. the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

VIA RAIL

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, as the economic conditions in Cape Breton continue to worsen, this government is doing its utmost to try to cut out the underpinnings of the economy which still exists. One of those prime underpinnings is VIA Rail.

VIA Rail is vitally important to the economy of Cape Breton. This government has manipulated with Canadian National to do away with VIA. Now CN is doing its best to try to get rid of the business it presently has in eastern Nova Scotia. Three-quarters of all the container traffic that once went between North Sydney and Port aux Basques, Newfoundland, is now going between Halifax and St. John's. The piggyback trailers that once went across the Gulf are down by one-third. The rail shipments are down from SYSCO to central Canada.

This government, by allowing CN to play down and to do away with business is actually aiding and abetting the downgrading of the economy in Cape Breton. VIA Rail must be protected. That is the best way to assure that a rail line will continue to exist in Cape Breton.

This is more than just an emotional need. This is an economic need.

* * *

EL SALVADOR

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, I commend the Minister of Employment and Immigration for Canada's fast and generous response to endangered people in El Salvador. Canadians have heard much about the civil war within San Salvador. Not only air force bombing of poor residential districts, but assassinations of clergy and trade unionists and arrests of church relief workers show the danger to many civilian non-combatants.

Many Canadians who have urged our government to take action to protect the innocent are very grateful for the response. Courageous and hard-working Canadian consular officers on the scene, backed by quick and humane decisions by the minister and senior officials, are saving lives and relieving much heartbreak.

Canadians can help in this emergency by offering to sponsor these refugees. A group of five can apply to sponsor one or more people for a year by telephoning either to the nearest Canada immigration centre for details or to one of the churches organizing sponsor groups.

The minister's action is not only humane and life-saving, but is a contribution toward the negotiated peace that was called for last month by the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

[*Translation*]

AGENCE DE COOPÉRATION CULTURELLE ET TECHNIQUE

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi): It will be Mr. Jean-Louis Roy's responsibility to make the *Agence de coopération culturelle et technique* the linchpin of the *francophonie*. Mr. Roy is in fact the second Quebecer to be appointed since the ACCT was established at the end of the sixties.

His election was not easy, but the candidacy of the agency's new director was diligently promoted by ministers Lucien Bouchard and Monique Landry and by a number of Canadian ambassadors.

The agency is responsible for the preparations for Francophone summits and for follow-up activities.

Mr. Roy is the right man to implement changes in a restructured agency that will now have broader responsibilities.

Mr. Speaker, this is a significant victory for Canadian and Quebec diplomacy. Bravo, Jean-Louis Roy from Saint-Georges de-Beauce!

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ECONOMIC PROMOTION OF METROPOLITAN QUEBEC CITY

Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Québec-East): Mr. Speaker, on June 30 1988, the Conservative caucus for the Quebec City area and its provincial counterpart recommended, based on the conclusions of a special task force, creating a company to promote the economy of the Quebec City metropolitan area.

The company was established on February 6, 1989. Recently, I was pleased to see that in the past nine months, the company has put in place a series of consultation mechanisms and has been actively promoting the industrial and technological development of the Quebec City area.

Today, the company is monitoring 30 or so projects, in various stages of development, which together are worth more than $150 million. It has also started to produce promotional material, including a list of manufacturing companies in the Quebec City metropolitan area, a reference and promotional tool intended to simplify contacts between members of the business world.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to belong to a community that is so economically sound, and I hope that our region will draw maximum benefits from these projects.

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi): Like Abitibi!

* * *

[*English*]

VIA RAIL

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Paul Stokaluk, a resident of Thunder Bay—Nipigon, recently travelled to Toronto with his wife. She required an extremely delicate eye operation. After the operation, Mrs. Stokaluk's doctor instructed her not to fly home because this form of travel would do further damage to her already sensitive eye. Following the doctor's advice, the Stokaluks returned to Thunder Bay on a sleeper car on VIA Rail. She was required to lie on her side all through the trip so as not to do further damage to this very sensitive area.

These concerned constituents called my office questioning what they would have done had Mrs. Stokaluk's operation been scheduled after January 15, 1990. That is the day when passenger rail service will no longer be available to the people in northern Ontario.

It is wrong to eliminate passenger train service in northern Ontario. It is unacceptable that this government eliminate a line which services over 300,000 residents of these communities. How else will the physically handicapped like Mrs. Stokaluk travel? How will the economically handicapped, those who cannot afford to fly and those who do not want to fly, travel throughout the north? It is wrong that these people and the 300,000 residents of Marathon, Terrace Bay, Schrieber, Nipigon, Red Rock, Thunder Bay, Ignace, Dryden, Kenora be denied passenger rail service after having it for over 104 years.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, this government is creating a double standard in environmental regulation that fails to protect the salmon resource of the Fraser River and

endangers the health of the people of the northern interior of B.C.

In May 1989 an advisory was issued saying that the consumption of some fish near pulp mills in Prince George and other locations should be limited due to dioxin and furan poisoning. Further tests were to be done this fall but because of Environment Canada's bungling we must now wait until spring for the tests. Environment Canada is creating a double standard by continuing its work on the coast but planning to turn over testing in the interior of B.C. to the very pulp mills responsible for the pollution and the basket-case enforcement of the provincial government.

This government should accept its full responsibility for the Fraser River and take the necessary steps to guarantee its protection.

* * *

FORESTRY

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur): Mr. Speaker, the federal government has done a lot of talking about the forestry agreements which expired in six provinces last March and about its intentions to renew them. Yet it has failed to replace them and this situation is creating many problems across the country. The delays brought about by the government's indecision in renewing those agreements have caused the loss of employment for 43 silviculture workers in New Brunswick.

[*Translation*]

Several times in the past, the Minister of State for Forestry promised us that new forestry development agreements would be signed with the provinces. Last August, the government of New Brunswick and the federal government agreed to renegotiate these agreements. We are now getting to the end of the year, and no agreements have been signed.

[*English*]

Industry and the provincial governments are ready to participate, as evidenced by the British Columbia government's commitment of $350 million toward a new agreement. Now the federal Minister of Forestry and his government must do their share. They must stop beating around the bush and they must renew the forestry agreements.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, striking crew workers have severely reduced the government's ability to effectively patrol our waters against illegal fishing. Since this strike began the fishermen in my riding have made numerous sightings of American vessels which have taken advantage of this situation by fishing in Canadian waters. Not only are they stealing Canadian fish stocks but the fish-dragging gear they use literally chews through the lobster traps set by our fishermen, causing them significant financial losses in both revenue and gear.

This situation cannot be allowed to continue. Canadian interests in the waters off Atlantic Canada must be effectively maintained. The fishermen of Atlantic Canada should not have to pay the price for the inflexibility of a few union bosses. I call upon the government to act with all possible speed in bringing about a resolution to this matter.

* * *

[*Translation*]

MEECH LAKE ACCORD

Mr. Gilles Bernier (Beauce): Mr. Speaker, on the weekend the NDP destroyed Meech Lake. The leadership candidates, all members of this House, went back on their word and shamelessly withdrew their support for Meech Lake. Even the former leader gave way.

I thought the new leader of the NDP would stand firm, but she also withdrew her support from the Meech Lake Accord, to attract partisan support.

The Berlin Wall has come down. Countries are opening their borders. Throughout the world, people are trying to understand and open a dialogue. And now we see the NDP raising a wall of shame in this wonderful country of ours!

What the NDP did on the weekend against Quebec was shameful and degrading!

[*English*]

TOURISM

Mr. Ken James (Sarnia—Lambton): Mr. Speaker, recent figures released by Canada Customs and Excise revealed that Canadians, as well as visitors to Canada, are increasingly choosing the Blue Water Bridge in my riding of Sarnia—Lambton as their point of departure and entry into Canada. Throughout and including the spring and summer of 1989 the total number of travellers reached 2.7 million, up 4.4 per cent from the previous year. By the end of October, the figures show that traffic on the Blue Water Bridge had jumped by more than 250,000 vehicles during the first 10 months of 1989. In all, almost 3.9 million cars and trucks crossed the international span, an increase of more than 260,000 as compared to 1988.

• (1410)

In a border community such as ours these traffic figures are particularly welcome from a tourism perspective. The tourism industry has been an integral part of the local economy and the community, including our local tourism operators, is striving to have more of these travellers stop and appreciate the many sites and attractions of Sarnia—Lambton.

I urge all members of the House, visitors to Canada, indeed all Canadians, to circle the Blue Water Bridge when travelling to and from Canada. I invite you all to come and see and appreciate our beautiful community of Sarnia—Lambton and what it has to offer.

* * *

CANADA POST

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, earlier today one of the standing committees of this House, the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Consumer and Corporate Affairs, had the pleasure of listening to a representative of Rural Dignity Canada, Ms. Cynthia Paterson, who described poignantly and quite eloquently the disruption inflicted on hundreds of small towns and villages across this great land by Canada Post.

The monolithic management of Canada Post and this government are executing the policy of closing rural post offices, come what may, all in the expectation of saving a few dollars, an expectation which, it turns out, is quite misleading.

On November 16, 1989 the Postal Services Review Committee, a committee appointed by the government, reported that Canada Post itself "acknowledged that savings from rural closures have not been material".

On behalf of Rural Dignity, and millions of Canadians living in rural areas, I ask the government of Canada and Canada Post to stop their unilateral dismantling of one of Canada's most valued rural institutions, the post office.

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[*Translation*]

MEECH LAKE ACCORD

Mr. Gabriel Desjardins (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, this past weekend, at its national convention in Winnipeg, the NDP put on a marvelous show. It was truly edifying to see the former leader break under the pressure of delegates and withdraw his support for the Meech Lake Accord. A sad end to a political career and a decision unworthy of a man who has always been known as a man of principle!

A deplorable beginning for the new leader, who throughout her campaign told Quebecers that she agreed with Meech Lake, that she respected the concept of a distinct society and Quebec's five demands, and who, under pressure from her supporters and to further her own ends, has now reneged on her commitment—

An Hon. Member: Shame!

Mr. Desjardins: —to Quebec and joined others in demanding a reopening of the Accord.

Mr. Speaker, after such a spectacular about face, the NDP has obviously cut itself off from Quebec. The socialist party will learn that Quebecers never forget. From now on, they know who they can count on, who are their real allies and who will defend and represent them here in the House.

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[*English*]

CHRISTMAS TREE INDUSTRY

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, it is December and the festive season is upon us. Last night the Minister of Public Works, with his accustomed

efficiency, lit the lights on the parliamentary Christmas tree in front of the Centre Block.

Inside, I must say the hallowed halls outside this Chamber don't look too bad, but they don't smell too good. In fact, they don't smell at all.

Why do I not sense the fragrance of a Lunenburg County spruce or balsam fir or even, heaven forbid, an Ontario pine? Do I sense that Parliament itself sets the regrettable example of using artificial Christmas trees? Is it possible they are not even Canadian?

The Christmas tree industry is a $70 million industry in this country and is worth some $30 million to the people of the South Shore. Is it possible that Canadian producers can export over three million trees to the United States but cannot persuade the Parliament of Canada to use them?

Real Christmas trees are biodegradable, environmentally friendly, beautiful to look at and wonderful to smell. Let this be the last year that Parliament is without the joy of real Christmas trees. Let's support our Christmas tree industry and make these buildings a real showcase for a beautiful, valuable and renewable Canadian resource.

* * *

SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, we want to alert all Canadians to the fact that the Conservative government is busily preparing for Christmas. The gift is Bill C–28 which spells the beginning of the end of universal senior's pensions and family allowances.

We want to alert 128,000 seniors and 14 per cent of Canadian families that as soon as the government can railroad this legislation through the committee and third reading that they will receive their cheques as usual, but they will have to return the money a few months later.

"No concern to me" say many Canadians. Not so. By the year 2000 it is estimated that 1 million seniors and 30 per cent of all Canadian families will be affected by the clawback provision.

This kind of Christmas gift is not wanted by any Canadians, so I would ask the government to rewrap Bill C–28 and present another package that Canadians will accept as a real gift.

What does the government have in its stocking for next Christmas? An attack on medicare?

* * *

LITERACY

Mrs. Pauline Browes (Scarborough Centre): Mr. Speaker, nearly 5 million Canadians have difficulty reading a sign or an instruction book. The Conference Board of Canada has recently reported that about one–third of Canadian companies have difficulty introducing new technology because some of their employees are functionally illiterate.

Last year our government introduced the National Literacy Strategy to help address these problems. The strategy focuses on remedial and preventive actions to help those with literacy problems and especially to promote literacy with children.

The year 1990 has been designated by the United Nations as International Literacy Year. This government is already doing its part to address the literacy challenge. While the cost of illiteracy to our country's economic future is enormous, the cost to the people involved is tragic.

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[*Translation*]

MEECH LAKE ACCORD

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, as a defender of Meech Lake, which I believe strengthens Canada, I was disappointed in the speech made by the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Bouchard) in Toronto before a large and happy crowd of Canadian francophones from across this country who were celebrating Ontario's Bill 8, a major achievement by the Peterson government affirming the rights of the official language minority in this province.

I was there, and I saw how shocked and insulted people were by the minister's attack against Pierre Elliot Trudeau and the way he misrepresented that vision of Canada which had in fact furthered their cause tremendously.

One of Canada's fundamental characteristics is the existence of official language minority groups, both in and outside Quebec. Trudeau was aware of this and supported those groups. You don't beat Canada, Mr. Speaker, by rewriting its history.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE OF CANADA

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the President of the Treasury Board about the government's mishandling of the strike of 2,200 federal ships' crew workers and over 1,400 federal hospital workers.

For two years the government has been trying to find every possible legal loophole to avoid bargaining in good faith. First, it bungled declaring these workers essential to the safety and security of the Canadian public. Then it spent months trying to get the courts to block the legal right of these workers to strike. It went through conciliation without ever putting a serious offer on the table. Now it is so threatened by people exercising their legal rights, it has gone to the courts to stop picketing and wants to order these people back to work.

How does the minister justify risking the safety and security of Canadians with these ham-handed bullying tactics? Will he state here and now that the government will get back to the bargaining table with a good offer, a serious offer and get this thing settled properly?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, the government has been negotiating throughout this unfortunate dispute in good faith. We negotiated throughout the months over the summer and throughout the months coming up to December. We have gone back to the table with the unions over the last few weeks in an effort of mediation. We have put a very serious offer on the table.

I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that we have been negotiating up to the very last hour. I am still prepared to continue if we see that there is a possibility of reaching a reasonable settlement. We were discussing this issue up to close to midnight last night.

The negotiations are still open for any kind of reasonable offer to be put on the table. I can assure my hon. colleague opposite that the government has been very conscious of its responsibility in terms of being an employer. We have put a very substantial package on the table and we would like the union to respond with a reasonable counter offer so that we can move in terms of reaching a negotiated settlement.

• (1420)

Mrs. Catterall: Mr. Speaker, it is obvious the minister thinks it is the responsibility of the union to act as the government should act and settle the strike responsibly.

I want to remind members that just weeks ago in this House we were paying tribute to three Coast Guard workers who had lost their lives off the shore of Newfoundland. At that time, the Minister of Transport said of these people that their daily bravery is testimony to the finest and noblest aspects of the human character. We are talking here about workers who go out in 100-mile-per-hour winds and 40-foot waves to protect the lives of Canadians.

With our hospital service workers, we are talking about people who work every day with our disabled and ill veterans in the last days of their lives. They are working for as little as $16,000 to $18,000 a year.

This strike is costing $1 million a day in tied up shipping in the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes. Veterans and patients are being denied food—

Mr. Speaker: I must ask the hon. member to put her question.

Mrs. Catterall: Does the minister think that salaries as low as $16,000 to $18,000 are commensurate with the risks and responsibilities these people take? If not, will he immediately commit to putting a good offer on the table?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I would like to answer the first part of the question of the hon. member. I hope she realizes when she refers to what happened in Newfoundland a few weeks ago that this has nothing to do with the agreement we have with the union dealing with the whole question of safety and rescue operations on the St. Lawrence River or on the ocean. I hope the hon. member is not just trying to threaten people in that way. There is

nothing true in the allegations that there is a problem of safety on the St. Lawrence River.

Moreover, dealing with the question of the closure of the St. Lawrence River last Friday, I did this because at the time I considered that I did not have guarantees about the safety on the river. We decided this morning, supported by the pilots, the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority and others, that there was no danger in permitting the ships to move on the St. Lawrence River.

As far as I am concerned, it will continue to be done in the same way. I hope that the member will no longer try to threaten people with the safety question when there is no problem of safety on the St. Lawrence River right now.

Mrs. Catterall: Mr. Speaker, the minister is absolutely right about one thing. The unions have been exceptionally responsible in providing for essential safety and security. However, that does not alter the fact that we have oil-laden ships and chemical-laden ships at risk in the St. Lawrence Seaway and on the Great Lakes.

I want to return to the question of pay equity. This government talks about paying people fair wages for fair work. Yet we have two concrete examples that are at the root of this strike: ships' crew workers who are told that their lives on the east coast are worth $2,000 less than those on the west coast and hospital service workers who have been waiting two years since a decision of the Human Rights Commission for decent, equitable wages.

On November 8, this government appeared before the Human Rights Commission arguing that the Human Rights Commission had no jurisdiction—

Mr. Speaker: I must ask the hon. member to put her question.

Mrs. Catterall: Will the minister explain why the government has been fighting equal pay for the lowest paid workers in the federal Public Service? Will he explain why his own officials are arguing against pay equity before the Human Rights Commission?

Mr. de Cotret: Mr. Speaker, I would like to give my hon. colleague the benefit of some information in terms of the negotiations. In terms of pay equity, in the ship crew negotiations we offered to establish immediately upon signing the agreement—if they wanted to in the next few days—pay equity between the east coast and the west coast.

In terms of the hospital services, we have already paid out $28 million to meet the Human Rights Commission decision and there is another $10 million on the way. In the case of hospital services right now we are facing demands for a pay increase of 14.3 per cent per year for the next three years. In the case of ships' crews the demand is 17.4 per cent per year for the next three years. That compares to the settlement that 155,000 public servants accepted for an annual increase of 4.1 per cent. We think that is not fair. It is discriminatory and we will just not tolerate it.

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board. It concerns this government's plan to introduce back-to-work legislation in the matter of the ships' crews strike.

The federal government's attitude toward these employees is nothing short of obscene and contemptuous. It has steadfastly refused to put an offer on the table that would eliminate up front in year one of the contract the regional rates of pay where the east coast workers are paid up to $1,800 less than their counterparts on the west coast.

Will the minister order his negotiators to resume negotiations immediately and put an offer on the table that eliminates this discrimination up front in year one of the contract and cease and desist in using the Order Paper of this place as a replacement for the collective bargaining process?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I believe I just answered that question. The offer is on the table. I have offered the union to move immediately to wage parity between the east coast and the west coast upon the date of signing. That has been on the table for weeks.

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the same minister. This government talks a good game about pay equity, but right now it has a motion on the Order Paper which will legislate wage discrimination against east coast ship crews. It would cost the government less than $2.7 million to eliminate this discriminatory wage practice and remove the major obstacle to a resolution of this strike.

Why is this government so hell-bent on perpetuating a system of wage discrimination that allows ships' crews in my riding of Dartmouth to be paid $2,000 less than ships' crews in the Minister of Fisheries riding for doing exactly the same job. How can he possibly justify that?

Mr de Cotret: Mr. Speaker, for the third time, I will repeat for my hon. colleagues that we have offered the unions to meet the parity question between the east coast fishermen—

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): Up front, year one?

Mr. de Cotret: Right now. If the contract were ratified in two days, we would immediately move to parity between the east and the west coast.

Ms. Clancy: Right now?

Mr. de Cotret: That is what I am saying. Yes, right now. The minute it is signed. That is on the table. The offer is there. We will have parity right now.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. Canadians are concerned about the double standard of providing immunity from prosecution to certain corporations, government agencies and individuals while charging the little guy.

In the November 15, 1989 federal document which I obtained from Fisheries and Oceans in Ottawa, serious charges are made and the minister is ultimately responsible. One of the matters raised involves Alcan and the destruction of a salmon stream in British Columbia.

As the minister must know, not only did Alcan destroy the streambed without approval, but it did so after it had been told directly and specifically by the minister's own department that it could not undertake such potentially harmful activities.

Does the minister not believe that charges should be taken against a large Canadian corporation that bulldozes the bed of a salmon stream?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the House, as I did yesterday, that there is no double standard in the application of the Fisheries Act, or in the pursuit of my overriding responsibility to ensure the sustenance, enhancement and maintenance of our fisheries resources. That will continue to be and always has been the policy of this minister and this department.

• (1430)

With regard to the specific matter referred to on a tributary of the Kemano river, it is my understanding that Alcan thought it was correcting a problem caused by an early winter storm and did perform activities outside the area of the approval it had been granted. It is a measure of the approach the department often takes to try to enhance, rebuild and restore these resources that an arrangement is being negotiated with Alcan to do full remedial restoration of this part of the stream bed. The solution to these problems is not always to put people in the slammer.

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Speaker, it does not sound like the the minister is going to charge Alcan despite the fact his own officials directed Alcan not to undertake the work and Alcan did it anyway.

An Hon. Member: Shameful.

Mr. Fulton: With regard to the loss of fish habitat in the Swift River case in central British Columbia, I learned from the Department of Fisheries today that the Department of Justice lawyer suggested that the laying of charges be delayed because of the Cariboo by-election, and that charges have still not been laid. On the Mile 44 Nursery case, the director general of Pacific Fisheries would not approve laying charges against the B.C. government ministry of environment, because it is "political dynamite".

Will the minister request an RCMP investigation of those two specific cases, or does he have excuses for them too?

Mr. Siddon: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is extracting from certain very serious allegations contained within a document prepared by a field officer of the department, which document is being reviewed very, very thoroughly at my direction by the deputy minister and senior officials of the department.

I can assure the hon. member that no official within my department would have recommended any delay on any legal action which was recommended to us, and certainly would not have done so for any reasons relating to political considerations. I think it is most reprehensible that the hon. member would suggest otherwise.

Mr. Fulton: The fact of the matter is that Mr. Langer is the head of the habitat management unit for the Fraser River, northern B.C. and Yukon division. One would assume if someone in western Canada knows something about what is going on with habitat, it would be the head of habitat. That is who wrote the memorandum.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Fulton: We know that the discharge of toxic effluent from pulp mills is making fish, crab, prawns, shrimp and shellfish unsafe to eat. We know that the source of 40 per cent of the marine pollution in Canada is from pulp mills and that it endangers human health.

Since the minister knows that most of the pulp mills across Canada are violating federal law and regulations, will the minister show some courage on this issue and state today in this House that all corporate polluters that are presently in violation of any federal law, any federal statute, any federal regulation will be prosecuted and charged today and that he will so direct his officials to do so?

Mr. Siddon: Mr. Speaker, I want to point out for the benefit of the member and members of the House that the official who prepared this document is a field officer responsible for one district within British Columbia, not the head of habitat for British Columbia. His opinions certainly do not represent the official policy of the department. We seek remedial actions, we seek to enter into co-operative arrangements with industries, and where appropriate, where advised by our legal counsel in the Department of Justice, prosecution is pursued as appropriate.

* * *

[*Translation*]

SHIPPING

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board. The Coast Guard strike has put navigation in the St. Lawrence at risk. Yesterday, a ship came close to a colliding near the Pierre Laporte bridge in Quebec City. Will the Minister negotiate in good faith, or is he going to wait until we have an ecological catastrophe? Will he act immediately to settle this dispute?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, whenever a member from that side of the House states something that is false, I try to set the record straight. The ship that left Quebec City yesterday from Montreal did not have a scratch, Mr. Speaker. It was merely a false manoeuvre, and the ship was duly escorted. The regulations were very clear. Once again, there was no connection with the ban announced between Quebec City and Les Escoumins. Permission was given yesterday. A pilot was on board. Once again, it was merely a matter of manoeuvring and had no connection with the strike by employees and crews on the ice breakers.

Mr. Gagliano: According to reports in the papers this morning, Mr. Speaker, it seems that yesterday, we could have had an ecological accident on our hands. If that had been the case, it would have been serious because of the current situation. The minister says "if". Why not settle this dispute, so that Canadians won't have to worry about the possibility of an ecological disaster?

As you know, because of the strike we are losing a million dollars a day, and this is only in Quebec! Is the minister going to wait until the Port of Montreal loses its competitive position before intervening, or will he instruct negotiators to settle this dispute quickly, so that Quebec's economy can continue to grow?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, negotiations continued informally for the better part of the evening yesterday. I think we should also bear in mind that there is a very wide gap, if we consider what we have been able to give other federal employees. On the whole, federal employees have settled for an annual increase of 4.1 per cent, while this particular group is asking for an annual increase of 17.4 per cent. I think you will agree it would be very difficult to bridge this difference. We are trying to negotiate. We are bargaining in good faith. We would like the union to come to the bargaining table with an offer that is reasonable, considering their colleagues in other parts of the Public Service, and reasonable in the eyes of the Canadian public.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that a 17.4 per cent annual increase for three years is a very significant increase and one that is very difficult for the government to accept. However, we are always prepared to negotiate. We are concerned about the safety of Canadians and we

will do what is necessary to guarantee safe navigation on the St. Lawrence River.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance and concerns the clawback Of Old Age Security pensions. The government says the tax only applies to senior citizens with an annual income of $50,000. However, the tax will also apply to senior citizens who receive only $40,000 in dividends from Canadian companies. Furthermore, the minimum is not indexed to the rate of inflation. Could the minister explain this injustice?

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that there is a thing called a dividend tax credit that is also a part of the tax form. When the clawback, the tax back, is calculated on the income before the tax credit, the tax credit does reimburse the individual for the effects of the reduction as a result of the gross up in the dividends.

Mr. Manley: Mr. Speaker, I am afraid the minister and maybe his department does not understand the gross up. Certainly the dividend tax credit has nothing to do with reimbursing the clawback, it is a reimbursement of taxes previously paid in the dividend process.

In any event, last week the Minister of State for Finance stated that it was not the government's policy to end universality. If that is so, how can the government justify its discriminatory tax, which is based not on the ability to pay, but based upon age and family size? A universal program that is subject to a 100 per cent tax back is a contradiction in terms.

I would like to ask the Minister of Finance to admit now, to the Prime Minister's mother and to all the senior citizens across Canada, that Bill C–28 is the end of universality. Will he not come before the legislative committee on this bill to account for this policy?

• (1440)

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, let me draw to the attention of the hon. member a presentation that was made to me in February 1989 by One Voice, the Canadian seniors' network. In this document, on page 6, they said social benefits are given to every Canadian citizen as a right:" They can be taxed back from the rich because the rich should pay more taxes than the poor".

That is the principle that we have established in the budget of 1989, where we are saying that on the current fiscal conditions that we have today, we will make payments to all people over age 65 with respect to the Old Age Security. We cannot afford to continue to subsidize those people in upper–income brackets, which amounts to 4.3 per cent of senior citizens who are affected. Only 1.8 per cent of senior citizens are going to be subject to the full amount of the tax back. So there is a very logical reason for this and I am sure that the hon. member, if he reflects on that, will agree that that is the right way to do.

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AGRICULTURE

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to a minister who can explain agricultural program cuts. Since European and American governments have not made any moves to cut farm programs until there is an agreement for an international phase–down of agricultural subsidies, can the minister tell us why Canada is cutting its support programs, like the two–price wheat program and the interest–free cash advance programs, before there is any international agreement, instead of using these programs as bargaining chips at the negotiating table?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Blais (Solicitor General of Canada and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, I am a little surprised by my colleague's question. If there is a government which has defended Canadian farmers and doubled and tripled the efforts made to defend farmers, especially western grain growers, it is our government. But we have understood that farmers, in particular grain growers, also had to be defended internationally. That is exactly why our Minister for International Trade is making every effort to end the war between the U.S. and the EEC, so that our Canadian farmers, who have always behaved very well internationally, can take Canada's rightful share of the international market. That is exactly the position we have defended and will continue to defend, internationally and nationally.

[*English*]

Mr. Althouse: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure I understand the logic of helping farmers by cutting programs to them. Perhaps the minister can explain the logic of cuts to the agricultural research program that is ongoing at the Animal Research Centre here in Ottawa, where the funding was first cut and then frozen to the point where there is barely enough funds to feed the research animals let alone to do research. Can the government explain what has happened to its so-called commitment to agricultural research?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Blais: Mr. Speaker, I am a little surprised to see a representative of the New Democratic Party tell us about logic after the way they treated the Meech Lake Accord last weekend. We have nothing to learn from the way you are behaving towards Canadians.

As for agriculture, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to invite my colleague to come and meet with over 1,400 representatives of Canadian agriculture who will be here in Ottawa to discuss all agricultural issues and to review our agricultural policies, which was never done in the past 20 years.

Mr. Boudria: Tell the truth!

Mr. Blais: We intend to do what no government did before us: consult Canadians on the future of agriculture. We invite all Canadians to come with us; all aspects of farming, from research to the environment, will be considered. I hope that my colleague will be able to attend this conference to facilitate the entry of agriculture into the 21st Century.

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CAR SAFETY

Mr. Maurice Tremblay (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

On Thursday, December 7, the Minister will meet his provincial counterparts in Ottawa and it would seem that one of the subjects on the agenda will be the mandatory use of air bags in motor vehicles. Mr. Speaker, since the United States has a law that took effect on September 1, 1989, requiring manufacturers to equip motor vehicles with these air bags, and since the technology has evolved quite a bit recently, thus reducing the cost considerably, could the minister tell us his position and, if appropriate, whether he would be prepared to urge his colleague the Minister of Transport to pass such a law?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, there is greater concern about the use and effectiveness of restraints on occupants of motor vehicles. Although seat belts are effective in preventing death, the number of non-fatal injuries caused by motor vehicle accidents is starting to rise. We must look at the advantages and disadvantages of air bags and this item will be discussed this week at the Health Ministers' Conference.

* * *

[*English*]

CANADA POST

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiaq):

[*Editor's Note: Member spoke in Inuktitut*]

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for Canada Post Corporation. On November 2, Canada Post issued a press release delaying proposed increases in the northern air stage commercial parcel rates until January 31, 1990.

In this House the next day, ministers told us a working group would be set up to carry out consultations with northerners before the end of January. This working group has not even begun to work because the departments involved cannot agree on who will have the lead role or who will chair the group.

Can the minister assure the House and northerners in particular that this committee will be struck immediately in order to allow northerners to make constructive suggestions?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I am informed that there was a meeting of this committee last Friday, December 1, and it was decided that two representatives from Canada Post and Indian Affairs and Northern Development would start their tour of the north to talk to people in the north about the northern air stage problem, if you will, to see if in fact some accommodation cannot be worked out so that any subsidies by way of food to the north are done in a more efficient and fair way than at present.

Mr. Anawak: Mr. Speaker, there goes the government again. It will solve the problem before it asks the people of the north what they would like to see in terms of accommodating the needs of the north.

My supplementary is for the same minister. Because of the interdepartmental confusion and conflict that we have seen in the last month, because it was supposed to start a month ago, we have lost one whole month of the three months. I reiterate that one of those three months includes Christmas at which time nobody does really much of anything, especially in a bureaucracy. Will the minister take the just and fair step of extending the consultation period beyond January 31, 1990, so that northerners do not have to pay for the government's waste in its mismanagement of this issue?

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, I think the proper course of action would be to allow this group to visit the affected northern communities. They will do this before Christmas. It is Christmas Day, not Christmas month, and there are still some days left in this month in which this work can carry on. It is not until the end of January.

If, in fact, some accommodation cannot be worked out by that time, perhaps the hon. member's request can be considered at that time, but I think we should let that committee do its work.

* * *

• (1450)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Ethel Blondin (Western Arctic): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the minister, my question is for the acting Minister of the Environment.

As the minister is well aware, Hydro Quebec is planning the largest river diversion project in North America on the Great Whale River. But the federal government which boasts about its commitment to the environment is not even intending to apply its environmental guidelines to this massive project, nor intending to honour Section 22 of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement.

Will the minister or acting minister explain why a letter was sent to the Minister of the Environment in the Quebec government which opts for a co-operative plan between the two governments and would exempt the federal government from holding an independent and public inquiry in which all parties, including the Cree, who would be most affected, could participate?

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the federal government has indicated from the very beginning that the Grande Baleine project has a significance for the federal government in that it will impact on marine mammals, it will impact on the waters of the Hudson Bay and on migratory birds.

For that reason we have made it very clear that our obligations, under EARP will apply to the Grande Baleine project and we will see that our considerations are met, either as part of a joint undertaking with the province of Quebec or, if necessary, on our own.

We have also made it very clear to the government of Quebec that there must be public hearings and that the Inuit and the Cree must be a part of that process. In fact, the federal administrator has already met with the Inuit. We have made offers to meet with the Cree and we hope that the Cree will accept those undertakings in the very near future.

Ms. Blondin: Mr. Speaker, what the parliamentary secretary has to say certainly does not concur with the letter written to the Minister of Environment in Quebec which makes a suggestion of setting up a co-operative effort rather than a federal environmental assessment, which is what we would like the minister to commit to.

Why will the minister not commit to an environmental assessment and review process on the Great Whale River Project and assist all parties, particularly the native people who live in the area, with intervener funding so they may participate fully in the process? This is a massive project.

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member and all members of the House will know, the judgment given in the Rafferty-Alameda decision made it very clear that wherever possible to avoid duplication the federal and provincial governments involved should work together in the undertaking of environmental assessments.

That is the proposal we have made to the province of Quebec, but we have made it in such a way that we will require and demand our requirements for information, our requirements that the Cree and Inuit should be part of that process must be met. In addition, we will see that

the necessary funding will indeed be made available to assist the Inuit and Cree in that undertaking.

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GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the acting Prime Minister. Last Thursday, the government appointed to head the Security Intelligence Review Committee, John Bassett, a man whose appointment the Prime Minister would clearly have known would be highly controversial, as it has proven to be.

The appointment was made without getting the views of the Leader of the New Democratic Party, as clearly required, in direct violation of the CSIS Act. Will the acting Prime Minister assure the House that the appointment will be rescinded and a proper consultation process put in place so that the credibility of this very sensitive and important committee will be protected?

Hon. Pierre Blais (Solicitor General of Canada and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, I think with respect to you, Sir, you are still looking into this matter under a question of privilege. With respect for your responsibility, I think it is inappropriate for me to discuss this matter before the House of Commons. I think I need your advice on this because I think it is inappropriate for me to answer that question.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Victoria. I will listen to the next question.

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Speaker, we have just heard from a minister who hides behind the RCMP, now trying to hide behind the Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: If the hon. member wants to argue this matter further, perhaps he could raise it on a point of order after Question Period. The hon. member for Algoma.

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TRADE

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Trade. Two weeks ago we saw the largest gathering of protesting farmers from Ontario and Quebec that this Hill has ever seen to protest the policies of this government.

The farmers rallied on the Hill because they were afraid the government would sell them out at the GATT negotiations this week in Geneva. In fact, yesterday the government did sell them out when it accepted the GATT panel decision on ice cream and yogurt.

Would the minister agree that this precedent could be applied to all processed dairy products and thus put in jeopardy 60 per cent, 20,000 farmers in the dairy industry and their supply management systems?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the demonstration the hon. gentleman referred to was, I know, a group of concerned farmers but I do not think it could be described as a titanic group in numbers. But we are well aware of the concerns of farmers and we have not sold them out. We have not even leased them out as the last government did.

With respect to the GATT panel report on ice cream and yogurt, we have not prevented that report being adopted at the GATT. We have pointed out, however, that we do not like the interpretation that was given by the GATT panel.

Mr. Wappel: Oh, you pointed that out.

Mr. Crosbie: You would not bother to point it out. You would not know enough about it to know which direction to point in.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Crosbie: We have also announced that we are re-extending the quotas for 1990. The quota levels for 1990 are set at 347 and 332 tonnes respectively, up slightly from last year, tied to domestic production of industrial milk. We have advised the GATT that we will consider the situation with respect to implementation once we see the results of the current Uruguay Round of negotiations.

Now what could protect Canadian farmers more than that? Certainly it protects them more than the vacuous bleatings of the hon. critic opposite.

Mr. Foster: Mr. Speaker, it occurs to me that that answer is a very vacuous answer. I was very careful not to call the minister vacuous.

I wonder if the genial minister would admit that what the government agreed to yesterday at Geneva and the GATT was the worst possible precedent at the worst possible time, at a time when the government is trying to renegotiate Article 11 of the GATT to redefine and to protect our supply management and marketing board system.

Since we are part of the Cairns Group and a part of the Canada–U.S. Free Trade Agreement, how does he expect to negotiate and protect the supply management and marketing board system when both of those trading groups that we belong to are opposing our position and want to get rid of supply management and marketing boards and destroy our whole dairy system?

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman has just wondered how I could do it. I wonder myself, it was such a fantastic performance. We are members of the Cairns Group and it accepts our position, although our position is not on all fours with the position of the rest of the members of the Cairns Group.

What could be a better job for Canada than that? We remain members of the Cairns Group. The Cairns Group exports 25 per cent of all the world's agricultural exports. That group needs us. We need it. We are not going to agree with the group about supply management boards and the need to retain Article 11(2)(c)(i) and have it strengthened. The group does not agree with us on that. Other countries do. We will see what comes out of this mix but if anything that we have seen so far is repeated, we are in very good shape.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Surrey North on a single question please, followed by the hon. member for Carleton—Charlotte on a single question.

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• (1500)

CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of State for Housing concerning Robert Jarvis, the chairman of CMHC who wants to be known as just another lawyer when he calls the Ontario government on behalf of property developers who are seeking CMHC funds.

Could the minister tell this House whether Mr. Jarvis has filed with him or with the government a declaration of his business interests, and does that declaration contain a list of his clients for whom he has sought CMHC funding?

Hon. Alan Redway (Minister of State (Housing)): Mr. Speaker, the provisions in the conflict of interest rules, I have been advised by the Assistant Deputy Registrar General, do not apply to Mr. Jarvis with respect to filing requirements. The requirements of the conflict of interest rules do apply to him, but there is no requirement for him to file under those rules and therefore the Assistant Deputy Registrar General has no authority over him at the present time.

There are other rules that CMHC itself has with respect to filing. In that instance, the initial set of rules that was put in place in 1984 did not require filing by Governor in Council appointees but Mr. Jarvis did file on a voluntary basis.

In addition to that, a new set of guidelines was put in place by CMHC in June or July of this year. At the present time filings are being made by members of the board of CMHC, but Mr. Jarvis has not as yet made his filings.

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AGRICULTURE

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Privatization and Regulatory Affairs.

The tariff on U.S. corn for eastern Canada imposes a burden on livestock producers. In short, it has a negative effect on their competitiveness.

Could the minister give us some assurance that this problem is fully understood by the government? In so doing, could he give us an indication as to how this problem will be addressed?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Privatization and Regulatory Affairs)): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I directed the Canadian Import Trade Tribunal to carry out an investigation of the situation as it currently stands and to consult all interested parties. That is taking place now.

Once those consultations have taken place they will be reporting to me whether or not another full study should take place. I will report to the House at that time when I have those recommendations.

Supply

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, if I may, I just want to reconfirm to the House that tomorrow will be an allotted day.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S.O. 81—UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Allmand:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should give urgent consideration to introducing in the immediate future a bill to extend the variable re-entry provisions of the Unemployment Insurance Act in order to assure full protection of workers in economically distressed regions;

That this House declare its willingness to pass such a measure in no more than one sitting; and

That, for greater certainty, this House declare that the passage of this motion does not constitute a vote of no confidence in the government.

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): Mr. Speaker, need I remind you that I represent a region where workers and employers know the importance and significance of the variable qualifying period of 10 to 14 weeks.

I am pleased to have the opportunity today to remind this House that we do not need to renew an outdated provision which no longer meets Canadians' needs.

In many regions of Canada, each season means either work, UI benefits or frustration. From my social involvement before 1984, I know that Canadians want to work as long as society makes it possible for them to do so.

Mr. Speaker, our government announced last April that it intended to bring in a more permanent solution for the variable entrance requirements. Improve the employment opportunities for those who hold insecure jobs is what we want to do starting January 1, 1990.

On June 1, we tabled in the House a bill that confirmed our intention. The new benefit structure which we propose to implement will better reflect regional disparities.

We have changed a system that no longer meets current manpower needs into a system that is adapted to current and future needs as well. Over one million Canadians have trouble finding work. I repeat, we must break the vicious circle of employment, unemployment insurance, welfare.

The workers of this country want something else. We call it human dignity. Félix Leclerc said that the best way to kill a man was to pay him to do nothing. As a government, we believe workers will use the training tools we make available to them. We offer them a chance to train for jobs that are worth while. However, we are well aware of the problems involved in bringing about such changes. We know it is much harder to find jobs in Newfoundland where the unemployment rate is still around 14 per cent, than in Toronto, where it is around 4 per cent.

That is why it is absolutely necessary to make the unemployment insurance program do what it was intended to do. I would like to take this opportunity today to appeal to the good will of the members of the Senate. I urge them to approve this bill as soon as possible. In doing so, they will help provide for a better qualified and a far more productive workforce.

Madam Speaker, it would be unthinkable to delay implementation of the labour force strategy any longer. Our Canadian workers want to work. Our workers want measures that are dynamic and effective. They don't want to wait six, eight or 12 months. They want to go on working, and they want to remain in the labour force. And they certainly do not want to be part of the political strategies of those people who refuse to approve our legislation. And above all, they do not want to be caught in the old vicious circle: job, unemployment insurance, welfare. Madam Speaker, this bill has was examined thoroughly by a legislative committee that travelled across Canada.

On November 7 this year, I announced in the House a new configuration of economic regions that will become official as soon as the bill takes effect. This reform will make the system even better adapted to employment conditions in the region where the person applying for unemployment insurance is a resident. This government

realizes that the economic situation has changed in many regions, a fact that the Liberals ignored for so many years. In regions where the unemployment rate is over 15 per cent, the qualifying period of 10 weeks will remain unchanged.

Madam Speaker, as part of the rhetoric that has been typical of this debate, it has been claimed, without giving any explanation, that Bill C–21 was spurious and unfair. But it is quite the opposite. Think about people aged 65 or over who want to go on working. They will be able to do so. Think as well about new parents to whom we propose offering higher special benefits. The combination of maternity, parental and health benefits will be extended from 15 to 30 weeks. These higher benefits will provide parents with a more generous income support plan while at the same time enabling them to reconcile their work objectives and their parental responsibilities. Again I say that this government seeks to make the unemployment insurance program more responsive to the needs of today's active parents.

The bill as amended provides 15 weeks of maternity benefits for the mother at time of birth; 10 weeks of parental benefits for natural or adoptive parents, mother or father, or equally shared by both; five weeks of additional parental benefits for adoptive or natural parents when the child is at least six months old when first brought home; 15 weeks of sickness benefits. This is our way of acknowledging the importance of the woman's role in an active society, just as we acknowledge the responsibilities shared by a couple.

Bill C–21 will come into force with the changes we are advocating. For instance, eligible people will be entitled to a maximum of 30 weeks of special benefits. That is what I call progressive measures.

Madam Speaker, these are only a few examples of benefits available under Bill C–21 which has now been before the Senate since early November, nearly a month.

• (1510)

The bill features a variable entrance requirement which takes regional disparities into account. I repeat that the bill was passed by the elected members of the government. Hon. members passed the bill in the House. The Senate still has three weeks to consider and report the bill before the House recesses for Christmas. Those who are delaying the bill are holding the unemployed as hostages.

Madam Speaker, again I say that I share the opposition's concerns over the variable eligibility requirements as a temporary solution. Therefore I intend to vote against the motion before the House because I believe we need to implement Bill C–21, a reform which shows full respect for the dignity of the worker and takes into account the prevailing conditions in the economic regions. I will vote against the motion because I hope that, prompted by their collective responsibility, the senators will make haste and send the bill back before we interrupt our work for Christmas.

[*English*]

Mr. Allmand: Madam Speaker, the minister knows that last year there were 2.2 million claimants under the unemployment insurance system. She should also know that as a result of Bill C–21, 155,000 Canadians who would have been claimants will totally lose their claims and 775,000 will have their claims reduced.

As a result of that sort of impact, already the clerk of the Senate committee has received 159 requests by groups to be heard on that bill. Let us say that even if only half those requests to be heard are legitimate, it still gives us about 75 legitimate groups that want to be heard.

Why is the minister opposed to groups of Canadians who feel impacted on Bill C–21 having the right to be heard? I am not talking about groups that were already heard by the House of Commons committee. I am talking about groups that were not heard at all by the House of Commons committee because we had a deadline to meet.

Why is the minister opposed to those groups being heard by the Senate committee and, if she is not opposed to that, why is she not willing to extend the variable entrance requirement for a month or two so that the law will remain the same while the Senate is dealing in a reasonable way with those Canadian groups that want to be heard?

It is not the Senate that wants to extend the time. It is not the Liberal Party. These are groups of Canadians who are being impacted by this bill and they want to make their views known to Parliament. The only means they have to do it is through the Senate committee

because they were not heard in the House of Commons committee.

I ask the minister why she is opposed to that. Why is she opposed to the democratic right of Canadians to voice their views on a very serious change in their lives and their economy?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Vézina: Madam Speaker, I would like first to point out to my hon. friend that we need no lessons in democracy.

Mr. Allmand: Yes, you do!

Mrs. Vézina: We have an advisory committee which met groups and had discussions with UI claimants. We have a structure which involves a House of Commons and a Senate. What I am re-emphasizing to the House is the need to enact as soon as possible the legislation now before us, Bill C-21. It gives me very much pleasure to point to the statistics of thousands of people, claimants who ask for the right to be heard. I will simply remind you of the reality of the calendar.

On January 1st, we must implement the program if it is to be efficient and serve its primary goal of helping workers who are willingly looking for a job, after having lost their jobs for whatever reason. It is urgent that we implement theses changes to ensure that the system's primary purpose be fulfilled, to achieve what this reform sets out to do which is training, in partnership with the private sector. I therefore remind the House of the need to approve the Bill as soon as possible. As I said, the House will adjourn in three weeks. And my hope is, as a Member of Parliament for an area that knows all about those 10 to 14-week entry requirements and unemployment rates, and what I want is that we show respect for workers who are looking for jobs. I want to give them renewed assurances, as a government member, that our safety net will be available, today and tomorrow, to the unemployed men and women who are looking for jobs, and I would like to recall that the methods introduced through Bill C-21 are an active, dynamic, and efficient way of developing a skilled, and on effective force for next year and the years to come.

[*English*]

Mr. Allmand: Madam Speaker, the minister knows that she introduced the new unemployment insurance regions the day after we completed the debate on Bill C-21 in this House. She waited until we had finished the debate and until we voted on it at third reading, and then she showed us the new regions.

All the groups that appeared before the House of Commons committee did not know what those new regions would be. Members of this House who debated the bill did not know what those new regions would be. Now we have to examine Bill C-21 in conjunction with those new regions.

Considering that, does the minister not understand that it is reasonable for people to discuss this bill in the light of the new regions that she presented to us the day after we voted on that bill in this House? Is it not reasonable that these groups should have the right to give their views on the joint impact of Bill C-21 and the new regions? I ask her this again because she did not give me a logical answer.

The minister said that she cannot learn anything about consultation from us. She is talking about private consultation in the department and in the office of the minister. We are talking about public consultation in committee, with the press present and the public participating in the consultations.

We are not talking about private consultation. We are talking about public consultation. Since the minister herself introduced the new regions after the debate was completed in this House, is it not reasonable to have some discussion in the Senate with groups on what the joint result will be of the new regions and the bill?

Again, would the minister not reconsider and along with the minister for employment extend the variable entrance requirement for at least a couple of months until the Senate reasonably hears those groups that have something worth while to say? Why is she opposed to that?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Vézina: Madam Speaker, my colleague knows very well, since he has been in the House of Commons for quite a while—I have only been here for five years—and knows very well what "consultation" means. You have criticized us as a government enough since 1984 for consulting too much. What you are asking me to do today before implementing Bill C-21 is to consult some more, leading Canadians to believe that the redefinition of economic regions is the same as Bill C-21, even without Bill C-21. Madam Speaker, the economic regions had to be redefined. As I mentioned briefly, the government that preceded us neglected to review the economic reality of the regions, neglected to analyse the economic situation, to recognize regional

disparities, and now we are asked to consult before accepting Bill C-21? The redefinition of economic regions was requested by members of this House, both in our party and in the one opposite, as we often say. We need both reforms, two complementary reforms, and we can continue to go ahead with Bill C-21, knowing very well that even without Bill C-21, the economic regions would have been redefined. And I must congratulate us for being forward-looking and taking account of the differences among client groups and labour markets. That reality had to be recognized, and again, I call on members of the Senate to respect the timetable. I ask them to respect the working people of Canada so that as of January 1, 1990, we can implement together these two reforms which recognize and respect the outlying regions, from which I come.

Mr. Arsenault: A question!

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I am sorry, the time for questions and comments is up. Resuming debate. The hon. member for South West Nova.

• (1520)

[*English*]

Mrs. Coline Campbell (South West Nova): Madam Speaker, I would point out to the minister, just on the last point she made about economic regions, that the southern end of Nova Scotia always had a sub-area up until last November when this government took away that sub-economic region. So let us not throw stones at each other.

This piece of legislation is about the worst piece of legislation—

Mr. Reid: Let's not throw stones? Do you see any boulders falling from the ceiling?

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): The member over there says: "Let's not throw stones". The minister just spoke and said that they were responsible for the great changes in the economic regions. They may have been responsible for the great changes in the economic regions, but they left an area that had had an economic region change up until last November without that stability of a new sub-economic region in Nova Scotia, and they made the people pay by putting in extra work weeks in order to claim.

Today we have a special motion before us. The member who just interrupted me comes from Newfoundland, so he would not understand the variable entrance requirement because the unemployment rate in Newfoundland is well above 15 per cent and is protected by this bill as it has been in the past.

The motion before the House is a motion to pass what has been passed every year since 1977 by both Liberal and Conservative governments. It has been passed in order to retain the variable entrance requirement and not go to a straight 14 weeks.

If this motion is not accepted today by the House and if it is not passed before January 6, two things will happen. This government can smile in self-satisfaction, but one of two things will happen. The bill will either pass without the proper consultation that it needs and should have in the Senate, or the variable entrance requirement will be done away with. In other words, everybody will need 14 weeks of insurable earnings in order to qualify starting January 6.

I made some inquiries at one of the local manpower offices in my riding and I found that last year, from January 3 to January 6, there were almost 500 applications from only one area, and I share that office with the member for South Shore. In that one area, those people would have to go from 11 weeks under the variable entrance requirements to 14 weeks, and because of the repeater provisions in the bill, they would need 20 weeks of insurable earnings in order to qualify in South West Nova.

This bill is such a callous way of taking funds from a given region and saying to that region that we are not any longer going to give you the funds that were normally there as income for Canadians, the income which was spent in those communities. As businesses are well aware, if you remove funds from a given area you are hurting not just the people and the families who are relying on receiving the benefits. You are hurting basic businesses in every village, in every town, across a given region.

The spin-off effect has to hurt, and it does not take long to realize it. You will soon find people, the young in particular, having to move away from areas that have always had a seasonal employment base and the greater part of Canada, whether in the north, the east, the west, central Canada or Quebec, has a seasonal employment

base. Bill C–21 forgets seasonal variations and says we are going to do it uniformly across Canada. Treat the people in Toronto the same way as you will the people there.

Mr. Kempling: You haven't read the bill. Read the bill.

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): Of course I have read the bill. The parliamentary secretary to the minister of manpower can sit pompously back in his chair. He does not know the effect it will have on all Canadians because this bill definitely violates people.

I am the first one who would say and say publicly, whether in my riding or elsewhere, that there may be abuses of the unemployment insurance system and the government wants all Canadians to know that. However, I do know what this bill will do.

This bill reduces the number of weeks of benefits, according to the estimates of a local manpower office, by probably from 30 to 32 weeks of benefit for the 17 weeks of insurable earnings to 21 to 22 weeks. That is an almost 10–week reduction in benefits for 17 employable weeks. It does not take much for someone, particularly someone who has been involved with the unemployment insurance program, to realize the effect of that.

Claimants who go into one of the manpower offices in the first week of January normally need 17 weeks. That is what was needed last January in order to qualify. But, if the bill goes ahead without any further amendments, they will then receive for the 17 insurable weeks somewhere around 22 weeks of benefits. I figure that that brings us into approximately the first weeks of May. In my area, with the fishery and with the way the government has handled the fishery, we are not even sure there will be a fishery. At that time the people begin to look for work because the fish have been coming in and the people hope that there will be work.

So what do we have? We probably have people starting back to work any time after the middle of May to June. They work their overtime, they work their weeks and, if there were fish, they would work all year. They work part–time throughout the year when there are fish. This bill means that by the first week in May there will be no more benefits for those particular claimants in that area, so these people must find work.

I can sympathize with people in the government who would like to say: "Let them find work", but when you come from an area whose economy is based on farming, fishing, forestry and tourism, the full employment season is barely the full months of May, June, July, August and September.

These people work and they get their 17 to 20 weeks, because they may as well know now that they are probably going to need anywhere from 16 to 20 weeks and then they go back on to unemployment insurance in the fall. By February they will have received all their benefits.

Municipal leaders have been telling me that this bill is bad law and that it has not been analysed. They are going to be the ones who are going to be under pressure next year. It will not be the minister from Bay Street. It will not be the Minister of Employment and Immigration who can callously sit there and pompously tell members of the opposition that they do not know what they are talking about.

Let the minister come down to the unemployment insurance office in any one of the areas. Last year at this time, 700 to 800 people were looking for unemployment insurance benefits. Last week, I think the number was around 2,400 in one office. That tells me one of two things. First, there is no work, and that I have to accept because there have been no fish even though the offshore quotas will leave about 26 million pounds the inshore could have fished in this particular month. There are no fish and the people have not had the work they have normally had.

Second, the people know that if they get their claim in before Christmas they will perhaps have a longer benefit period in the new year and will be able to adjust to the harsh requirements this government is setting down without providing any alternative.

I was around when there was a Liberal government and it changed some of the unemployment insurance rules. At that time I opposed certain of these changes, but never have I seen changes which take approximately $50 million out of an economy like that of Nova Scotia without having at least a make–work program established by the government in order to provide work in an area for those people who need the additional weeks of work. Never have I seen that.

• (1530)

People used to laugh about make-work programs and say that they did not provide long-term jobs. But they did retrain people, they did show them that there were other jobs in the community that could be done and they did build certain things in the community. But the most important thing was that they allowed people to find the additional work weeks necessary to establish a claim at an unemployment office. As well, they gave income to the people in many communities who needed that income in order to remain there and be available for the seasonal work in those areas.

This minister has changed the direction of the unemployment insurance program. She has said, "We will retrain". She has not said the government will provide any work opportunities for the many people who will find themselves caught by the new changes in this act.

It hurts members opposite to hear this.

Mr. Reid: It hurts anybody to hear it.

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): They will have to hear it eventually. There are 139 groups that want to appear before the Senate. I have never seen a change in any government policy and the spin-off effects it will have in the many regions, villages and towns across Canada be less scrutinized.

It is a piece of legislation geared strictly, in my opinion, to the free trade agreement.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): They laugh. Our unemployment insurance system has at least provided a subsidized income to allow all Canadians to have a reasonable living. Until this government or a new government provides a new outlook on how we are going to have income maintenance across Canada, we need that program in various communities or people will, as a result of this legislation, have to leave their communities and their families and go into the downtown areas of Toronto, Mississauga and other places in Ontario.

They may have full employment in St. John's, Newfoundland, but there is not full employment in Halifax. Many people there are now beginning to suffer the economic consequences because not only is the fishery not bringing income into that area but the people in the surrounding areas are not going into Halifax and spending money.

The whole direction which has been followed since I came back to the House of Commons less than a year ago has been detrimental to the regions. We see it in the fishery. We see it in the unemployment insurance changes. Because business has said the program must carry itself, the Unemployment Insurance Act must be directed toward business. Even de Grandpré and Forget said there must be something within the economy to sustain the people in the long term. Retraining should be left for business. Retraining should be done by the IBMs and the GMs, not subsidized by the government for the GMs and the IBMs.

Madam Speaker, the other day I picked up a press release and saw that the minister had given $2 million out of the UI fund to a radio station, CBC, to provide a program for retraining senior Canadians aged 55 and up. Why does downtown Toronto need $2 million? Is there no awareness within the business community of Toronto that the older worker has to have assistance, has to be reintroduced to the workforce by the community, by those businesses?

That $2 million is coming from claimants in the east who will have reduced benefits and going to Toronto, the richest area in Canada. Business people are asking her to change the Unemployment Insurance Act and she cannot get them to submit, on a tax receipt, the assistance needed for CBC to carry that program.

That was okay. The worst part was that it was only for a designated area in Ontario, I think seven cities. It did not go across Canada to help other older workers getting back into the workforce. It only helped her area and those businesses in that area. This is a very limited area as far as I am concerned.

I have watched this government bring in a bill and impose closure on it after only one day of debate. If I recall correctly I did not speak on this bill at second reading. I think I spoke on the closure motion.

I do not think I have seen a study on what is going to replace the $50 million in Nova Scotia, but I do know that with the way the unemployment changes are going that has to be studied. I do not think our municipalities can create the weeks of work needed in order for people to make claims without some assistance from the federal

government, if it is going to proceed at the rate it is going.

At the same time, I think Mr. Buchanan is right that there is going to be a great loss of income available within the area.

This motion is simple. It does two things. It allows the status quo to continue beyond January 6 until the bill is passed. If the motion is passed as it is, it will not have all the consequences that I have said it could. But it will also allow the 139 groups which want to make representations to point out the concerns that exist. I do not know why the government feels that the Senate is not entitled to look at this, to give it a sober second look. I am glad the Senate is there.

I know what the effect will be in my riding. I think I mentioned that well over $1,000 per claimant will not be received if this bill passes. There is no provision for make-work programs to enable them to earn the benefits within the community.

I repeat, this is one of the harshest pieces of legislation that I have seen in the 15 years that I have been involved in politics. I do not believe that the government has looked at the effects and consequences. We have the opportunity for the Senate to look at it and hear the 139 groups. I think it is only right that the variable entrance requirement be maintained rather than going to 14 weeks.

The member from St. John's has been here a short time. He perhaps does not know what it is going to be like for his people to have to have 14 weeks, come January 6, if this bill is not passed. Since 1977, for 12 years, we have consistently passed this little amendment that allows the variable entrance requirement to continue. That variable entrance requirement means that people in the hon. member's area may only need 10 or 11 weeks in order to qualify.

If our motion is rejected by the other side today, people will need 14 weeks to qualify. If they are repeaters, as a good many are in some areas like South West Nova, which means they have established the second claim, they will need 20 weeks, come January 7, in order to qualify. Given the economic conditions that have existed this year for fish plant workers, it will be a very hard task indeed to find that 20 weeks.

• (1540)

I beg the government to pass this. It did it last year, it did it for the four years or more that it has been in office.

Mr. Reid: Just pass the legislation.

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): This is ransom. Why should the weakest people in Canada be denied the right to have fair scrutiny of Bill C-21 when the government has always passed the variable entrance requirement? It has been passed for six years.

Mr. Reid: Madam Speaker, I will be speaking later on this and I will address some of the points specifically, but a couple of remarks have perhaps raised my blood pressure a little so that I cannot let them pass right now.

First of all, the hon. member stands there, points to me and says that I know nothing about the variable entrance requirement because the unemployment rate in Newfoundland is too high. Let me tell you about the variable entrance requirement, Madam Speaker. Let me speak of the people of Bell Island where there is a horrendous unemployment rate. It is an island in the middle of Conception Bay with no land transportation. It has a 70 to 75 per cent unemployment rate. In my region when the unemployment rate drops .2 per cent, under the old laws they go from 10 weeks to 16 weeks, just like that. That is what happens if the other place does not pass this legislation, that is the sort of thing that hurts people.

It is the variable entrance requirements and moving on with this legislation that is going to help and protect people, that is going to give them options, not stone walls. The member stands there and tells us we do not know what it is like because the unemployment rate is too high. Well, it does not work that way.

The greatest effect of changing the regions has taken place in my constituency and I have supported it because it is a response to the eight or 10 groups that appeared before the committee in St. John's, Newfoundland in the fall. They said, "Change it, make it fairer". I have supported what the minister of state has done.

I do not normally get this excited. I try to keep very calm and to the point, but may I sum up my comments on the hon. member's speech. I will not use the words that the parliamentary secretary used about knowledge of the legislation and having read it. The repeater provision is eliminated under the new legislation. It is gone. There are no more penalties for living off fish and forestry and seasonal employment. It is gone. It is eliminated. It is not

there any more. So it respects the fact that our people have to work sometimes two or three different times a year, sometimes in two or three different jobs.

Standing up here and going on about the repeater provision and the hurt it is doing people is a sort of scaremongering based on nothing. It hurts people more than anything else. This legislation provides options. This legislation says we can do something. The member says that we are saying, "Let them find work". We are saying to people, "We will help you find work". That is the difference between the new legislation and the old legislation which says to people, "Here it is and that's it".

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): Madam Speaker, I do not think there was a question in that tirade of words of the hon. member.

Mr. Reid: No question. I don't want an answer.

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): I would just say to the member that he has two things wrong. If his variable entrance requirement goes from 10 to 16 right now—

Mr. Reid: Right now.

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): —he does not realize that the repeater provisions are already in effect in his riding.

Mr. Reid: Can you explain that?

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): I cannot explain it because it is the hardest thing in the world to understand. I can do it by using as an example the southern end of Nova Scotia. Right now the variable entrance requirement is based on the unemployment rate in an economic region. For instance, because of that, 11 weeks are necessary under the variable entrance requirement. That is the VER. We are asking the government to give Canadians a chance, to allow this motion to go through so that we can continue the study on this disastrous bill.

The second thing that the hon. member does not seem to realize is that in an area like southern Nova Scotia we have repeaters in the same year, given the fact that that is what the repeater provision was in the past. With that repeater provision a repeater is penalized six weeks for being a repeater. I agree with the minister's aim to do away with the repeater, but the member does not realize that, if this bill passes, the claimant who needed 17 weeks to qualify last year will get 10 weeks less of benefits. It is the amount of benefits they will receive that is reduced. Look at it, it is the amount of benefits.

Maybe Bell Island will get something from heaven or this government, I do not know, strange things happen with this government and some people. But I am telling the hon. member that this is an economic take-away from communities of $1,000 per claimant. I figured it out to be about $1,000 per claimant and that comes to big numbers. I said that in debate and you could probably find it in the debate of June 21. I think it is well over $50 million that is taken out of the communities in Nova Scotia because of the reduction of the number of benefit weeks. Look at what the minister prepared.

The member may stand up and pontificate about how good this legislation is but I would like to hear how the people in his area have been affected in a year's time. If the unemployment rate in an area is over 15 per cent they are not even affected by the legislation, because it stays the same. So the member is comparing apples and oranges over there, but the effect of this legislation will be apparent to most Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy H. Arsenault (Restigouche—Chaleur): Madam Speaker, as the member for the riding of Restigouche—Chaleur, I want to point out that the unemployment rate is very high in my riding as well. I am astonished when I hear members on the government side saying they will not institute temporary measures, pending a decision by the other place on Bill C-21.

As a result of the proposed changes in the unemployment insurance program, the Atlantic provinces will lose $260 million in benefits, which breaks down as follows: $51 million in Newfoundland; $32 million in Prince Edward Island; $29 million in Nova Scotia and $148 million in New Brunswick. There is no guarantee that this money will be returned to and spent in those provinces.

[*English*]

I would like to congratulate the member for South West Nova for trying to explain to the government side what a little bit of compassion is in this House. I am not worried about theatrics. I am worried about the people who are on unemployment insurance who will not qualify come January because the government does not want to pass a temporary measure, a measure that has been passed continuously since 1977 by Liberal and Conservative governments.

The only thing we are asking today is that the government continue a tradition and pass a temporary measure while waiting for the decision of the other place on Bill C–21.

Mr. Bill Kempling (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, I would suggest to the hon. member for South West Nova that she look at the "blues" because I seem to recall she said that Bill C–21 mandates a uniform 14–week variable entry requirement across the country. That is what she said. That is what I heard her say.

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): No.

Mr. Kempling: Check it out. The bulk of her remarks sounded like that old Abbott and Costello routine, "Who's on first, what's on second"? It was so disjointed it was very difficult to follow.

• (1550)

When I saw this motion I wondered how people could be so cynical as to put a motion like this before the House of Commons pertaining to a bill that was in the Senate. In effect, what they are asking us to do is to set aside what we have done through committee hearings and through debate in the House of Commons and bring in another bill to handle one portion of what we have done.

If you go back and look at Senate debates on this matter in 1988 you will see that Senator Frith agreed with the deputy leader of the government in the Senate that the variable entry rate should be made permanent and should be put into legislation. That is what Senator Frith agreed with. That is what we have done, we have put it into legislation and now they want to change that somehow.

Bill C–21 passed this House on the evening of November 6 and for almost a month the Senate did nothing about it. They fiddled and diddled, that is about the size of it. They issued a series of press releases: "Senate Liberals consider delaying jobless change", "Senate likely to give UIC bills rough ride, Liberal Frith hints", "Senate may stall unemployment bill says Senator Frith", "Battle over UI reforms threatens eligibility rules", Senate threats to stall UI bill could bring serious hardships". That is the sort of little PR game they played in the Senate, Madam Speaker.

They may be wise to listen to what *The Guardian* from Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, my favourite province, had to say. The headline reads: "Did the Grit Senators think this one through?" The article said: "It appears the Liberal–dominated Senate could be instrumental in assuring that a number of Islanders do not qualify for unemployment insurance benefits. Word from employment minister Barbara McDougall's office is that if the Senate delays approval of the bill amending the Unemployment Insurance Act beyond January 6, the variable entrance requirements provision, formerly passed annually by Parliament, will not apply, resulting in Islanders who do not have 14 weeks of work credits not being eligible for benefits. All it took was 10 weeks when that provision was passed each year but now it is contained in new legislation and can't be effective until the whole bill is passed".

It goes on to say that they should really look at this: "Liberal Senators may not like the bill. Nevertheless it is going to go into effect eventually and it is time to choose between speedy passage or depriving unemployed workers of insurance benefits because of a matter of a few weeks of work. Surely the choice is obvious".

Surely the choice is obvious, Madam Speaker. The Senate set up a special committee on November 9 and did nothing until last week when they had their first organization meeting. They have made a lot of noise about a certain number of groups who want to appear before them and present their positions.

The legislative committee of this House heard 200 groups when it travelled across the country. Those groups represented national, provincial, regional and local labour groups and unions. They heard national business groups, provincial business groups and local business groups representing both small and large business; legal clinics, anti–poverty clinics, UI action groups, family groups, youth groups, disabled human rights groups, churches, co–ops, regional governments, tribal councils, individuals, pensioners, adoptive parents and

adult education. They heard women's trade groups, women's training and education organizations, women's centres, status of women groups and groups representing mothers. They heard steel workers, nurses, construction workers; federal, provincial and regional civil servants, forest workers, miners, teachers, farm workers, hospital workers, builders, and fisheries workers. They heard representatives from railways, the petroleum industry, hospitality and tourism, the paper industry, mining and transport machinists, the automotive industry, banking, aerospace and the garment industry. On the development side of it they heard from developmental organizations; native, regional and municipal. You have to ask yourself how much more you want to hear before you go on with more consideration of this legislation.

The backdrop to that is that from 1982 to 1988–89 the government has looked at the Macdonald commission which, from September 1982 to November 1985, travelled the country for 74 days. It went to 37 different communities and by the end of its work it heard from more than 2,500 groups. Three of its research studies are on UI alone and seven chapters in the report deal with unemployment insurance.

Then we had the Forget commission which travelled the country for 60 days. It went to 46 communities and by the end of the study had considered 1,500 submissions.

Then we had the Standing Committee on Labour, Employment and Immigration which, from December 1986 to March 1987, in Ottawa, heard 53 individuals representing 26 different organizations.

After that we had the de Grandpré report that did not hold public hearings but invited comment from all interested sectors. Over 160 briefs were considered.

You look at that and then you look at what the standing committee went through, the list I just read: labour, business, social, women, development and industrial workers from various sectors. How much more do we have to hear? How much more do we have to listen to on unemployment insurance? Surely there is a limit to what you can listen to.

The members opposite are using this as a ploy. They want us to say that we will set aside the legislation that we debated and was passed, legislation that is based upon all the studies that have been done by Macdonald, Forget, de Grandpré and committees of the House of Commons. They want us to push all that to one side and hear another 159 or so groups.

After Bill C–21 was referred to the Senate we heard first that they were going to travel across the country. Maybe they still are for all I know. It is their decision to do what they wish, but we heard that they were going to travel across the country. Then we heard another rumour that they were going to have televised hearings on this bill.

I think what really happened was that the Senate took a look at the legislation and said, "My God, if we don't pass this by the Christmas break, on January 7 this whole business is going to fall apart and a lot of unemployed people across the country are going to have to have 14 weeks of work before they can apply for unemployment benefits". Then, I suppose, they looked at a list and said, "Where is it going to affect"?

In Newfoundland it is going to affect the Avalon Peninsula, Fortune Bay, Gander, Corner Brook and Labrador. It is going to affect all of Prince Edward Island. In Nova Scotia it is going to affect Cape Breton, Cumberland, Guysborough, Halifax, Yarmouth and Kings. In New Brunswick it is going to affect Moncton, Saint John, Fredericton, Madawaska and Restigouche. In Quebec it is going to affect Trois Rivières, the Eastern Townships, Montreal, Gaspé, Quebec and northern Quebec. It is going to affect eastern Ontario, Belleville, Peterborough and other regions such as Georgian Bay, Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie, northwest Ontario, Windsor and Sarnia.

We have put a bill in place. It handles the variable entry rate system very effectively. Any region that has unemployment in the 14 to 15 per cent range will still require just 10 weeks of work to qualify for unemployment benefits. That is in the bill and that is why the bill should be passed. There is no logical reason why senators should go through this little dialectic dance that they are going through in trying to convince people that this is some great horrendous thing.

• (1600)

The reality is that the Senate has not done its job. It did not start the thing properly and senators have been fiddling around with it ever since. They cannot make up their minds as to which way to go. They suddenly realize that they have a real problem on their hands. The newspapers in eastern Canada are beginning to editorialize on the weakness in the Senate because of this bill. So members of that place called for help. This motion was put together to try and help the senators, to try and not take the blame for this. We have done our work; they have to do theirs. But they want to shift it back to the House of Commons and say: "Set your legislation aside. Pass this special variable entrance rate that we are suggesting". The motion goes on to state: "this House declares that the passage of this motion does not constitute a vote of no-confidence in the government". What a lot of nonsense! Get on with the bill and pass it. That is what the Senate should be doing.

Aside from the variable entry rates, what are they doing? They are holding this up. They are saying to older workers: "We don't care about you. We don't care about the plans the government has for older workers to allow them to collect benefits past age 65". With respect to the special benefits for women who are pregnant and ill, that special 30 weeks that they can now get, they are saying: "Forget about that. We don't care about that. We'll pass that when we get around to it".

The member for South West Nova was talking about some of the communities in Nova Scotia that are going to be hard hit. The increase in Community Futures is tied up in Bill C-21. The repeater provision is in Bill C-21. It refers to those who are unemployed, then get some work and go back in the same year to try to collect benefits the second time. Under Bill C-21 the repeater provisions are waived. Much of the training that could be done under Bill C-21 is going to be held up because the funds will not be available. I just cannot believe that the Senate is that poorly informed.

In all the years that I have been in Parliament I have always sort of protected the Senate. I have listened to a lot of criticism over the years from people who said that the Senate of Canada is a useless thing, get rid of it, dump it, close it down, you can save a lot of money, and this sort of thing. I have always defended it. I have said: "I think the Senate has a useful place in our system". I still do. But when I see the games senators are playing with this sort of legislation—dirty little games are what they are playing—I am fast becoming a convert to the view that perhaps the best thing we could do is just to eliminate the Senate.

This is playing brinksmanship, a game they should not play. Most of those guys have not worked for so damn many years they do not know what work is all about. They are totally removed from the reality of the workplace today. They do not know what training is all about. They do not know what is required in the industrial world today. Every industrial group that we talked to across the country has said that our biggest problem is that we do not have enough trained workers to carry on our industrial operations. People come to us and say: "Can we not bring in more tool and die makers from South Africa and Europe"?

When the Berlin wall came down and the East Germans were flooding into West Germany, my phone was ringing off the hook. People were saying: "We can bring a lot of tool and die makers from East Germany because they are good craftsmen and we need them here in this country". We are saying: "Look, we can train a lot of these people ourselves".

If you talk to some of our small business people they will tell you that, first, they do not have the resources to train. Second, they do not have the personnel. They have orders to fill and they cannot afford to take someone off the floor to train them. They are looking to the government to train them. The government is looking for some assistance from them, and for quite a bit of assistance from large business to help us on the way.

Let me tell you, I see this as a cynical, back-handed way of dealing with legislation. If the Senate gets away with this, I want to tell you that there will be some really upset people across this country. In the Maritimes in particular the people will be very, very hard hit. It will rest right on the shoulders of Senator MacEachen and his cohorts in the Liberal-dominated Senate.

There are areas in western Canada and in the north that will be affected by this action of the Senate. I would suggest that they sit back and contemplate what they are doing, reflect on it and get down and pass this bill. They can give it a good look-over with experts and officials

from the department who are available to go in and explain any sections of the bill that they are not familiar with. Having read Senator MacEeachen's speech I can tell you he did not read the bill. He did not know what it was all about. It was a disjointed effort on his part. His comments were a discredit to himself and to the Senate.

I hope that the Senate will reconsider the actions that are being contemplated and that senators will pass this bill before we rise for Christmas.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Beauséjour): Madam Speaker, I find it very hard to accept what was said by the hon. member who just finished his speech, and I am referring to his comment about treating Bill C-21 in a cynical, back-handed way.

What we are trying to do today is make the government understand that in January, we might have a situation where families might be in great difficulty. There might not be any money to pay the rent or heating bills or food bills.

When he says there is no reason for such measures, I think we should consider the normal parliamentary process. As soon as the House of Commons has finished consideration of the bill, it must be referred to the Senate for further consideration. We are told it is customary, that they have to do this. They have every right to do so, and if they do, it would take us practically up to February, although it might take longer.

This measure would at least have the effect of alleviating the immediate needs of families caught in a very difficult situation.

The hon. member also said the committee had heard witnesses and mentioned all these people representing chambers of commerce and local groups. However, one group was denied access to the committee. I attended hearings in Moncton, where two ministers of the province of New Brunswick would have liked to address their concerns to the committee. At the time, the committee decided against hearing them.

I wonder why the committee refused to listen to these people. When the Senate holds its hearings, perhaps these people could come and explain their position, so that we can find out how the bill will affect people in the various provinces. I think the Senate should have enough time to hear these witnesses.

Is the hon. member saying we should not listen to these people, that they should not be given a chance to speak?

[*English*]

Mr. Kempling: Madam Speaker, when we had an organizational meeting of the legislative committee dealing with Bill C-21 we had requests from Liberal members of Parliament who wanted to appear as witnesses before the committee. We had other requests of a similar nature from some of the provinces.

The member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, the member from Saskatoon, myself and others sat down and agreed that we should not hear from politicians, that provincial ministers have direct access to the Minister of Employment and Immigration and on commissions. They have other ways of communicating. It is not a normal practice. I would like him to tell me of another legislative committee in this country that has had provincial ministers appear before it. That is not the normal way in which they communicate.

• (1610)

As far as the witnesses are concerned, when we had our organizational meeting the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce came before us and said: "We don't want to begin any hearings before September 4th", or perhaps it was the fifth, whatever it was, the first week of that month. That was his comment to us. We said: "Fine, that is all right".

He then said that we should have 16 witnesses a day and give them each 30 minutes. We agreed to that.

He then told us in which cities he thought we should have our hearings. We agreed with that, right across the country.

The member should go back and ask him, do not ask me. We went right along with everything that he said. In fact, I can tell you for sure that there were only two cities where we heard the full complement of witnesses. Those cities were Toronto and Vancouver. Even in Montreal, his own city, we did not hear the full complement of 16 witnesses.

We were going to go to the Northwest Territories and to the Yukon, but we did not have enough interest for us

to go there, even though we agreed to defray expenses. We offered to have them come to Vancouver and nobody turned up.

As I said before, this matter was talked about and talked about and talked about from 1982 to 1988. Surely to God we have gone far enough with this thing and there is enough information out there. My files are two feet high. They contain articles and comments that have been made and briefs which have been received on Bill C-21.

If the Senate thinks it can hear more witnesses, let it be selective. There is no law which says that anyone who submits a brief has to appear before the committee. We had all sorts of briefs, I think over 300, submitted to the committee and many of them did not want to appear. They just wanted their briefs to be registered, and we did that. Each day we would append the briefs to our minutes.

However, I just cannot agree that the Senate is doing anything but playing games—and a very dangerous game—with some of the people in disadvantaged parts of this country. It should remember that.

Mr. Rodriguez: Madam Speaker, I have a question for the parliamentary secretary. It seems to have become a pattern for this government on very important issues that it has its members make insulting remarks to the residents of regions where hearings are held.

When the parliamentary secretary was with the legislative committee on Bill C-21 and the committee was in Prince Edward Island, he suggested that the reason there was such a high unemployment rate in Prince Edward Island was because the people were lazy. That is the kind of stuff we have been getting from these southern Ontarians who sit on these government committees as they go across the country. I want to ask the parliamentary secretary if he still holds to his insulting remark that the people of Prince Edward Island have such a high unemployment rate because they are lazy. Is that the position he is still taking?

Mr. Kempling: Madam Speaker, this is the danger in reading newspapers and not reading the truth. The hon. member would have a very difficult time finding those remarks attributed to me. I did not say them at all. I did not say anything like that.

All I said was that there are a lot of opportunities everywhere in the country and these people are not taking advantage of them. I did not say they were lazy. One of the reporters said to me: "Are you saying that the people in Prince Edward Island are lazy?". I said: "No, I did not say that at all. Those are your words, not mine". The member should perhaps read his newspapers a little more carefully or get a better source of information. That is not what I said at all.

What I did say was that there are a lot of opportunities. I read from a list of job vacancies in Prince Edward Island that employers could not find people to fill. We had witnesses before us from the tourism industry who said: "Our difficulty is that we train people down here, but after they work for 10 weeks they quit and go on unemployment". I never heard the term "10/42" until I got to Newfoundland where members of the Liberal caucus—and the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce was there, we had lunch with him—made a bit of a joke about the 10/42 instead of the 6/49. I think that is the way they referred to it.

We never said anything like that at all. I just think the hon. member, as usual, does not have his facts straight.

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Madam Speaker, I want to join in this debate. I have looked at the motion from the Official Opposition. For those who are watching this debate they now know that Bill C-21—

Mr. Nunziata: They just tuned out when you stood up.

Mr. Rodriguez: Folks do not tune out when I stand up. They can lower the volume but they will still hear me. More important, they can see me.

I think that the people who are watching this debate understand that Bill C-21, which was an amendment to the Unemployment Insurance Act, 1971, was pushed through all stages in this House by way of closure. In other words, the government had that legislation on a fast track. It is about the only train in this country that was on any kind of fast track. The government pushed it through. Now that it has cleared the House of Commons it is over in the Senate where it is supposed to get a sober second thought.

Neither I nor members of my party have ever invited the Senate to use any delaying tactics on any piece of legislation. Senators have a constitutional right to ex-

amine the legislation. I invite them to follow what is their constitutional right. They are doing that.

What we have here is a power play by the government. The power play is the threat that if January 1 comes and Bill C-21 is not law, and the changes have not been made to the Unemployment Insurance Act, the government is not going to introduce what it has become practice to do in the House for the last eight years or so. That is to say that a bill would be brought to the House. It would receive unanimous consent for all stages in jig time. It would extend the variable entrance requirement. The government has threatened this House and the other place that if this bill is not through the Senate that it will not introduce the variable entrance requirement bill. What we would have is 14 weeks required for unemployment insurance benefits right across the country.

It further goes on to say that if the bill is not passed, particularly since it is a Liberal-dominated Senate, the Liberals want southern Ontario to only have 14 weeks of work to qualify for benefits. People in areas like the Atlantic provinces and northern Ontario would have to work 14 weeks to get unemployment insurance benefits where in some areas they may only have to work 10 weeks.

I want to set that stage because this is a threat that the government has made. It is a power play. It is a power play between this Conservative government and the Liberal-dominated Senate. We have these two playing chicken. Who is caught in the middle? It is the ordinary unemployed, mostly poor people. That is who is caught in the middle. I think it is despicable on the part of this government to actually threaten that and be prepared to carry out the threat. But nothing surprises me any more from this gang over here.

• (1620)

It is our position that what the government ought to do is introduce the variable entrance requirement bill. If it wants to make it contingent on the bill being passed in the other place, the legislation being put in place or the variable entrance requirement legislation will die, I have no problem with that. We are prepared to support that. I say that to the parliamentary secretary.

It seems to me that it is very unfair and cruel to tamper with the lives of people by issuing these threats. It is not fair and I think members of the government should stop.

I am prepared to criticize the Liberals in this House as well, never mind the Liberals in the other House. The Liberals in this House have suddenly discovered how important unemployment insurance is. It was the Liberals with Bryce Mackasey as the minister who introduced a very progressive Unemployment Insurance Act in 1971.

I want to remind the House that at that time that act was based on a full unemployment rate of 4 per cent. The premiums charged to employers and employees guaranteed the payment of benefits to those who were unemployed up to a 4 per cent unemployment rate. Any unemployment beyond 4 per cent, the federal government picked up the cost out of general revenues.

It was not long after that that the economy started to slow down and the unemployment rate started to rise and 4 per cent became 6 per cent. Then it became a variable rate. We all remember the changes that were brought in in 1976 to the Unemployment Insurance Act.

First, the members of the government of the day created the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission. They changed the fixed entrance requirement of eight weeks to a variable requirement of 10 to 14. They changed the benefit structure. Claimants were now entitled to one week of initial benefits for each week of insured employment up to 25 weeks. If they were still unemployed, they could claim up to 13 weeks of labour force extended benefits.

In 1978 the Hon. Bud Cullen was the minister. He introduced sweeping changes in the fall of 1978 which went into effect in 1979. The claimants were now required to repay a portion of benefits received if their annual income exceeded an amount which was one and a half times their yearly maximum insurable earnings.

Second, the benefit rate was reduced to 60 per cent of the average weekly insurable earnings from 66-2/3 per cent. There were higher entrance requirements. Anyone who had not had 14 weeks of insurable earnings in the year preceding the qualifying period was required to have at least 20 weeks. A repeater now had to work the VER plus one week for each week of benefits received in

excess of the VER requirement up to a maximum of six weeks.

The member from Gander, Newfoundland remembers the fight we had with Buddy Cullen and his bureaucrats. We remember the fight well.

What was a social contract between workers, their employers and the government the Liberals in this House began to dismantle to the great dismay of Bryce Mackasey who had been the originator and the introducer of the 1971 act. He was a very sad and bitter man. He commented constantly on the fact that every time they wanted to chip away at the social contract which we call the Unemployment Insurance Act they always pointed to cheaters and said that it encouraged malaise among the unemployed. They said that it took away incentives.

I want to point out all of this chipping away, particularly to the new Liberal members. My colleague from Gander, Newfoundland, and I went through these fights together. He fought with the New Democrats, and there were Tories too. God knows what their political machinations and motivations were. But we fought it and we lost.

What we see in Bill C-21 did not originate with Tories. This whole approach to chipping away the social programs of this country, whether it is unemployment insurance, deindexing old age pensions, family allowances or cut-backs to VIA, did not start with these Tories. It began with the Liberals.

Let us not kid ourselves. They are wolves in sheep's clothing. They cannot fancy it up and come in here pretending they are the great defenders of the unemployment insurance program. No. I was here. I have lived through it.

Along came this gang in 1984. In this gang in 1984 we had the Minister of Finance make an economic statement. He said: "Well, we have to do something about unemployment insurance. We have to cut it. We have to do something about unemployment insurance." He proceeded to cut it.

He suggested some changes, continuing in the same trend. He said that henceforth pension income would be considered earned income. He said that vacation pay will be used in calculating unemployment insurance benefits, and that severance pay will be included.

We have once more the unemployment insurance program, which is part of the social contract, moving toward means testing. From income replacement we now move to a means-tested program.

Having put that in place the government then hired at an expense of millions of dollars Mr. Claude Forget who studied unemployment insurance and came down with the Forget Commission Report. It was music to the Tories' ears, except they had a problem. They had a problem selling it in the country.

The Standing Committee of the House of Commons on Labour, Employment and Immigration made up of members from all sides of the House studied the Forget Commission Report and we passed 89 recommendations unanimously after looking at it. I would have called that report "back to the future" because what it sought to do was to re-establish the social contract, to return the UI program to its pristine position of 1971.

We recognized the growing need to include part-time workers in recognition of a growing trend. We made those recommendations unanimously.

Mr. Young (Beaches—Woodbine): What happened to them?

Mr. Rodriguez: My friend asks what happened to them. They got put on the shelf.

Instead, after the 1988 election we have this Draconian proposal of Bill C-21 which completely removes the government from the unemployment insurance program. It removes the government from any responsibility from what was before a tripartite arrangement, a contract between the governors and the governed, the employers and the employees.

• (1630)

Now with Bill C-21, it has taken all the moves that the Liberals started in 1976 and 1978 and extended them to their logical conclusion. The government now has removed itself from any participation in the social programs.

What the government has done is the first step on the road to what it has called privatization. Since the Conservatives have taken this position of removing themselves from putting any money into the Unemployment Insurance Act, then they have no right to call the

shots in the unemployment insurance program. Yet the deputy minister continues to be the commissioner of the Unemployment Insurance Commission. They still want to call the shots with somebody else's money because now it is only employers' and employees money in the pot.

What they have also done is to use the money in the social insurance program for things which are rightfully the responsibility of government, such as the so-called retraining programs. They are taking $1 billion out of the fund for retraining.

I have here a planning and environment assessment document entitled "Trends and Perspectives". It was put out August, 1988, by the Employment and Immigration Department. It lists the growth occupations. I want to quote from this document because these are the studies, and surely the department ought to take a look at the trends in growth occupations. They are outlined.

Here are the top 10 occupations contributing most to employment growth from 1986 to 1995. I will read them, starting with the first and most popular in the top 10: Sales persons; second, food serving occupations; third, bookkeepers; fourth, secretaries and stenographers; fifth, chefs and cooks; sixth, cashiers and tellers; seventh, janitors and cleaners; eighth, truck drivers; ninth, sales management occupations; and, tenth, barbers and hairdressers. These are the top 10 on the hit parade. This is a department's document looking ahead. These are the trends.

The script that goes with the document states: "By and large, low to medium-skill levels characterize these occupations, with most requiring little or no post-secondary education or training. The nature of these jobs could, however, change appreciably in the future with a higher proportion of 'mental' rather than 'manual' work being required. Virtually all the occupations listed opposite will require certain minimum standards of numeracy and literacy".

Then it talks about the quality of these new jobs. Here is the quality. It states: "While debate continues on this issue, it is worth noting that over 70 per cent of the new jobs, both full-time and part-time, created in Canada between 1983 and 1986 paid less than $20,000 annually, with over 30 per cent paying less than $10,000."

There is the trend. They are taking this money out of the unemployment insurance program to do what training? I just described what the top 10 jobs in this country will be up until 1995, and yet we are taking the money out of these jobs to train.

I heard the parliamentary secretary talk about how we need these machinists and all the rest. Madam Speaker, you do not send someone for a six-week course to become a machinist. It is all part of an apprenticeship program. In East Germany, West Germany, or European countries, it is an integrated program at polytechnical schools where people are trained for these particular trades. It does not happen overnight in six-week programs.

Why is the government doing this? Because now what we have is a system whereby the unemployment insurance fund will be used by the government for things that are rightfully its responsibility; relocating workers, labour adjustment programs, retraining programs and upgrading programs. All of that is coming out of the unemployment program. We do not have the money inside the program to improve the social insurance programs, for example, the kind of program we need for parental leave or the kind of program to enhance the benefits that claimants should get.

We know that the unemployment insurance program is not used. All the evidence points to the fact that it is not used by workers to just collect benefits. Take fishermen, for example, people in these kinds of seasonal employment. The government decides when you fish, how long you fish, where you fish and how much fish you can catch. These are not decisions made by fishermen. If you are going to determine all those things, you have to make sure you have a network of unemployment benefits so that people can live and keep their families with dignity. On the bottom line, that is what we are talking about. Are the unemployed in this country to be made welfare seekers, or are we going to provide the benefits so that they can live with some dignity and maintain their families in dignity in the community? That is what it is all about.

I want to conclude by saying that all of this chopping away and eating away at the program did not start with the Conservatives. I want to make that crystal clear. It began with the Liberals, the first neo-conservatives to

move on this program. The Conservatives are just taking this to its logical conclusion. That is the scene we have.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Questions or comments? Debate.

Mr. George S. Baker (Gander—Grand Falls): Madam Speaker, I was going to ask the hon. gentleman a question, but after the remark he made about the Liberals at the end of his speech, I decided I would not ask him a question.

The parliamentary secretary and the minister made the point here in the Chamber today that they have heard from all of these organizations, the unions, business groups, anti-poverty organizations, churches, and so on. They wondered why should they have any more hearings, everyone has been heard from. The problem I have with this bill is that the very people affected by the legislation have not been heard from at all.

I have here a list of places in Newfoundland that are affected by the legislation. The hon. member for St. John's East is going to speak in a few moments. I will be very interested to hear what he has to say as it relates to his riding. For example, what do the people in Flat Rock think of this legislation? What do the people in Bear Cove, Blow Me Down, Broad Cove, Goose Cove, Frogmarsh, Lady Cove, Hibbs Cove, Kettle Cove or Nicky's Nose Cove think of the legislation? These are the people who are affected by the legislation.

• (1640)

I must admit that it is sometimes frustrating to sit in the Chamber and listen to the parliamentary secretary make the remark he made a few moments ago. He said: "There is lots of opportunity in a particular province. They just won't take advantage of it."

I have never ever met a person who wanted to be on unemployment insurance. You may think that there are people who would like to be on unemployment insurance but I have never met a person, not in all the years I have been here, not in all the cases I have handled before the judges, have I ever met one person who wanted to be on unemployment insurance. Why? Because, Madam Speaker, do you know how much they get? An average cheque in Canada today is $210 a week. The average cheque in my province of Newfoundland is $195 a week. You would have to be crazy. You belong in a mental institution if you wanted to sit at home and get just $195 a week and by law have to report your earnings beyond 25 per cent more than that.

There is a fallacy and misconception out there by people who say: "Look, somebody just wants to stay at home and they want to remain on unemployment insurance". There is no such person, unless the person perhaps has a physical or mental problem that means they just have to, but Canadians do not want to sit at home and make that kind of money.

What is wrong with the bill? I just said it is the people whom it affects. I took a map of Newfoundland out a few moments ago. I took the places in the new zones affected by the legislation. Do not forget that the new legislation says that if the unemployment rate is 15 per cent or less then you require more than 10 weeks to qualify. At this very moment, if the unemployment rate is less than 11.5 per cent in Newfoundland, you require more than 10 weeks to qualify. So that is quite a difference from 11.5 to 15 per cent. Now, all of a sudden, it becomes serious because under this legislation the government has redrawn lines. It drew a line around the hon. member's riding opposite. Then the government drew a line right up through Newfoundland almost following the railway track—we used to have a railway track, but the railway is gone. The expression used to be "which side of the track do you live on?" Now it is "which side of the line do you live on?"

Mr. Reid: In 1968 I think the railway went, didn't it?

Mr. Baker: The government has taken the cities, the metropolitan area that has supposedly lower unemployment than the other areas and defined that as an area. Then in the province of Newfoundland they have taken the fairly, relatively speaking, well-off areas like Gander, Grand Falls, Corner Brook and made them into a zone south of the railway, and what do you have? All of a sudden, if you live in Paradise, you would require more to qualify for unemployment insurance than if you lived in Gallow's Cove, for example. If you live in Petty Harbour, you are going to require more to qualify for unemployment insurance than if you live in Bay Bulls.

The hon. member for St. John's East made the point a moment ago when he said: "Look, my area of Newfoundland has been fluctuating between 10 and 16 weeks because the unemployment rate has dipped above and below 11.5 per cent on the entire Avalon Peninsula." If

you took St. John's and drew a line around that, which has been done, the unemployment rate there is going to be much lower than 11.5 per cent. Under the new legislation, if it is 11.5 per cent people require 14 weeks. So, it is a sure bet that if you live in St. John's or around there, you are going to require much more than 14 weeks because the unemployment rate has to be less than 11.5 per cent. Therefore, his argument does not hold.

The entire Avalon Peninsula, by the hon. member's admission, was dipping below 11.5 per cent and that is why the requirement was 16 weeks this past year in certain months because the average is for 3 months in a row. Then the next month came along and it was up a little bit above 11.5 per cent. All of a sudden, that was averaged out for three months and his district was back to requiring 10 weeks. According to the Unemployment Insurance Commission, it was around 11.5 per cent and that is why he has had the problem in the entire Avalon Peninsula. With this new map a line is drawn around the city of St. John's. Do you really believe that the unemployment rate in St. John's is going to be higher than the unemployment rate in the Avalon Peninsula? That is ridiculous.

When you look at unemployment rates, you cannot take the Statistics Canada rates. The unemployment rate in the city of St. John's last month was 12.9 per cent, but that is not the adjusted rate used by the Unemployment Insurance Commission.

What is the government now doing with the rest of the province? Well, it has drawn a line that goes between Sunnyside and Swift Current. Come-by-Chance is in the middle. If you come from Come-by-Chance you don't know where you are. You could be either in 10 weeks or 13 weeks. The line is drawn somewhere down the middle. Then it goes up through Newfoundland and passes between Philips Head and Northern Arm. If you live in Philips Head, 10 weeks for sure. If you live in Northern Arm, I'll bet you they are going to need 13. What if you live along the road? There are seven houses on that road. You know yourself, Madam Speaker, that they are all going to change their postal address to Philips Head.

Mr. Reid: What an aspersion to make.

Mr. Baker: Why not?

Mr. Reid: People don't do that.

Mr. Baker: Now, here's where we have a problem. The hon. member now is going to learn something. This new bill would not be so bad if people lived where they worked. If you work where you live, you can draw some lines. But in Newfoundland if you work in the woods, you do not live in the woods. If you work on the CN boats, you do not live on the CN boats. Your mail does not come to the CN boat. If you work on a lake boat, your mail does not come to the lake boat. If you work in the woods in Labrador, your mail does not come to the woods in Labrador.

• (1650)

A standard work crew working this past year in Millertown, central Newfoundland, with the contractors got 13 weeks work. Suppose one man goes home to Flat Rock, another man goes home to Bonavista. The man in Flat Rock cannot collect his unemployment insurance, but the man in Bonavista can. If he is from Philips Head, as I just pointed out, or on the road between Philips Head and Northern Arm, what do you think he is going to do? He has worked in the woods next to a man who lives down the road. He does not qualify for unemployment insurance to feed his family, but the other man does. He would have to be crazy not to change his postal address. Of course he is going to change his postal address.

If you continue on along the line, Madam Speaker, you will see what the problems are that are being created. In a province like Newfoundland people do not normally live where they work. I do not know many people who live on the Funk Islands. I do not know many people who live 200 miles out in the Atlantic Ocean.

Mr. Simmons: But they work out there.

Mr. Baker: They work out there. And when they come home they do not all live in the same place. They live in various places. This year in this part of the country when the lake boats were hiring and laying off, all of those 400 Newfoundlanders went home, and they went home to various places around Newfoundland and Labrador. That is why this bill cannot work in a province like Newfoundland.

When we had the present legislation of 11.5 per cent, if the unemployment rate dropped below that, you required more than 10 weeks. It never dropped below that in the high unemployment areas. But now we are into 15 per cent and there are all kinds of areas carved out by the government in which the unemployment rate

is between 15 per cent and 11.5 per cent and so you get that great variance.

What side of the line do you live on? That is the question that is going to be asked in the high unemployment areas in this country with the passage of this new legislation. That is why I say that the legislation is very, very seriously flawed.

The other problem, and I will conclude with this point, is that it amazes me, as it would anybody, to realize that the House of Commons, made up of supposedly educated people with good research staff, and the House of Commons with its Library and all of the public servants in Canada, has not one single MP in this Chamber who knows exactly how the new bill is going to affect his province. Not one single MP. Why, Madam Speaker? Because they do not have the figures done up yet. That is what they claim.

Mr. Simmons: Deliberately so.

Mr. Baker: They do not have the figures done up. They claim that they do not know, that they are just compiling the figures now. If you ask: "How is it going to affect St. John's?" They say: "We are not sure, because we do not have the exact figures done up. We have to adjust them and so on. We do not know". If you ask: "How is it going to affect Gander? They reply: "Oh, we don't know that. That's in a different zone. We do not know that". If some member stands up in the House of Commons and says "I know how it is going to affect all areas of my province", then he knows more than the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

That is the other thing that is wrong with the legislation. If you were to say to an unemployed person: "Boy, we are going to change the rules on you in January, but we do not know how many weeks you are going to need to qualify for unemployment insurance". The fellow would say: "Why did you change the rules if you do not know what the new rules are"? You would change them if you did not understand what unemployment is all about. You would change them without knowing the results, if you believed that people were too lazy to work. You would change them if you really believed that people were living off the system on $200 a week. And, of course, you would change them if you wanted to do away with the unemployment insurance scheme altogether. You would change the law to something that you did not know you were changing it to.

As far as the motion itself is concerned, let me conclude by saying that no bill should have ever passed this Chamber without us knowing the effects of that legislation. No bill should have been passed in this Chamber.

Shame on the Government of Canada. Shame on it for changing the system and not being able to say what it has been changed to and how it affects that unemployed person, the poorest of the poor. Today in Newfoundland, 101,000 people are drawing unemployment insurance with the average cheque just below $200 a week and, in Canada, more people are drawing unemployment insurance than the government claims are unemployed. That is how serious the problem is.

I would suggest to the government that it simply pass the normal bill, extend the variable entrance requirement and then interview the people affected by this new legislation and see what they think.

Mr. Reid: As my hon. friend has indicated, I will have the opportunity to comment a little later. I cannot, as I could not with our friend from South West Nova, let what my friend from Gander—Grand Falls has just said pass by. While it sounds marvellous and looks terrific, if you look at where we are today and where this new legislation takes us, all that has been said to us is total puffery.

Mr. Allmand: You know better than the people in Newfoundland?

An Hon. Member: You should have been at the hearings.

Mr. Reid: First of all, I was at the hearings. I want to quote from some of the hearings about the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour, about the Fishermen's Union and about the Newfoundland Advisory Board on the Status of Women, which advised the committee to change the economic zones, to put metropolitan St. John's in its own economic zone. That is what we have done.

Who set up the variable entrance requirements? It was the crowd opposite. My friend opposite calls them unconstitutional because they are decided by where you

live. Nothing has changed, so all that we have heard is craziness because it follows on from where we are today.

• (1700)

I do not like the fact that some of the people in my constituency will need extra time to qualify for unemployment insurance, but I am a damned sight happier that people in the areas around the city of St. John's, in Bell Island, in Colliers, in Avondale, in Cupid's and in Brigus now have the opportunity to qualify like the areas around them where the unemployment rate is high. We have always had to draw lines.

There have always been questions about Goobies, and where the line is and where the line is not. There have always been some areas that do better than others. I get the message but I cannot let it go by. "Unconstitutional", he says. I cannot believe it. He says it is a violation of our constitutional rights. They violated them.

Mr. Baker: Madam Speaker, to me it is unconstitutional to discriminate against somebody because of where they live.

We had lines drawn in Newfoundland on the basis of an unemployment rate that was relatively low. We have moved to a system where we are drawing lines based on 15 per cent unemployment. That is quite a difference. Not only that, but the hon. member is saying that we had lines drawn before in Newfoundland. Yes, we did, but it did not matter what side of the line we lived on.

Now it does, Madam Speaker, right throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, but much worse in the St. John's area than it was before. Why? Because there are 22 communities listed in with St. John's. Undoubtedly, it is going to require a great many weeks to qualify in that zone.

Then you have another line drawn in Newfoundland which separates the medium from the really bad off, and you have another line to deal with in Newfoundland. That is a lot worse than it was before. You could have redrawn the lines and kept it at 11.5 per cent. That is what the witnesses wanted.

The next thing the government is going to do is require more than 10 weeks if the unemployment rate is below perhaps 20 per cent. That is the next step for the Government of Canada; in other words, to do away with the unemployment insurance scheme totally.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The hon. member for Burin—St. George's.

Mr. Simmons: Madam Speaker, I have watched with great interest—

Mr. Reid: Is he on debate, Madam Speaker?

Mr. Simmons: No. I am allowed to ask questions too, if the member from St. John's East doesn't mind if we ask a question. I am glad to have his permission. We wouldn't want to do it without his permission.

The member for St. John's East and the member for Gander—Grand Falls focus very graphically on the two sides of the debate in Newfoundland. My friend for Gander—Grand Falls is saying that white is white and he is right, white is white.

The gentleman from St. John's East is saying that black is white. I want to say to him before I put my question that he should not dig his hole too deep because there are a lot of people who are going to hurt under this new legislation. He can put the best face on it he wants to. There are still a lot of people who are going to hurt. I will get to him later if he gets the courage to get up and speak in this debate.

I want to put a question to my colleague for Gander—Grand Falls and to congratulate him first of all on his very graphic description of that line. One is almost moved to poetry, to borrow from another poet: "Have you counted the cost, if your UI be lost, because you sleep to the south of the line?" I could go on, but the point I make is this: Has he put some figures on this either in terms of his own riding and/or all of Newfoundland?

Can he indicate to us or to the House what this is going to mean in terms of a misery index? How many people are going to hurt in round thousands? I know he does not have the figure at hand, but he probably has it in his head, because he has done a lot of work on this.

I ask the member for Gander—Grand Falls if he could educate the gentleman from St. John's East a bit. In the process could he tell us approximately how many people are going to be even more miserable if this legislation comes in, if this crowd has its will and inflicts its majority on this House and the people of Canada?

Mr. Baker: Madam Speaker, as hon. members from Newfoundland know, I do the appeals myself to the Appeal Board and to the Federal Court judge on all unemployment insurance appeals that go through that stage. Sometimes we have had hundreds of cases heard.

I can tell you from my dealings with the Unemployment Insurance Commission in Newfoundland: if the unemployment rate is determined by the Unemployment Insurance Commission as I think it will be, it means you take the unemployment rate, take three percentage points off of it, and seasonally adjust it.

The hon. gentleman is laughing a bit now but that is quite true. Statistics Canada would show you that in his riding the unemployment rate is far above 12 per cent. The Unemployment Insurance Commission, in judging the rate in those zones, is going to knock off quite a few percentage points from that.

We can only guess at what the effect of the legislation will be because we do not know for sure, but I can assure you of this: we had a problem in Newfoundland this year and the Government of Canada had to put up $5 million to try to solve part of the problem of people not getting enough work even to make their unemployment insurance on 10 weeks.

Under this legislation, the Government of Canada will have to put up millions, upon millions, upon millions, upon millions of dollars if it is going to have people qualify for their unemployment insurance in the coming winters.

Mr. Ross Reid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Madam Speaker, I am about to make a mistake that a politician knows he should not make; that of course is to respond. I admit from the beginning that I will make that mistake.

This is the hon. member who told us before the unemployment insurance changes came down that Newfoundland would lose $250 million and that thousands and thousands would be thrown off the unemployment rolls.

This is the person who told us four weeks ago that there were 60 communities around St. John's which were going to be affected. Now it is down to 22. I am dying for St. John's to be taken off the list as well.

This is the gentleman who asks us to believe that UIC is going to take 3 per cent off, then go on an average and move back and forward until the third Tuesday in the month.

All I do is put that before the members of House and ask them if they would stake their futures on it.

If I may return to the matter at hand now that I have transgressed, as I am sure I will again, the point, if I am going to address the motion before the House, is whether or not we need to move another bill to go ahead with the variable entrance requirements.

This House has already passed a piece of legislation that takes care of that, not only for this year but in the future, making sure it is there, making sure that the regions of this country get the protection that they need, and and making sure that the people who depend on seasonal employment or live in high unemployment regions get that protection.

• (1710)

Because their friends in the other place will not move for petty political reasons, they want us to pass another piece of legislation.

This House has spoken. That legislation has been passed. It is up to their friends to ensure that the legislation gets the due attention it deserves, because it is the people of this country who are to be affected. It is the people who live in my constituency who are going to be hurt because they will not move on this piece of legislation.

It will mean that workers in Atlantic Canada will have to depend on 14 weeks. We all know we do not have that option. We all know there is a problem. That is why we have a variable entrance requirement. That is why this piece of legislation changes the system so that there is a variety of things that we can offer people. Instead of a stone wall, there are options. I will come back to the options.

Formerly unemployed workers could qualify after 10 weeks if they lived in areas of high unemployment. That has been permanently enshrined in Bill C–21, but now the stall will not assure that that happens.

Let us talk about the regional differences that others have discussed. In Toronto the unemployment rate is 3.6 per cent. The new program will demand that you have 20 weeks to qualify. That 3.6 per cent is almost full employment. There is movement in the economy. There

is constant movement. Even in our economy there is movement. Things change, opportunities come and go, people have and create options.

In Corner Brook where the unemployment rate is roughly 16 or 16.2 per cent, one will only need 10 weeks to qualify, which indicates that we recognize people are affected in higher unemployment areas, and the program respects that.

We have seen the national unemployment rate in this country drop by more than 4 per cent. In Newfoundland and Labrador alone it has come down by 6.3 per cent. In many ways in this business we are the victims of our success. When we fiddle around with statistics, come and go with numbers so that the unemployment rate drops and drops, we become victims of our own progress. I suppose it is a nice problem to have because I agree fully with my hon. friend from Gander—Grand Falls that people want to work. People do not want to be on unemployment insurance. If there is any opportunity to work people will take that opportunity to work.

Since this government came to power jobs have increased in the Atlantic provinces by 106,000. There are 106,000 more of us working out there bringing in a wage, taking care of families and contributing to communities. That is progress. That is something we have seen as a response to government action in co-operation with provinces, the private sector and individuals in the society and in the economy. The government has pledged in the last budget over $2 billion to Atlantic Canadian initiatives alone.

We talk about the fishery and recognize that there is a problem in the fishery. But for the first time we have a government that is willing to address the problems in the fishery as a national economic issue, not some regional issue. For the first time we have a government that is willing to say there are some problems and it will set up—

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): The government is the problem in dealing with the fishery.

Mr. Reid: I know. We took all the fish. We took them. We got them.

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): You gave it away.

Mr. Reid: I can answer that one. I have been there. We have a cabinet committee chaired by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, appointed by the Prime Minister and responsible for bringing together government's response on fishery. There is a senior committee of officials to advise that committee. Never before has a government exhibited its commitment to dealing with this problem as a national issue. Never before have we seen that.

I would like to go back if I may to unemployment insurance. I work on the basis of two premises when I deal with unemployment insurance. First, as my hon. friend has said, people would rather work than collect unemployment insurance. Second, the people who are in the unemployment insurance system react to that system in the best interests of themselves, their families, and their communities. There is remarkably little abuse.

Let us look at the statistics. People react to the unemployment insurance system the way some members of this House react to the tax system. They make decisions based on what is best for themselves and best for their families. That is only to be commended.

What are we saying to people if we do not move ahead with this legislation? To me this comes to the core. I am a Newfoundlander. I understand what unemployment insurance is in my province: $865 million next year. That is a substantial transfer of resources not only to individuals but into the province and that province's economy. Whether we like it or not, whether we pretend it is different, it is an income-supplement-program.

If we stay rock solid with this very narrow, very restrictive program, we are asking it to do something that it was not designed to do. It is designed as an insurance program, but we are asking it to do so much more. If we are going to stay there and simply tell people "that's it, you are going to take your money and that's all", it is all built on negatives. We are going to make no progress in this country. We have to evolve that system and develop that safety net.

What are we doing? We are saying to people that there are options. There are alternatives that we can use with a bit of money and a lot of ingenuity and a fair amount of co-operation. At the same time we have to protect the interests of people who need that protection. The people of my province need to know that. Because their opportunities for employment at this stage are limited they can draw on unemployment insurance, but we have to be

able to say to those people that there are other things that we can do. I think that is particularly important.

One of those options is training. We hear a lot about training. What are you doing training someone in this community for a job that does not exist and never will exist? One of the biggest advantages to anybody seeking employment is that bit more education, training, exposure, or experience in a job. It is an investment for them. There is a feeling of accomplishment that brings confidence.

One only need talk to anybody in this business and they will tell you that that bit makes a difference every time. Not only will people have an extra opportunity if a job comes along, but they will also have an ability and a willingness to create jobs.

People may scoff at that, but I have seen it in my involvement with the youth strategy in Newfoundland and Labrador. A pilot project was designed to help kids who are having trouble getting from school to the workplace. By doing some programming with them we have broad consultation. We were told: "Give me the tools. I will create the opportunity".

The third factor is that if we have the technically capable workforce and we know where the jobs and the opportunities exist, we can bring them to us. That is another opportunity, but it is not limited strictly to training.

I can quote all sorts of figures from StatsCan. A million people say that their lack of training is holding them back. The CFIB is saying that 50 per cent of members cited shortage of qualified labour as the thing that hurts them. The Canadian Manufacturers' Association found that 36 per cent of its manufacturers in 1988 expressed difficulty in finding skilled trades people.

If we can help people get that bit of training, that bit of education, that is a step up, but I recognize that in my province it is not as easy as that. Until now we have been relatively limited in some of the opportunities that we have, but we created the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. We are just seeing the creation of the preservation of nearly 20,000 jobs in Newfoundland and Labrador alone. That has seen investment of about $600 million directly, not to mention what has accompanied it.

• (1720)

That is building opportunities with people who have ideas, with people who have the capacity and capability to go out and do it in co-operation with a variety of groups, including the provinces.

The training under this program will go from about 75,000 people who are being trained at this point, or 2.5 per cent of the people on unemployment, to 140,000 or about 5 per cent. What are some of the other things that, for some reason, get overlooked? For instance, I know my friend from Burin—St. George's is familiar with some very successful Community Futures projects in his constituency.

Need I mention any more than Port aux Basques, Stephenville or the Port au Port area? They have been very successful. I have a new one in my constituency that will take in a large number of communities, with diverse interests. The people of the community will be able to say to those who have ideas that there is a little money here. We have a knowledge capacity that we can pass on. We have the ability to get grants and loans from government. We have the ability to provide some travel money to bring people in or to go and find out what is going on. We are putting more money into Community Futures because what is clear is that government cannot just sit up in Ottawa and divine solutions. It has not worked. It has not worked for 100 years.

That is why ACOA is in the Atlantic provinces. That is why something like Community Futures is so successful, because it comes from the communities. It is an approach that they together can take. That is one of the things this bill will provide, more money for Community Futures, more money for older workers. There will be another $100 million under the Labour Force Development Strategy to provide a variety of adjustment assistance for older workers not only in retraining but in experience and on-the-job training, recognizing that there is a disproportionately larger number of older workers who are unemployed and do not have the opportunity to get back into a job.

As we see shifts in our economy in Newfoundland and Labrador I need not tell my friends opposite that we need to have that capacity. That is what we are addressing. The SARC program has been very successful in a number of areas in my constituency and I am sure in others. We are ensuring that we are going to see the

investment of another $200 million specifically to help those who are on social assistance, about 60,000 a year.

One of the remarkable things is the success rate in the SARC program. It is over 50 per cent. What that means is that one half of the clients of these programs are employed or in further training three months after the program. Fifty per cent in some things does not sound a lot. It was pretty good for me when I was going to school. I was delighted to get 50 per cent. Fifty per cent for all of us here is a marvellous number to get in an election, but I would suggest that in a program like this that addresses the real problems of people and that gives them opportunities in co-operation with the provinces we have seen real progress at 50 per cent.

We have also provided $230 million of this training to help get unemployed people into the private sector. As a member said earlier, the business community in this country does not do its share. It does not do as much as it should be doing in terms of training. Some big companies do and, as usual, what you have is a very small number of companies doing a huge percentage of the training. We do not have the broad application. There must be more involvement. That is what this will do.

If we continue to say to people in the Atlantic provinces or in any other part of this country who need help that they must accept the program the way it is without any changes, people are going to say: "What's the point"?

What this government is doing in so many of its programs, but particularly in this one, is giving people choices. We are going to try different things in helping you to improve your situation. We must evolve a program like unemployment insurance. It must continue to move and to change because if we do not it will not serve any better those who need it. Quite clearly what we have here is a program that does make things better for people.

I am tempted to return to my sin of responding to my friend opposite. It is a trap and I am at the brink. I would just like to say a couple of things on the economic zones. The principle of variable entrance requirements came from our friends opposite. The principle that was based on residency came from my friends opposite. The principle that in areas of higher employment, there will not be the same benefits that are available to those people who live in areas of lower employment. You have got to draw the line somewhere.

Despite the condescending comments of one of my friends earlier, I have been around the precincts of this place for a long time, and I feel it sometimes. It has always been an argument that St. John's makes it worse for the Avalon Peninsula and St. John's in this case and only in this case makes it worse for the Avalon Peninsula.

My friend from Bonavista—Trinity—Conception will tell you that some of his constituents in areas of very serious problem were not getting the same break as other people in the province because of the city of St. John's. I do not want to say to the people in the city of St. John's and the few surrounding communities that are close by that it is too bad, that I am sorry but no, we are going to have to make it tougher for you. I do not want to have to do that. I do not want to have to do that in the case of equity.

We were talking about lines, about moving people around and about where they live. When you go below 11.5 per cent today you go from 10 weeks to qualify to 16 weeks, just like that. At least now you will know as you drop a percentage point there is a week. It is as simple as that and it is no different from what is there now except the swings are not as dramatic. The effect is not as devastating. It is more predictable. It is more reasonable. That is where some of the changes are.

For my friend opposite to stand up and go on about this track and that line is ludicrous. There have to be lines. I do not like there having to be lines, but if he would like St. John's to affect the whole of the province, maybe we can have one economic zone. I guess I would be happier; most of my constituents live in the city, but that would not be fair to the people of Bell Island. It would not be fair to the people of Avondale. It would not be fair to the people of Bacon Cove. We have to do things. We have to move. We have to be progressive to respond. That is what this legislation is all about.

The question before this House today is whether the other place will deal with a piece of legislation that the members of this House who were elected by the people

of this country have passed, or do we have to piffle on another piece of legislation?

Mr. Simmons: Madam Speaker, I know the gentleman from St. John's East, as he alluded to, is a bit tender from the words of my good friend from Gander—Grand Falls. At the same time I am tempted to say that if Jimmy Bakker taught us anything, it is that you should not try to be an evangelist unless you have got something in the gut. I say to the gentleman from St. John's East that he preaches today a false doctrine. He does not believe a word he is saying. He is doing a great job of mouthing the party line on this one.

• (1730)

This is the brunt of my question to him. Can the hon. member stand there and categorically say that, knowing that his constituents are watching him, and in case a few miss this this afternoon, I will see that they know about it. Can he categorically say today that none of his constituents will be adversely affected by the new unemployment insurance legislation?

I put it to the hon. member that many of his constituents will be out of pocket many hundreds and thousands of dollars. He stands there and he characterizes it in very different terms. If you were to be carried away by his evangelical speech, you would get the feeling that Utopia arrives when this bill is passed finally by both Houses of Parliament.

We know the difference. I say to the hon. member that he is being less than candid with his constituents, if he leaves us with the impression that somehow everybody, without exception, in his own riding is going to be better off because of this bill. I put it to him that many of them are going to be worse off.

Just one further question, so I do not have to get up again. He does a marvellous job, an absolutely fantastic job of mouthing the rhetoric on the issue of training. I ask him to look at what this so-called training initiative has done to the Canadian Jobs Strategy in Newfoundland. It is robbing small communities of many tens of thousands of dollars they can no longer access, because every time they try and tailor an application to legitimate, justifiable training options within the parameters of their communities, they are told it is not good enough. The application is turned back and the net effect is that the Canadian Jobs Strategy, Canada Works, or whatever we called it over the years, that short-term job creation initiative is now having less positive impact on rural Newfoundland because of this farce about a training option.

I put it to the hon. member that in real terms, in terms of the bill that is otherwise before the other House of Parliament now and in terms of the motion here today, this training as it is with the Canadian Jobs Strategy is a complete ruse, it is a complete farce as it applies to rural Newfoundland.

I say to the hon. member that unwittingly or otherwise, he is aiding and abetting the very shut-down of rural Canada with this rhetoric. I appeal to him as a fellow Newfoundlander to come clean on this one. Either he is duping or he is being duped on this particular issue. Training, yes, but make the training realistic to the opportunities that are available.

My first question, in case he has forgotten it: Can he honestly say to his constituents that without exception, none of them will be adversely affected in terms of dollars in the pocket as a result of Bill C-21?

Mr. Reid: Madam Speaker, the answer to the first question is, no. I obviously cannot stand here, neither have I purported to stand here, and say that none of my constituents would be negatively affected. Some of my constituents will be negatively affected, and I am sorry for that.

I will tell you this: Most of my constituents, be it through the change in the economic region or be it through some of the new opportunities and options that we are putting before them, will be better off and will have the opportunity to make their lives and the lives of their families and communities better.

Second, on the question of training, the hon. member makes a point. It is recognized that in some areas of our province, the training components may not be as available under job development of the Canadian Jobs Strategy. It is a case that I have carried to the minister and it is something that I think the department is looking at. I say no more than that.

I will say that first of all, there is Section 25, which has been a huge benefit to most of us and to the people in our constituencies. As well, to call the training a farce is in itself a farce.

I look at the people that the Basilica of St. John the Baptist brought in when they decided to restore the building they are in, a beautiful historic building more than 100 years old, and I may say a program started by my

predecessor, Mr. Jack Harris. They took people off the street. Do you know what they have done? They have trained them to be masons, not licensed masons who can go to Westminster Cathedral, but good enough that people around the province are asking them to come to give them advice.

There is a professor at Memorial University who has an ongoing program. She brings in one or two people. Some of those people are now in law school. People who were unemployed, who had no options, no opportunities are now in university taking science degrees. I see this kind of thing happening all the time.

On the last point, I will take criticism for what I say in this House but I will not take criticism for my motives and I will not sit here and have an hon. member tell me that I do not believe a word I say. That is an insult to me and an insult to this House.

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak in favour of the motion now before this House.

[*Translation*]

The motion urges the government to do something very simple and quite reasonable, namely re-introduce in the House a bill aimed at extending for only a few weeks the 10-to-14-weeks' variable entrance requirements which now determine the number of insurable weeks of work the applicant must have to qualify for unemployment insurance benefits. This extension would enable Bill C-21 to get the normal consideration, which a bill of the magnitude deserves. It would enable the Senate to weigh the implications of this bill which will affect thousands of working and unemployed Canadians. The Senate would feel free to call in witnesses who have not been given the opportunity to air their views on this bill, witnesses such as provinces, municipalities, independent experts, research organizations like the Economic Council of Canada, witnesses who might shed more light on the impact of Bill C-21 which was rammed through the House at every stage. We want to avoid the possibility that normal consideration of this piece of legislation might be curtailed or cut off as a result of an altogether specious provision.

[*English*]

The so-called variable entrance requirement provision of the unemployment insurance program was introduced in 1977 with the adoption of Bill C-27. It was meant to expire after 36 months and be replaced by a fixed 14 weeks unless extended by resolutions of Parliament.

Each year since 1979 Parliament has passed such a resolution extending the life of the VER by one more year. This government introduced this same resolution which has become a standard piece of legislation during each of its first four years of power. The exception is 1989 when instead we got Bill C-21.

Bill C-21, by altering the structure of the variable entrance requirements and the unemployment reference levels used to determine eligibility for UI in each of the UI regions across the country, makes a dramatic change to the workings of the unemployment insurance program in Canada.

In addition, the 48 UI economic regions used to determine eligibility will be replaced in January by 62 new regions and the boundaries will be substantially modified. These new regions were introduced to this House only after Bill C-21 had passed third reading.

The changes in the application of the UI program will occur simply as a result of the introduction of these regions and will touch virtually every member of this House. Yet we as members have been provided with very little information on how the introduction of these new regions will affect the unemployed. We do not even know what the unemployment rates will be that will apply to these new regions. We certainly do not know which unemployed individuals will be denied benefits as a result of the application of these new boundaries.

• (1740)

We do not have an independent economic analysis of the impact of the changes in the UI benefit rules on unemployed workers and on the labour market in general. Are the jobs out there for the workers who will need extra weeks to qualify? How will the new rules affect local labour markets? Will industry have a harder or easier time obtaining workers? Will there be an increase in migration from one region of the country to another as a result of this bill? In which direction? Will the bill encourage or discourage seasonal job patterns? How? What will be the consequences of the new financing arrangements which has the government withdraw from financially contributing to the UI program, on the

properties of the program as an automatic fiscal stabilizer?

Another source of uncertainty has to do with the application of the UI benefits savings to the government package of training assistance for UI recipients. During the course of the bill's passage through the Commons, we were told by government members and the minister that new consultations were taking place with business and labour to determine how these funds would be allocated. We have not heard the results of these consultations.

How will these training funds be spent? Where will they be spent? When will the savings the government will realize by denying benefits to the unemployed show up in training expenditures and in whose pockets will they land?

The government has been vague on all these questions. These are all questions which require understanding by Canadians before approval is given to the kind of major changes to UI contemplated in Bill C-21.

If the government is so confident in its legislation, if the government really believes that its UI reform can stand the test of scrutiny, will it not permit the Senate to give this bill the sober second thought it deserves? Will it not vote in favour of this very reasonable motion and introduce the simple bill that will prolong the VER? We will co-operate. The NDP will co-operate.

We can pass this bill with no debate. We can demonstrate in this Chamber a rare display of Yuletide solidarity with the unemployed of this country.

Maybe the government is not so confident. Maybe it is not sure that this package is so solid. Maybe that is why it has rammed it through this House. Maybe that is why it used closure at every stage. Maybe that is why it will not let the Senate look at it.

Maybe the government, despite the parliamentary secretary's rhetoric, is really intimidated by Mr. MacEachen and his colleagues in the Senate. Maybe it is scared that if the Senate takes a close look at this legislation, it will expose the flaws in Bill C-21 and in the hollow arguments of the members opposite.

Maybe the other place and Canadians will see that for the few unemployed who will benefit by the elimination of the repeater provision, there are thousands who will be cut off completely by this legislation, that these thousands will get nothing from the government's training programs, that the Canadian economy will be that much more vulnerable to the vagaries of the next recession as a result of the passage of this bill.

Let us not play brinksmanship with the unemployed of this country. Let us permit the democratic process to run its course. I call upon the government to pass this motion and introduce forthwith the required bill which will prolong the VER for a few more weeks.

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): Madam Speaker, I have a question for my hon. colleague, though I know that time for debate is running out. My hon. colleague went on at some length and at the end of his speech, he indicated that the real reason that the government opposite seems not prepared to introduce a simple motion in the House to extend the VER until the legislation comes back is simply because this government does not want the legislation to be examined properly as it should be constitutionally in the other place.

The members opposite who will very shortly be coming in to vote on this motion I think are a bit cowardly in not allowing a full legislative process to take place. Would that be something that the hon. member would agree with?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I regret to interrupt the hon. member. Unfortunately we will not have the time to hear the answer of the hon. member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso.

[*Translation*]

It being 5.45 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the Business of Supply, pursuant to Standing Order 81(14).

Accordingly the question is on the motion of Mr. Allmand.

[*English*]

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaking (Mrs. Champagne): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Call in the members.

The House divided on the motion which was negatived on the following division:

(Division No. 134)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Arseneault
Bélair
Benjamin
Black
Blaikie
Boudria
Butland
Callbeck
Catterall
Comuzzi
Dingwall
Ferguson
Flis
Foster
Funk
Gagliano
Gauthier
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hopkins
Jordan
Karpoff
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Laporte
Lee
MacLellan
Maheu
Marleau
Mifflin
Mitchell
Nault
Nystrom
Pagtakhan
Phinney
Rideout
Robichaud
Simmons
Stewart
Tobin
Wappel
Wood
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—85

Althouse
Baker
Bellemare
Bevilacqua
Blackburn (Brant)
Blondin
Brewin
Caccia
Campbell (South West Nova)
Clancy
Crawford
Dionne
Fisher
Fontana
Fulton
Gaffney
Gardiner
Gray (Windsor West)
Guarnieri
Heap
Hunter
Kaplan
Keyes
Kristiansen
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacWilliam
Manley
McGuire
Milliken
Murphy
Nunziata
Ouellet
Parent
Proud
Riis
Robinson
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Taylor
Vanclief
Whittaker
Young (Gloucester)

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Beatty
Bernier
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blenkarn
Bouchard (Roberval)
Bourgault
Brightwell
Cadieux
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cole
Cook
Corbeil
Côté
Crosby (Halifax West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Domm
Edwards
Fee
Fretz
Gérin
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Guilbault
Halliday
Hawkes
Holtmann
Hughes
James
Johnson
Jourdenais
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Landry
Larrivée
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Littlechild
Lopez
MacKay
Marin
Mayer
McDermid
Merrithew
Moore
Oberle
Plamondon
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Van de Walle
Vézina
Vincent
Wenman
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)

Andre
Attewell
Belsher
Bertrand
Bjornson
Blais
Bosley
Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Boyer
Browes
Cardiff
Chadwick
Chartrand
Clifford
Collins
Cooper
Corbett
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Friesen
Gibeau
Greene
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hogue
Hudon
Jacques
Jelinek
Joncas
Kempling
Koury
Langlois
Layton
Lewis
Loiselle
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Malone
Martin (Lincoln)
McCreath
McDougall (St. Paul's)
Monteith
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
St-Julien
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Venne
Vien
Weiner
White
Worthy—135 *ediv

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I declare the motion lost.

It being 6.15 p.m., this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, December 6, 1989

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

AUDITOR GENERAL

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I am troubled by the proposal of the Auditor General to set up an anonymous tattle-tale hotline to encourage civil servants to tell tales about other civil servants to the Auditor General. I am particularly concerned that the Auditor General appears to be dismissing out of hand the view of Canada's privacy commissioner that the proposed hotline is dangerous and perhaps even illegal.

I believe that public servants have a right to know their accusers and I would urge the government not to approve funds which would sanctify, subsidize and institutionalize anonymous informants, certainly not before Parliament has had an opportunity for a thorough examination of the issue.

I do not accept on the face of it the suggestion that a tattle-tale hotline is somehow the same as a crime stoppers hotline. The Auditor General should understand that he is not dealing with organized crime syndicates, he is dealing with hard working Canadian public servants. We all want to save money in this country but not at the expense of Canadians' individual rights.

I do not think the Auditor General should feel free to ignore the advice of the privacy commissioner on civil liberties any more than the privacy commissioner would feel free to ignore accounting advice from the Auditor General.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, the tariff on U.S. corn places an extra undue burden on Atlantic livestock producers. Atlantic Canadian farmers already struggling to be competitive must now pay more for feed because of higher transportation costs than those in any other area of Canada. On top of this, they must carry the extra burden of the tariff on corn. Again, farmers of other areas do not have to absorb such a tariff.

I call on the Minister of State for Privatization and Regulatory Affairs to give this issue top priority and work to remove this tariff which hurts all Atlantic livestock producers in a very real way.

* * *

HAITI

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Employment and Immigration is rescheduling deportation of Haitians who fear persecution from the oppressive government of General Namphy in Haiti. They have reason to fear persecution.

On October 4, thugs threatened the staff of Radio Soleil, Radio Cacique and Radio Haiti. On October 6, Vilme Eleazar of the Catholic Church Justice and Peace Commission was stabbed to death after demonstrating with 46 other commission members against the repressive government. On October 12, a land owner, four soldiers and an army second lieutenant shot and killed a peasant in a land dispute. On November 1, one labourer and one political opposition leader were arrested and beaten by police.

Recently two Quebec missionaries have been assassinated. Recently, in the Plaisance communal section, all public gatherings have been forbidden, even religious ones. Renaud Bernarden in *Le Devoir* calls this state terrorism and points out that candidates for highest office used force to block elections and are demanding

that Duvalier supporters be allowed to run in violation of the constitution.

My question is why does the minister insist on sending back people to risk prison, torture and assassination in Haiti?

* * *

TOURISM

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, customs and excise officials have for years been conducting immigration pre-clearance on behalf of the Department of Employment and Immigration at the airport in Houlton, Maine, as a service to residents of the United States on their way to visit Canada. Many of the people who benefit from this service are American sportsmen who are coming to New Brunswick to hunt and fish in our forests and rivers. This industry accounts for approximately $9 million in revenue each year and provides jobs for some 7,000 guides.

The service was discontinued on October 31, 1989, based on the position of employment and immigration that there was no provision in legislation for this activity. However, the principle for permitting the pre-clearance of visitors to Canada on U.S. soil was established in 1974 in a treaty between Canada and the U.S.

I understand that External Affairs has explored the question of expanding this provision to include other locations. I urge the Minister of National Revenue to review this matter and work with his cabinet colleagues to reach a solution that will permit reinstatement of pre-clearance at Houlton, Maine.

* * *

TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, some time in January this government is expected to deliver another blow to Atlantic Canada. This will come in the form of an 11 per cent increase in ferry rates for trucks.

The reason for this and other rate increases is the steady reduction in federal subsidies to Crown owned Marine Atlantic. However, in a province like Prince Edward Island, higher transportation costs mean higher priced consumer goods and less competitive exports.

Now that VIA Rail has been forced by this government to reduce its service, we are wondering if Marine Atlantic will be forced to do so as well. I call on the Minister of Transport to refuse this 11 per cent increase, to restore a fair and working subsidy to Marine Atlantic.

The people of Atlantic Canada have suffered too much at the hands of this government and it has to stop now.

* * *

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

Mr. Lee Clark (Brandon—Souris): Mr. Speaker, despite what the television news was indicating during periods of the past summer, the drought in western Canada has not ended. In fact, the 1989 crop in my constituency of Brandon—Souris and in parts of eastern Saskatchewan was considerably worse than it was in 1988.

Due to the fact that drought and low prices have had an accumulative negative impact on farm incomes, many farmers are experiencing more serious financial circumstances than they ever have before. As the hon. Minister for Grains and Oilseeds has repeatedly indicated publicly that he would readily consider any provincial proposal for a jointly-funded drought relief program, I urge the provincial governments of Saskatchewan and Manitoba to make such an offer immediately. The financial need is real—even though it has not been televised—and governments must jointly respond.

* * *

[*Translation*]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

Mr. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, as we near the end of this session, there is some concern about the fate of the bill on unemployment insurance reform which is now before the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, any delay in passing Bill C-21 will deprive many unemployed workers of their unemployment insurance benefits.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to appeal to the Liberal majority in the Senate to stop its obstructionist tactics so that disadvantaged regions will not be penalized. Any delay in passing this bill will have serious consequences. Thousands of unemployed workers who have worked the requisite ten weeks will be unable to receive unemploy-

ment insurance benefits if the bill is not passed by the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, families and children will be in great difficulty because of the Senate's obstruction, and I would urge the Senate to show some maturity and common sense so that this bill can be expedited through Parliament.

* * *

• (1410)

[*English*]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of the House a very serious matter. The Armenian people living in Nagorno-Karabakh, which is an autonomous region under the control of the Azerbaijan, have been persecuted by the Azerbaijan government for some years now.

The situation was quieted for a short time when the region was placed under the administration and protection of Moscow. The Supreme Soviet on November 28 made the decision to pull its troops out of the region and as a result the killing of Armenians is starting again.

The Azerbaijani government has also put up a blockade which is seriously hampering efforts to rebuild the area after last year's earthquake.

In light of the Prime Minister's recent trip to the Soviet Union and the changes that are taking place in eastern Europe, I call on the Prime Minister to ask the Soviet Premier to give the protection and right to self-determination that the people of this region deserve.

* * *

NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY LEADERSHIP CONVENTION

Mr. Felix Holtmann (Portage—Interlake): Mr. Speaker, the following is a list of adjectives which Canadians have used to describe the recent political leadership convention held in Winnipeg: Unbelievable, strange, different, unacceptable, conniving, backstabbing, open, scarey, marvelous, preposterous, stupid, wonderful and insane.

Should another political party consider a leadership convention, it should refer to the Acme leadership candidates tips:

1. Never wear a concealed 007 listening device.

2. Invite media whose objective is to further the party's cause.

3. Be on guard and constantly protect your back from other candidates.

4. Take up a foreign language for intimate discussions.

5. Send your mother and brother on a long vacation at your own expense.

6. Beware of labour leaders.

Do you copy, Mr. Speaker? Do you copy, Mr. Speaker? If you copy, Mr. Speaker, I'll sit down.

* * *

EL SALVADOR

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, many of the Salvadorans arrested in the raid that saw Karen Ridd of Winnipeg arrested and later released remain in detention. Their lives are in great danger because under the Arena government's state of siege, the military have the power to charge people with assault on the high command, to immediately prosecute them and to sentence them to execution.

When is the Canadian government going to speak out clearly and strongly against the crimes of the Salvadoran regime? When is the Prime Minister going to send a strong message to Mr. Bush that American military aid to the reprehensible Arena government is unacceptable and must stop?

The silence of the Canadian government stems either from naiveté or cowardice. I believe it to be the latter. If the Prime Minister remains silent on American aid to the Salvadoran military, then the Canadian government must share responsibility for the military's actions. If those courageous Salvadoran humanitarian workers are executed, the Canadian government, by its acquiescence to the official American view, must share the blame for their deaths. The government must speak out today.

Tributes

CONAIR AVIATION

Mr. Ross Belsher (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of members the growing success story that is Conair Aviation.

Late in November I had the pleasure of accompanying the Western Economic Diversification minister in Vancouver, where he announced a repayable loan to Conair in the amount of $539,451.

Conair of Abbotsford is a major forest fire-fighting company with some 400 employees. Conair is looking forward to growth in sales and in jobs as a result of the ingenuity and expertise in the business of aircraft rebuilds.

Conair has gained notoriety for having successfully completed over 50 rebuilds of Grumman tracker aircraft. Called Firecats, these fire bombers are gaining popularity in Australia and Europe. France presently has 16 and has plans for more.

Conair anticipates exports of 20 to 30 re-engined, turboprop Firecats at a price of some $3.5 million each. Significantly, each plane sustains 20 jobs a year. Four Firecats a year mean 80 jobs. With the help of the repayable contribution, Conair and its employees will be soaring to new heights.

* * *

TOY SAFETY

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, every year at this time, it is a "parents beware" crisis around Christmas shopping. The Canadian Toy Testing Council releases in early November its annual toy guide for a fee in which it rates toys according to design, function, durability and play value, but it is mute on the question of safety.

This non-profit consumer advocacy group evaluates 1,500 items each year for its annual toy report. Too many of these products are unsafe for our children and therefore should be removed from the shelves.

It is unacceptable that no consumer toy testing agency in Canada has a mandate to test for safety. This is dangerous and irresponsible. The government should be issuing regular bulletins to make parents aware of unsafe toys. More inspectors are needed. Tougher enforcement should be mandatory along with the better labelling of toys.

LEADER OF THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the election of the new Leader of the New Democratic Party is a tremendous personal achievement and I convey both sincere congratulations and best wishes to her, I am sure, from every corner of this House.

As the first woman to lead a national party, she will bring to Parliament qualities of heart and mind that will benefit this institution. Her personal accomplishment is truly historic and will not be forgotten. It is historic and I congratulate her personally for such a major achievement.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, while there are real and sharp party differences, there is a community of interests and a dedication to the public welfare that tends to make this institution work.

The new leader has already demonstrated her skill and resolve in dealing in this Chamber with the great issues of public policy confronting Canada and I look forward to working with her in the years ahead.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my party and of course on behalf of all government members, I wish the Leader of the NDP every success in the performance of her new duties and offer her our assurances of sincere co-operation. As a colleague, I would like to say: Welcome!

[*English*]

The new Leader of the NDP will soon learn the challenges and the difficulties of national leadership, but obviously, one of her sources of joy will be a caucus of solidly united brothers and sisters.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

• (1420)

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, this morning, Wednesday, was caucus and I could hear their caucus chorus of *Solidarity Forever* as far away as Meech Lake.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: I am sure that all members of all parties were impressed with the very fine photo on page one of *The Globe and Mail* this morning showing the new leader with Shirley Carr, both wearing big smiles. There is no

indication yet of what they were saying, and I can hardly wait until tonight to find out.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mulroney: The member should not be offended because much of what Shirley Carr says about me is unprintable too.

Whatever our differences may be in the future, I hope that the new leader keeps in mind that the hon. member for Yukon, whoever he or she is over the years, always has a special place in my heart.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mulroney: Public life brings with it periods of difficulty and moments of great joy. I think that for Canada, for all Canadians, regardless of political persuasion, the hon member's election to the leadership of a great national party will be viewed as a joyful occasion, and I am pleased today, as Prime Minister of Canada, to underline the strength of character and the very impressive personal qualities of the member that made it possible.

[*Translation*]

On behalf of all Canadians, I wish to extend to the hon. member my sincere congratulations and best wishes for the future.

[*English*]

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I rise to add my voice to the thousands of Canadians who are offering congratulations to the new Leader of the New Democratic Party, the hon. member for Yukon.

[*Translation*]

The victory she won so gallantly, Mr. Speaker, is an historic one. Our colleague can be proud of the fact that she is following in the footsteps of such eminent figures as J.S. Woodsworth, M.J. Coldwell, Tommy Douglas, David Lewis, and his eminent predecessor, the hon. member for Oshawa. On that important day, Mr. Speaker, we all noticed the almost continuous presence at her side of Stanley Knowles, Woodsworth's last colleague who did a symbolic laying-on of hands.

I can inform the new leader that her election changes the dynamics of her own party, of our country and, I hope, of the House of Commons. In fact, I think a number of candidates for the leadership of my own party will be following her performance very closely, since her victory may affect their campaigns!

[*English*]

On a personal level, I want to warn her, Mr. Speaker, that in the coming weeks and months she will be receiving a good deal of advice, some of it solicited, most of it not; advice as to how she should lead the NDP and where she should lead the party. My advice to her is to listen to all of it, but do not compromise your own integrity, do not comprise your own reputation. No two things can disappear faster than reputation and integrity, and with more devastating consequences.

I also want to offer my congratulations to the other NDP candidates in the race. The member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca made a convention speech which was a triumph. He did it his way, no holds barred, but he did it with wit and humour, panache and passion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): I know, Your Honour, it is tough to lose a close race like that, but he has accepted the results with grace and equanimity.

The member for Essex—Windsor also delivered a very, very powerful speech. I found it full of direction and commitment.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): I know it is not easy running for the leadership of a political party. I congratulate every one of the candidates, those who are members of this House and the one who was not—perhaps we might see him here some day—for running excellent races.

I want to say to them that despite the mediocre press they received through a good deal of the campaign, they need to have something to offer since all of the so-called NDP stars sat out the leadership race and became media commentators and pundits, except toward the end of the final day when some of them became platform dancers. Listening to some of the commentary, it was my view that the candidates themselves performed a lot better than the commentators.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has mentioned the challenges of leadership. Those challenges, I warn her, are unpredictable. We in this party all remember that in response to the initiatives of her predecessor, Erik Nielsen, then the member for Yukon, we had to sweep our caucus room for bugs; not that anything was confidential anyway.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): I want to suggest to the new leader that she is going to have to go a step further. She is going to have to sweep them as they walk into the room.

I flew back with my colleagues from Winnipeg this morning, and we thought that we would buy her one of those airport metal detectors to put at the caucus door.

In any event, the convention certainly proved that the NDP is a modern party. It has entered the electronic age in a big way.

I do not know whether the hon. member for Yukon is going to accept her predecessor's suggestion which he made to me on several occasions, including on national television, that Canada would function better under a two-party system. Now, I want to tell her, and this is the time to say it to her, Mr. Speaker, that now is the time to talk about it. We are open to that idea. Whenever the NDP is ready to close up shop and join us, we can begin talks, as long as you leave your microphones at the door.

The new leader has said that she enjoys a challenge. Well, I cannot tell the hon. member for Yukon that we in this party wish her electoral success, quite the opposite. We do wish her success in meeting the tough challenge of following, in the initial days, in the footsteps of her very excellent predecessor, the hon. member for Oshawa.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): I hope, as a member of the House of Commons, she continues his complete commitment to the House of Commons, to treating this place seriously. If she does, our party and our caucus looks forward to working with her and her party in a co-operative fashion.

Again, my congratulations, Mr. Speaker, to her on her victory, on her new and important role in this country as Leader of her party, as a very, very important Canadian citizen.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

• (1430)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Thank you, thank you very much for your words of congratulations!

[*English*]

I certainly look forward to working with the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Official Opposition. I would like to say to the Prime Minister that I am glad that members from the Yukon have a special place in his heart. I assure him that he will have a special line in my book.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. McLaughlin: There are a lot of people in this House who can give me very good lessons on being a leader, but the most important lesson I have learned since I have been here is of the dignity with which all leaders in this House have acted. It is correct, I am sure, as we have learned from our own experiences, that at times there are some differences of opinion in caucuses which we as leaders have to work toward mending.

I do not think anyone from now on will say the NDP is not fun. People have asked about my style. Part of our strategy is that we are going to destroy some of those myths. I think we have begun to destroy that one. As the hon. Leader of the Opposition said, we have moved into the age of technology. I got my metal detector on Sunday morning.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Ms. McLaughlin: Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour to be here and it is a great honour to serve with all of you. As the Prime Minister said, we certainly have our partisan differences. They are not going to go away. Neither, I suspect, hon. Leader of the Opposition, are any of the parties going to go away.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. McLaughlin: We are all here to serve the Canadian people. I, too, want to pay special tribute to the other candidates in this leadership campaign who acted

with honour and who put themselves on the line. We all know what that means in politics. I want to give a special tribute to them. There are other leadership candidates in this room too, and they know what it has been like. I would really like to thank them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. McLaughlin: Of course, I have had another good teacher in this House and that is the hon. gentleman—I hesitate to say—to my left. I am even going to break the rules, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Ed Broadbent has brought great honour to this House throughout his career, and not only to the New Democratic Party but to us all. He is a politician who is respected, who speaks his mind, who stands up for what he believes. And, in the end, I think that is what we all do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Ms. McLaughlin: And finally, I want to thank the Prime Minister!

[*English*]

I look forward to working with you. I am sure that this gracious moment will continue through the next—three quarters of an hour!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

VIA RAIL

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Today dozens of mayors from all across Canada are in Ottawa as are many senior citizens and other outraged Canadians from Atlantic Canada and British Columbia. They are all here at their own expense. They are here to renew their call for a moratorium on the cuts to VIA Rail, cuts scheduled to be implemented on January 15.

On November 8 the all-party Standing Committee on Transport issued a report also calling for a moratorium on cuts to VIA Rail. Both inside and outside Parliament Canadians of every political stripe are asking this government to halt the slaughter of VIA Rail.

How can the Prime Minister expect to be taken seriously when he says that he believes in parliamentary committees, when he says that he believes in consulting the provinces and municipalities and when he says he believes in listening to senior citizens and the disabled while at the same time he refuses to listen to Canadians who say they want a quality passenger train service in Canada? Why is it that once again the Prime Minister believes that the Cabinet and he are right and all other Canadians are wrong?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I have repeatedly answered questions from the Leader of the Opposition and others about a moratorium.

Today, December 6, 1989, the situation has not changed substantially from what it was in October, as far as resources are concerned. In other words, our reasons for setting new reference levels were based on the ability of people to pay for services that are being used very little. And Mr. Speaker, the first people to benefit from a sensible and efficient approach by government to management are the general public.

I repeat what I said before. I have no intention of requesting or putting a moratorium on the decision concerning VIA Rail.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): We have heard that answer from the Minister of Transport before. The following question is directed to the Prime Minister, who has repeatedly told the House about his commitment to parliamentary reform. He has also said that he was personally very proud of the reform of parliamentary committees.

If he wants to be taken seriously, the Prime Minister should bear in mind that a standing committee of the House, with a majority of Conservative members, has asked the government to withdraw the budgetary cutbacks that are to take effect on January 15 at VIA Rail.

Why has the Prime Minister of Canada refused to take the advice of the standing committee? Will he not wait until an interim report by the Royal Commission of Inquiry on Transportation in Canada is published, to find out what the future holds for passenger rail transporta-

tion, before proceeding with the budgetary cutbacks planned by the Minister of Transport?

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): The Leader of the Opposition mentioned the benefits of parliamentary reform, and rightly so, but it is not a one-way proposition. The freedom and independence granted parliamentary committees also means that when committes make recommendations, the minister has the right to either consider or not consider them, depending on the government's policies.

Mr. Speaker, we have repeatedly explained our position on paying for services that are not being used by the public.

Mr. Speaker, in the end, whatever the outcome may be, and contrary to what the party opposite did for 20 years, we have an obligation to consider the costs facing us, and when the government decides that those costs go beyond the financial resources available to us, we must take the kind of courageous decisions that this government has made, and that is why, while it has every respect for the advice of the parliamentary committee, the government has decided to stress the commitment to good management it made to Canadians.

[*English*]

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, I want to put the question again to the Prime Minister. On his many international trips surely he has seen what other countries are doing, in Europe and elsewhere, to improve high quality, high speed train service for people. This Prime Minister promised, on coming into office in 1984, to build a co-operative federalism. Not a single provincial government, not a single mayor of Canada's cities or towns approves of the Prime Minister's plans to destroy VIA Rail. From coast to coast Canadians are condemning the plan.

Will the Prime Minister agree, as I have on other occasions, to meet personally with the mayors from across Canada who are in Ottawa today? Does the Prime Minister not agree that these mayors represent an important and critical part of our democratic process and represent directly the communities that elected them and, on behalf of Canadians, have a right to put their case directly to the leader of our government, the Prime Minister of Canada?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I certainly acknowledge the very important role played by the mayors in our national life. Indeed, I have had the occasion to meet with many of them on a regular and ongoing basis regarding the matters that they choose to raise.

My right hon. friend asks about comments made by other world leaders when we travel. The principal comment made by world leaders when we travel is the comment that came out of the OECD the day before yesterday: "Continue the work, Government of Canada, of getting your deficit under control because it is key to ongoing economic prosperity for Canada".

• (1440)

There is the key, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Pass that comment on directly to the mayors.

Mr. Mulroney: I pass it on to the mayors or to anybody else.

The Leader of the Opposition has spent his career since he came into this House as the captive of any interest group.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mulroney: He constantly puts forward every spending program. Never once has he given the slightest concern, in terms of the control of the deficit, to the massive deficit that began in Canada when the Leader of the Opposition was Minister of Finance.

Some Hon. Members: You doubled it.

Mr. Mulroney: That is what we are dealing with. We are trying to clean up the mess left by the former Minister of Finance, the present Leader of the Liberal Party.

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. The Minister knows that it costs $45 million to maintain VIA's nine remote routes. Forty-five million dollars would reinstate the chopped routes in Atlantic Canada. The Standing Committee on Transport, as well as the Liberal Party, has recommended that this money be approved separately by Parliament. This would allow for an additional $45 million in VIA's budget and allow for the reinstatement of the Atlantic Canada routes.

Will the Minister make this commitment to Atlantic Canadians?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I wish I could count like the Liberal Party does but I just cannot manage that.

Whichever way you look at it, Mr. Speaker, whether the $45 million are drawn from the VIA Rail budget or the government's supplementary estimates, they still add up to $45 million. We simply do not have those millions. We built a national network. We have kept an accessible network for which we can afford to pay.

That is not what my colleague is asking for. My colleague is urging us to do what the Liberal Party has always done: throw in money, more money, still more money!

You forgot to pay the bills and passed them on to us. That is what we are now trying to do.

[*English*]

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, it is not just the Liberal Party, the Transport Committee is also requesting that this be done.

In October I asked the minister if the VIA Rail cuts would adversely affect CN and CP and he responded: "Absolutely not". I have been advised by CN that the 25 per cent reduction in VIA service has resulted in one in four dispatchers in Moncton being declared surplus and they will lose their jobs effective March 1, 1990.

Given that we now know that the minister's previous assurance was false, has CN misled the minister or, if not, can he explain the discrepancy?

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, decisions which are made are made for VIA Rail when we are dealing with VIA Rail and CN when we are dealing with CN. The people of CN can say what they want.

I tell my friend here today that we made a decision in light of the resources we had and in light of the fact that Canadians want us to control the spending of the government. This is exactly what we are doing.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister has just returned from meetings in Brussels with other NATO leaders. The world has been watching the profound changes in eastern Europe, changes in which I think all of us applaud and take great joy and pleasure.

Can the Prime Minister tell us now, however, what he has proposed at those meetings as specific actions that Canada will take to take strong leadership in order to speed up this process of ending the cold war?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend rightly points to the centre of the most dramatic and most convulsive developments in the world today.

When the Secretary of State for External Affairs and I visited with President Bush, and when we were at NATO, we put forward a series of specific recommendations that we thought would be helpful in constituting the beginnings, at least, of a bridge between the Soviet Union and the western alliance and the industrialized nations.

They range from consideration for the idea put forward by President Mitterrand about an eastern European development bank, to membership in the IMF, to the requirement for the outgoing chairman of the industrialized summit to meet with President Gorbachev on a yearly basis, as well as a series of other initiatives.

We think that if all of these are taken together with other ideas that have been put forward by other leaders, there are the beginnings of the building of a solid bridge which will advance the causes that are being sought by my hon. friend and, I think, by all members of the House.

Ms. McLaughlin: Mr. Speaker, I think we all agree that there needs to be real action on the economic issues that confront eastern Europe and, indeed, the developing world. I want to pose again a specific question because while Canada's role indeed should be to build bridges, surely we can also take leadership.

LOW LEVEL FLIGHTS

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Prime Minister specifically, in an attempt to really demonstrate not just a commitment but action and that we believe the cold war is over, will the Prime Minister now agree to stop low-level flights in this country, to stop cruise missile testing over the north?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think, as I indicated to the House the other day, and as many members from all parties have indicated, we are entering a new and important era of relationships between east and west. We should be sensitive to all opportunities for change. We should not reject ideas out of hand simply because they have not been tried before or they have been tried and found wanting.

I agree with the openness of the approach suggested by my hon. friend. I draw to her attention the comments made to me and the Secretary of State for External Affairs by President Gorbachev. He said that the most imprudent thing that could be done at this time, given the enormity of the changes in eastern Europe, would be changes in the structures of the alliances because at this particular time any such changes could be destabilizing with regard to the efforts that he and others are trying to bring about.

So while I take good note of the comments made by my hon. friend, I point out that the progress we have made so far, and it has been remarkable in the last number of years, has been brought about in large measure because of the leadership of President Gorbachev on the one side, but the solidarity of NATO on the other. We propose to keep that.

Ms. McLaughlin: Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the Prime Minister is aware of the remarks by his former ambassador on disarmament who said that, in fact, we are following the United States on disarmament issues. I am suggesting we take the lead. I may be new at it but it seems to me that leadership means leading from the front and not the back.

[*Translation*]

This is a historic moment. Canada must assume her rightful role as world peace leader. Now is the time to come up with constructive and positive suggestions. Why would the government not take this opportunity to display leadership by proposing measures over which we have direct control?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, to answer the question properly, I must quote from an interview given by the Foreign Minister, Mr. Shervardnadze, on November 23, where he said, according to the English translation:

[*English*]

"As the Soviet leader stressed,—"

[*Translation*]

That was the interview granted by Mr. Shevardnadze.

[*English*]

"—the Canadian Prime Minister's visit to the U.S.S.R. ranks among the events which help to change the world situation with a focus on a better future—The political declaration signed by the leaders of Canada and the U.S.S.R. is an intellectual and political breakthrough into the new interdependent world", and so on.

[*Translation*]

We have done two things as a government. First, we made a series of specific recommendations–seven, if I am not mistaken–for building bridges of friendship and realistic relations between the two blocs and, as Mr. Shevardnaze said so well, we have changed our attitude significantly. We will maintain this forward-looking position along with the positions which the hon. member will announce in this House.

* * *

• (1450)

TREASURY BOARD

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board who intends to put hospital service workers and ships crews back to work. These workers have been providing emergency services during the strike in spite of the government's tyranical action over the past two years to force them to accept pitiful salaries. How can the government justify this back-to-work legislation?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): As I was saying yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the informal negotiations which started several months ago are continuing. I said yesterday that if we could reach a negotiated settlement, I would favour this solution over a legislated settlement. I am still prepared, day or night, to meet the union leaders to try and reach a settlement

of this type. But for the time being, we have reached a dead end and major issues are still on the table. We are faced in one case with demands for yearly increases of 17.4 per cent, and in the other, 14.3 per cent.

In this conflict the interest of medium term public safety and public health must be resolved. That is why we will introduce later today a bill to set up a process for reaching a settlement. Mr. Speaker, I can say that we will not legislate an agreement per so, but rather a means to achieve a settlement.

[*English*]

Mrs. Catterall: Mr. Speaker, the workers have been providing emergency services. The Minister of Transport told the House yesterday that there is no problem with safety on the St. Lawrence River. Where was the minister's concern for safety last month when 1,700 lobster fishermen put out to sea? Is not the real reason for the sledgehammer of back-to-work legislation protecting the profits of the friends of government in the shipping business?

Mr. de Cotret: Mr. Speaker, the real reason for the legislation is to break an impasse that does not seem to be able to be resolved through negotiations. I have said it before and I will say it again. I am willing to sit down at the table. Informal negotiations have been continuing throughout. The situation is at a point now where the two parties are so far apart, with demands of 17 and 14 per cent annual wage increases compared to 4.1 per cent for the rest of the 155,000 public servants, that we feel we have to move.

I would like to quote from a letter I received from Iris Craig, President of PIPS, who says: "The current and anticipated labour disruptions will undoubtedly have an egregious impact on the health and safety of government clients. Furthermore, any extended inoperation of federal government ships will jeopardize research activities in which significant time, energy and money has been invested. It will also jeopardize the Maritime economy of our country."

She is saying: "do something", and that is exactly what we are doing.

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker, my question also is directed to the President of the Treasury Board and it is twofold. It was partly covered in his last answer.

If it is necessary to introduce legislation, is he still prepared to negotiate, even with the legislation introduced? And in view of his answer yesterday about pay equity when he said that if there was a settlement there would be pay equity, which has been a longstanding problem in these trades, how does he intend to implement pay equity where the contracts are staggered and overlapping?

Mr. de Cotret: Mr. Speaker, first, even with the legislation introduced, I would be willing to negotiate at any time. I will repeat that commitment. I am available and I will be willing to negotiate.

In terms of the other part of my hon. colleague's question with regard to pay equity between the east coast workers and the west coast workers, the offer on the table at the moment is that as of the date of signing of the new bargaining agreement the east coast workers would get exactly the same compensation as the west coast workers so they would have parity.

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, my question is also directed to the President of the Treasury Board. Yesterday he informed this House that wage parity was offered to the unions. What he did not say was that he would only agree to it if the unions dropped all the other issues.

Will he today, rather than introduce this legislation—legislation which indeed we will not support—continue to support this wage parity and at the same time return to the negotiating table and negotiate separately the outstanding issues that are there?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I would like to correct the premise of the question. I indicated yesterday and I indicated again today that wage parity was very much on the table and up-front on the day of signing. I would just like to assure my hon. colleague that there was never any question about this offer being conditional on dropping all of the demands.

We know very well that there are other issues that have to be resolved and this particular issue was agreed upon without a further condition that all other demands be dropped.

Mr. Proud: Mr. Speaker, I get a different story when talking to other people. We are now seeing the true value of the work being performed by these people. For instance, for every day that these ships' crews remain on strike it is costing the Great Lakes' economy approximately $2 million. Six million dollars will end this strike, that is three days of striking.

Again, rather than bringing in this legislation will the minister return to the table with the unions and settle this strike today, which can be done?

Mr. de Cotret: Mr. Speaker, I have had informal conversations overnight, in the evening and again this morning, and as recently as roughly an hour before Question Period. I am still negotiating. I am there, I have said it repeatedly, and I will stay there. I am willing to discuss all and every remaining issue to try to get to a negotiated settlement.

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AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology. Almost 18,000 General Motors workers are now being laid off in addition to other plant shutdowns throughout Ontario, Quebec and other parts of Canada.

What action is this government taking to prevent more major job cuts in this industry as happened in the early 1980s? Does the government understand how urgent this crisis is becoming? Will the government act to do something serious?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, automobile sales, particularly by the big three North American manufacturers, are down considerably, some 13.8 per cent in November of this year compared to last year. As a result there is less production from the plants.

One of the things I think we can be particularly happy about in Canada is that as the auto industry has had to reduce its capacity, in reflecting this fact Canada has done very well. For example, Chrysler has laid off 4,000 in the U.S. and has not yet laid off people in Canada, although it probably will.

• (1500)

Since 1987 nine plants have closed in the United States. So far we have avoided that happening in Canada. We cannot avoid that forever, but so far we have shown that the Canadian auto industry is very competitive compared to the American auto industry. As this cyclical adjustment goes through the economy, we are fortunate in Canada that we have not borne the same brunt the Americans have.

Mr. Langdon: Mr. Speaker, in fact much of the reason for this cyclical downturn is the tremendously high interest rates in this country. Surely the government should be moving on this.

In 1987 the international trade committee of this House unanimously called for maximum political and diplomatic pressure on offshore producers so as to meet the same Canadian content levels that the U.S. owned companies have to meet.

Could the Secretary of State for External Affairs tell this House if the government has followed the recommendation to put this full diplomatic pressure on offshore producers, or has the government simply ignored the recommendation?

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, just over the weekend in looking at Canada's economic performance the OECD commented with high praise for what Canada is doing in this regard. As I pointed out, we have had in the last five years a growth rate second only to Japan, and just marginally so. We have incomes that are much higher than they were five years ago. The rate of poverty is down.

Yes, at the moment there is a drop off in car sales, and there are certain indications of a slowdown in the economy. But none of the major North American manufacturers are blaming this on foreign imports or on unfair competition.

The hon. member knows full well the posture of this government in respect to international trade. We are active in the MTN in terms of lowering trade barriers. We will continue to be so in our belief that it is good for the economy of Canada and the world and that Canadians can compete.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Arnold Malone (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. He will be aware that the Government of Alberta has produced a paper that relates to the GST that is both mischievous and inaccurate.

I would like to ask the Minister of Finance if there is any evidence that he can find to indicate that the proposed GST would take more tax from the province of Alberta than the present manufacturers' sales tax? What does his research indicate with respect to the allegation that in fact the GST would be a tax grab of some $6 billion and is not revenue neutral?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I have looked at that particular document. It is full of overblown rhetoric. I think it is something that people should review with a great deal of skepticism because of the nature of the particular report.

We do have figures which indicate that the amount of GST net of all the credits will be less than the amount of sales tax paid by people who are living in that province.

In addition, I can tell the hon. member that the low income credit is a very generous element of this over-all package. For the province of Alberta the credit will generate about $308 million and will be received by just short of 800,000 residents of the province of Alberta.

It is a balanced package. It is a package that is going to be favourable to the economy of Alberta. It is a fair package and will definitely be favourable to those people in the low and modest income brackets.

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, I would like to test the minister on some of his own overblown rhetoric.

Yesterday, in answering a question in this House, he tried to tell us that the dividend tax credit was going to reimburse seniors for the clawback of old age pensions. The minister knows, or he should know if he understands his own tax system, that this is utter nonsense.

The minister knows that the clawback is going to apply to a senior who receives only $40,000 in Canadian dividends, in spite of what he says the minimum threshold is. He also knows that that threshold is not indexed for inflation.

Will the minister admit that he was wrong in his answer yesterday? Will he admit that he is wrong in proposing this policy?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I have commented on a number of occasions as to the rationale of this policy. It always surprises me that we have members of the Liberal Party spending more time trying to defend the interests of 4 per cent of senior citizens rather than concerning themselves with the problems of many other people in the country who merit their attention far more than this.

Mr. Volpe: Are they not Canadians?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Let me also make the point that the design of the tax back on old age security and family allowances is based on putting different elements of income on the same pre-tax basis, that is, interest income, dividend income, pension income—all forms of income on a pre-tax basis—and then having done that apply the tax back based on that amount of money.

Mr. Manley: Mr. Speaker, the minister demonstrates that he does not understand the dividend gross up.

He also said yesterday, and he effectively reiterated it today, that we cannot afford to continue to subsidize seniors in upper income brackets. That is essentially what he has just said again.

This is the same minister who brought in a capital gains exemption, who is proposing massive increases in RRSP limits, who has lowered the top marginal tax bracket. What are all those things except subsidies for upper income people?

He uses this as the basis for ending universality. He is not even trying to protect seniors against inflation.

How does the minister justify to the seniors of Canada this two-faced, discriminatory policy?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, there are a large number of allegations in the preamble to that question. Let me just pick out one.

He is talking about the increase in the RRSP limits. The legislation that we are proposing to bring in is going

to put people who save only through registered retirement plans and people who save only through registered retirement savings plans on the same basis. It is a very equitable piece of legislation. I am sure that the hon. member, when he sees it, will agree with it.

The other part of the legislation which the hon. member is ignoring when he makes that comment is that this legislation is going to shut down a large number of loopholes that have crept in over the years to allow a degree of retirement savings over and above the limitations that were intended to be. The net result of this is that the closing of the loopholes will pay for the equitable elements that will put all people who are saving for retirement on the same basis.

It is good legislation. It is equitable legislation. It is legislation which closes down loopholes.

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COMPETITION ACT

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Acting Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. It is about the Imperial–Texaco deal.

He will know that the former director of the competition bureau took the rare step of referring this deal to the tribunal. The tribunal chairperson in her decision criticized the former director for being "highly presumptuous if not arrogant" in his handling of the Texaco deal.

Does the minister share the assessment of the chairperson of that tribunal? How do we as Canadians know that the same mishandling of those deals has not occurred in all the other cases which have not been referred to the tribunal?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Cal Goldman who took over as head of the competition bureau after the passage of the new Competition Act, after many abortive attempts by the previous government, did an exemplary job of handling that. I find it regrettable that the hon. member would stand up and slander his reputation in that manner.

In terms of the Imperial–Texaco decision, the head of the tribunal, Justice Reid, made certain recommendations. The current head of the competition bureau, Mr. Wetston, said he was looking at them and making accommodations. I understand they will be appearing, I think perhaps even tomorrow, with the restructured deal. I think we ought to let that process which is an excellent process that works well and has been working well continue to its conclusion.

• (1510)

Mr. Simmons: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister, although I must say the first part of his answer was sufficiently kinky that it probably qualifies for FBDB funding.

I am quoting to him not my words but the words of the chairperson of the tribunal. If anybody is slanderous in his calumny terms it is her, not me.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Simmons: Of course the truth is neither of us is being slanderous, only the minister.

The track record of this competition bureau in protecting Canadians, I think the minister will agree, has been somewhat less than brilliant. In short, it has been an unmitigated disaster. The former director whom he defends referred only six cases to the tribunal. Of course the whole process, as we can see, is completely flawed and is a farce.

I ask the minister: Does he not agree that the time has now come to take a new look at that act in the interest of protecting Canadians and ensuring that all such deals are automatically referred to the tribunal?

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member needs a new joke writer.

I find that a peculiar measure. He said that because only six cases have been referred to the tribunal this is axiomatic proof that the act is a failure and the public is not being protected. I do not understand that logic.

Mr. Simmons: What about air fares?

Mr. Andre: I think if the hon. member keeps his mouth shut and his ears open for a minute, he will appreciate how silly that argument is.

All the experts I have been reading from the business community, from the independent economic think–tanks and so on have acknowledged that the competition situation in Canada, the competition bureau under the new Competition Act, is a fantastic improvement over anything that preceded it, especially any of the abortive

attempts of the previous government to update it. In fact, it gets rave notices from everybody except that hon. member apparently.

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VIA RAIL

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Right Hon. Prime Minister. He will know that the report of the Standing Committee on Transport raised serious questions and in fact repudiated almost nearly every so-called fact used by the Minister of Transport to justify the government's cuts to VIA Rail.

Given this undermining of the minister's credibility by the committee, will the Prime Minister impose a moratorium on the VIA Rail cuts until the royal commission which he has appointed has had an opportunity to review rail passenger services and to report to this House? Will he do that?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend will understand that I cannot and would not accept the comments in the preface to his remarks either about the information contained in the report or the minister.

In fact, I think on all sides of the House it is widely recognized that among a group of very competent ministers the Minister of Transport has a very special place.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: It is easy to give things away and to maintain a series of subsidies. It is difficult to cut back and to provide leadership. You get few compliments and very little gratitude. We are doing this not because it is popular but because it is right, because it is right for Canada.

The OECD has pointed out that the efforts of the Government of Canada are on the right track and will be rewarded by ongoing prosperity. That is what we want for all the people of Canada.

Mr. Angus: My supplementary, Mr. Speaker, is again for the Right Hon. Prime Minister. He will know that this was not an opposition report. This was an all-party committee report, adopted by the committee, voted on by Conservatives, Liberals and New Democrats who called for a moratorium.

In that report they questioned whether in fact the environment would be harmed. They questioned whether or not there would be any savings. They questioned whether or not the per passenger subsidy would in fact drop.

Given these concerns, these question marks against the government's decision, will he now take his leadership role like he did when the government attempted to deindex seniors' pensions and announce a moratorium? We are not saying cancel the cuts but are asking for a moratorium until the royal commission has a chance to report, having properly reviewed the whole situation.

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, the committee chaired by the distinguished member for Annapolis Valley—Hants provided both an excellent report and some very interesting advice. The government considered the advice of the report very carefully.

But it is the government's responsibility, having considered the advice, to take decisions and to provide leadership. We have taken those decisions which we firmly believe to be in the national interest, acknowledging as we do that any cut-backs in subsidies impact negatively upon certain groups and cause pain and disappointment. We recognize that.

I hope my hon. friend in turn will recognize that our principal obligation is to restore a degree of sanity to the public finances of Canada. We are in the process of succeeding, having taken the deficit from almost $39 billion down to below $30 billion, and we are well on our way to doing better.

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FISHERY

Mrs. Coline Campbell (South West Nova): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

The federal fish quota report of November 22, 1989 indicates that in excess of 26 million pounds of cod, haddock and pollock will be left unharvested by offshore fishermen in the Scotia Fundy area.

Will the minister finally make a concession to the inshore fishermen and transfer to them the unused excess quota that the offshore fishermen will not be using this year? Will he transfer it to inshore fishermen who have had such a dismal fishery in the last six months?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I have not seen the specific report that the hon. member mentions. But I have made it clear to the offshore companies that there there will be no fish left in the water that are part of the enterprise allocations of the offshore companies, or they will be very hard pressed in the coming year of tight quotas to ask for those quotas to be reinstated.

At the same time I should point out that the good news report I did see today was to the effect that in the Scotia Fundy region fish landings were up this year to $336 million in value over last year for the first three quarters.

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): Mr. Speaker, I think the minister is mixing lobster and scallops in terms of the amounts of fish. We have always had good lobster and scallop seasons until this year when the price went down.

I want to say to the minister that the boats in Gloucester, Boston and Chatham are having record seasons this fall—for example, 70,000 pounds of cod per trip from Georges—while the unharvested quota that the offshore fishermen cannot use in those waters is not being picked up by Canadians. When is the minister's groundfish plan going to help Canadian inshore fishermen instead of helping the Americans?

Mr. Siddon: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows full well that the Americans do not fish in Canadian waters north of the Georges Bank line.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Siddon: We take effective enforcement measures to ensure that is the case.

The hon. member knows full well that in the Scotia Fundy region in the first three quarters of this year over-all landings increased in the amount of $336 million compared with the previous year. That ought to be very good news to her constituents.

Mr. Speaker: A single question from the hon. member for Essex—Kent.

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CANADA-U.S. FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. Jerry Pickard (Essex—Kent): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the presidents of Heinz, Hunt—Wesson and Campbells confirmed that the free trade deal jeopardizes our $15 billion agri-food business. They have stated that tens of thousands of jobs and millions of dollars of equipment are on the chopping block.

Will the minister stop this threat and kill the free trade deal before it destroys agriculture in this country?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows very well that the real problem facing the Canadian food processing sector is high input costs for basic produce and for packaging. It is not free trade.

It would be foolish for Canada to put our economy and our future at risk by closing down the free trade agreement.

• (1520)

Mr. Speaker: There will be a single question from the hon. member for Churchill and a single question from the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve.

* * *

FISHERY

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Fisheries. According to a report released by his department, groundfish landings in Atlantic Canada have decreased by 9.3 per cent this year. In addition to that there is talk of closure of plants by National Sea Products.

Will the minister, after having a special cabinet committee spend six months on this crisis, finally announce when he is going to do something about this and what direction the government is going to take? After six months with no action, it is time.

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, but as was improperly reported in *The Globe and Mail* this morning, over-all fish landings in the Scotia Fundy region alone were up by $336 million, while the groundfish landings were down on average 9 per cent because of the decline in quotas that was necessary this year as a result of the groundfish management plan for 1989.

The groundfish management plan for 1990 will be released at the end of December, after the concluding consultations that I will hold with Atlantic provincial fisheries ministers next Thursday. Other appropriate measures about which he inquires will also be announced in the not too distant future.

[*Translation*]

RAILWAY TRANSPORT

Mr. Allan Koury (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. I will repeat in the House the questions I put to the Minister of Transport in a letter dated September 11.

Will the Minister of Transport announce a moratorium on all decisions affecting the railway transportation industry, until such time as the royal commission of inquiry has tabled its recommendations and these have been evaluated by Parliament? Will the Minister of Transport send one or several representatives to the joint meeting on the railway industry, as he was invited to do last summer by Quebec Minister Daniel Johnson?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I will repeat for the benefit of the hon. member what I said today to the Leader of the Opposition and others, which is that the Department of Transport does not intend to put a moratorium on the cutbacks at VIA Rail. However, this morning I had a meeting with the *Fédération des travailleurs du Québec*. I think it was a very good meeting, and I can give Mr. Fernand Daoust the assurance that the Government of Canada will contribute $120,000 to this joint endeavour in Montreal, more specifically concerned with the future of railway transportation, always bearing in mind that the decision on VIA will remain as announced on October 4.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to several petitions.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Speaker: Statements by Ministers. The hon. member for South West Nova on a point of order.

* * *

[*Translation*]

POINT OF ORDER

SITUATION CONCERNING LOBSTER

Ms. Coline Campbell (South West Nova): Mr. Speaker, last week before the Prime Minister's meeting in Washington, he said in the House that he would raise the lobster issue again. Does the Prime Minister intend to make a speech or statement in the House on his meeting with the president in Washington about the lobster question?

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member has risen on a point of order under the rubric Statements by Ministers. It most definitely is a question. The minister may wish to respond, but he is not obligated to do so.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to tell my hon. friend that further to our exchange in the House the other day the Secretary of State for External Affairs and I raised this concern about lobsters directly with the President of the United States and the Secretary of State. We hope for an early answer.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FRENCH-SPEAKING PARLIAMENTARIANS

PRESENTATION OF 4TH REPORT OF CANADIAN SECTION

Mr. Charles DeBlois (Montmorency—Orléans): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the fourth report on the activities of the Canadian section of the International Association of French—speaking Parliamentarians. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the staff that helped prepare this report.

[*Editor's note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

ELECTIONS, PRIVILEGES, PROCEDURE AND PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS—SEVENTH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Chuck Cook (North Vancouver): Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Elections, Privileges, Procedure and Private Members' Business has the honour to present its seventh report.

It is in accordance with the order of reference adopted by the House on Thursday, October 26 and deals with the subject of private members and the draw.

I am tabling the report, but I would also note that no movement for adoption of the report will be made at this time as obviously the House leaders will have to have conferences in regard to the matter.

ELECTIONS, PRIVILEGES, PROCEDURES AND PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS—EIGHTH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Chuck Cook (North Vancouver): Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Elections, Privileges, Procedures and Private Members' Business has the honour to present its eighth report. It is in accordance with its mandate under Standing Order 92(1).

The committee recommends that one item of Private Members' Business be designated as a votable item.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

* * *

CROP INSURANCE ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-48, an act to amend the Crop Insurance Act.

Mr. Speaker: Shall the hon. minister have leave to introduce the said bill?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, bill read the first and ordered to be printed.

[*Translation*]

ACT TO PROVIDE FOR THE RESUMPTION OF CERTAIN GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board) moved for leave to introduce a bill intituled: An Act to provide for the resumption of certain government services.

Mr. Speaker: Shall the hon. minister have leave to introduce the bill?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. de Cotret, seconded by—

[*English*]

Mr. Tobin: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member may have a point. I will hear the hon. member.

Mr. Tobin: If I heard the Speaker ask for unanimous consent of the House, it was not given.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Mr. Speaker: Call in the members.

The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:

(*Division No. 135*)

YEAS

Members

Anderson	Andre
Atkinson	Attewell
Beatty	Belsher
Bernier	Bertrand
Bird	Bjornson
Blackburn (Jonquière)	Blais
Blenkarn	Bosley
Bouchard (Roberval)	Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Bourgault	Boyer
Brightwell	Browes

Cadieux	Cardiff
Casey	Chadwick
Champagne (Champlain)	Chartrand
Clark (Brandon—Souris)	Clifford
Cole	Collins
Cook	Cooper
Corbeil	Corbett
Côté	Couture
Darling	DeBlois
de Cotret	Desjardins
Dobbie	Domm
Duplessis	Epp
Fee	Ferland
Fretz	Friesen
Gérin	Gibeau
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	Greene
Grey (Beaver River)	Guilbault
Gustafson	Halliday
Harvey (Chicoutimi)	Hawkes
Hicks	Hogue
Holtmann	Hughes
James	Johnson
Kempling	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Koury	Landry
Langlois	Larrivée
Layton	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lewis	Littlechild
Loiselle	Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)	Malone
Marin	Martin (Lincoln)
Mayer	Mazankowski
McDermid	McDougall (St. Paul's)
Merrithew	Monteith
Moore	Nicholson
Nowlan	Oberle
O'Kurley	Plourde
Porter	Pronovost
Redway	Ricard
Richardson	Roy-Arcelin
St-Julien	Schneider
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)	Shields
Siddon	Sobeski
Soetens	Sparrow
Stevenson	Tardif
Thacker	Thompson
Thorkelson	Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Tremblay (Lotbinière)	Turner (Halton—Peel)
Valcourt	Van de Walle
Venne	Vézina
Vien	Vincent
White	Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Worthy—124	Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)

NAYS

Members

Anawak	Angus
Arseneault	Assad
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)	Baker
Bélair	Bellemare
Benjamin	Black
Blackburn (Brant)	Blondin
Boudria	Butland
Caccia	Callbeck
Campbell (South West Nova)	Catterall
Clancy	Comuzzi
de Jong	Dionne
Duhamel	Fisher
Flis	Fulton
Gaffney	Gagliano
Gardiner	Gauthier
Gray (Windsor West)	Harb
Harvard	Harvey (Edmonton East)
Heap	Hopkins
Hovdebo	Jordan
Karpoff	Karygiannis
Keyes	Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Kristiansen	Laporte
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)	Lee
MacAulay	MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacLaren	MacLellan
MacWilliam	Maheu
Manley	Marleau
McGuire	McLaughlin
Mifflin	Milliken
Mitchell	Murphy
Nault	Nunziata
Nystrom	Ouellet
Pagtakhan	Phinney
Pickard	Proud
Prud'homme	Rideout
Riis	Robichaud
Robinson	Rocheleau
Rodriguez	Simmons
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)	Stewart
Taylor	Tobin
Vanclief	Volpe
Wappel	Whittaker
Wood	Young (Gloucester)
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—87	

• (1610)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I declare the motion carried.

On a point of order, the hon. member for Kamloops.

Mr. Riis: Madam Speaker, just before the vote commenced, our labour critic for the New Democratic Party met with representatives of the union and they were making it very clear that they are quite anxious to get back to the bargaining table.

I am wondering if it is necessary for us to proceed with this legislation with that positive spirit in mind.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The Hon. Member for Saint-Denis on a point of order.

Mr. Prud'homme: Madam Speaker, I think that it would be good to remind hon. members, especially the one who just spoke, whom I hold in high regard, of course, that it is the second time in a few days that he has risen to comment after a vote and give further explanations.

I am absolutely sure that this is completely out of order and it is the second time that the hon. member, who has a lot of experience in this House, has done such a thing.

[*English*]

Mr. Tobin: Madam Speaker, to the point of order raised by my colleague and friend from the NDP, on

behalf of the Liberal Party I simply want to say that we welcome the fact that they are now apprised of this issue.

Mr. de Cotret moved that the bill be read the first time and printed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): All those in favour will please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Mr. Hawkes: Madam Speaker, since a number of members have risen calling for a vote, I wonder if there might be a predisposition in the chamber to not ring the bells but move immediately to the vote so members can go off to committee, we can have an opposition day and so on.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The House has heard the suggestion made by the hon. member. Is there unanimous consent to dispense with the ringing of the bells?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:

(Division No. 136)

YEAS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Beatty
Bernier
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blenkarn
Bouchard (Roberval)
Bourgault
Brightwell
Cadieux
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cole
Cook
Corbeil
Côté
Crosby (Halifax West)
Andre
Attewell
Belsher
Bertrand
Bjornson
Blais
Bosley
Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Boyer
Browes
Cardiff
Chadwick
Chartrand
Clifford
Collins
Cooper
Corbett
Couture
Darling
DeBlois
Desjardins
Domm
Epp
Ferland
Friesen
Gibeau
Greene
Guilbault
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Holtmann
James
Kempling
Koury
Langlois
Layton
Lewis
Loiselle
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin
Mayer
McDougall (St. Paul's)
Monteith
Nicholson
Oberle
Plourde
Pronovost
Ricard
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van de Walle
Vézina
Vincent
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)
de Cotret
Dobbie
Duplessis
Fee
Fretz
Gérin
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Grey (Beaver River)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Hogue
Hughes
Johnson
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Landry
Larrivée
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Littlechild
Lopez
Malone
Martin (Lincoln)
McDermid
Merrithew
Moore
Nowlan
O'Kurley
Porter
Redway
Richardson
St-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Venne
Vien
White
Worthy—125

NAYS

Members

Anawak
Arseneault
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bélair
Benjamin
Blackburn (Brant)
Boudria
Caccia
Campbell (South West Nova)
Clancy
de Jong
Duhamel
Flis
Gaffney
Gardiner
Gray (Windsor West)
Harvard
Heap
Hovdebo
Karpoff
Keyes
Kristiansen
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacAulay
MacLaren
MacWilliam
Manley
McGuire
Mifflin
Mitchell
Angus
Assad
Baker
Bellemare
Black
Blondin
Butland
Callbeck
Catterall
Comuzzi
Dionne
Fisher
Fulton
Gagliano
Gauthier
Harb
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hopkins
Jordan
Karygiannis
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Laporte
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacLellan
Maheu
Marleau
McLaughlin
Milliken
Murphy

Nault	Nunziata
Nystrom	Ouellet
Pagtakhan	Phinney
Pickard	Proud
Prud'homme	Rideout
Riis	Robichaud
Robinson	Rocheleau
Rodriguez	Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Stewart	Taylor
Tobin	Vanclief
Volpe	Wappel
Whittaker	Wood
Young (Gloucester)	Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—86

• (1620)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I declare the motion carried.

Bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Madam Speaker, there have been discussions between the parties *vis-à-vis* Friday of this week, and I think you would find that there would be unanimous consent for me to move the following motion and for it to be adopted, without debate.

I move:

That on Friday, December 8, 1989, at 10 o'clock a.m., following Prayers, the House will hear a statement from the Secretary of State of Canada, followed by replies from spokespersons on the subject of International Human Rights Day and;

That the remainder of Friday, December 8, 1989, be according to Standing Orders governing Fridays, provided that any time taken for the statement and replies be added to the time allowed for Government Orders starting at two o'clock p.m. and the hour for Private Members' Business begin immediately thereafter.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

PETITIONS

VIA RAIL

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Madam Speaker, I have the duty and the honour to present several petitions on the subject of VIA Rail closures, signed by 1,663 persons mainly resident in the constituency of Brant, who call upon the government to rescind the order to curtail VIA Rail services until after the report of the Commission on National Transportation.

They call upon the government to maintain, upgrade and increase passenger rail service in this country.

[*Translation*]

OPPOSITION TO TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATION ON FISCAL INDEMNIFICATION OF ISOLATED AND NORTHERN AREAS

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am today tabling a petition signed by workers in Lebel-sur-Quévillon and their wives against the task force on fiscal compensation for isolated and northern areas, which recommends abolishing travel deductions for medical reasons for northern workers within a year and limiting fiscal compensation for isolated and northern areas to places north of 51°05'N latitude.

Madam Speaker, the people of Lebel-sur-Quévillon reject the recommendations of the task force on fiscal compensation for isolated and northern areas because this task force did not take into consideration that in 1989, for the Government of Quebec, the North begins at the 49th parallel and that on May 26, 1989, the Minister of Finance changed the rules after consulting only 250 groups.

[*English*]

VIA RAIL

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Madam Speaker, at the same time as Transport 2000 in concert with Rural Dignity Canada is rallying in front of Parliament Hill concerning VIA Rail cuts, it is my honour pursuant to Standing Order 36 to table petitions on behalf of my constituents of Parkdale—High Park who also ask this government that no further cuts in VIA Rail be made.

They argue that this would reduce the ability of many Canadians to travel economically within Canada. Rail service is more environmentally sound. The Canadian railroad has bound this country together. It is our heritage. It was part of our Confederation, so they appeal strongly that this government not cut VIA Rail but expand the services with modern state of the art equipment.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Madam Speaker, I have another petition from Canadians in Iqaluit. I am indeed very honoured to table this one, having spent a week in that part of Canada. They are dead set against the GST. They want it scrapped because even though the government may not put the tax on food, they have to pay for transportation on all the food that they get.

On their behalf, we can upon Parliament to reject the proposed goods and services tax. That is from a group of Canadians that I hope the government is listening to.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. David Bjornson (Selkirk): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition on behalf of the member for Lisgar—Marquette, signed by 30 petitioners, and another petition from my riding of Selkirk, signed by 40 petitioners who call upon Parliament to enact legislation which will effectively protect the life of the preborn child without distinction as to stages of development.

Madam Speaker, I also have the honour to present a petition from the Knights of Columbus No. 6150 in my riding of Selkirk, signed by 33 petitioners who call upon Parliament to enact legislation which protects human life from conception to natural death.

BILL 178

Mr. David Bjornson (Selkirk): Madam Speaker, I also have the honour to present a petition signed by 33 people from Oakbank, Dugald and Hazelridge, Manitoba, who call upon Parliament to pass a resolution of the House of Commons urging the Governor General in Council to give full force and effect to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms by the exercise of its constitutional power of disallowance with respect to Bill 178 in the province of Quebec.

[*Translation*]

OPPOSITION TO GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present 31 petitions bearing the signatures of 2,464 residents of the riding of Saint-Léonard and the Greater Montreal region. The 2,464 signatories call upon Parliament to reject the new goods and services tax which the government plans to levy as of January 1, 1991. They feel that the tax is regressive and unfair and that it will be an additional source of hardship for Canadian taxpayers.

Madam Speaker, your petitioners urge the government to listen to Canadians and to withdraw this tax forthwith.

[*English*]

BILL 178

Mr. Ken James (Sarnia—Lambton): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, it is my duty and obligation to present this petition to the House today which has been certified correct as to form and content by the Clerk of Petitions.

The sum total of 70 signatories from my riding of Sarnia—Lambton call upon the Parliament of Canada to urge the Governor in Council to exercise its constitutional power of disallowance with respect to Bill 178 of the province of Quebec which they believe contravenes the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Madam Speaker, it is my honour to present to you pursuant to Standing Order 36 the attached petition requesting that the Parliament of Canada enact legislation that will define and protect the life of the unborn child.

• (1630)

The petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to do that, and that involves, of course, changing or attempting to change the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to protect the life of the unborn child, recognizing the life of the unborn. The petitioners urge us to do just that, so it is my privilege to present to you these petitions from Carleton-Charlotte.

VIA RAIL

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Madam Speaker, I rise under Standing Order 36 to present a petition signed by my constituents. These people are opposed to cutbacks in VIA Rail. They indicate that several rural communities in Canada rely exclusively on rail passenger service and that the tourist industry in Canada relies on rail passenger service.

For these and other reasons, they would ask Parliament not to cancel, in whole or in part, rail passenger service in Canada.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions to present to this House, both certified under Standing Order 36. The first is to draw to the attention of this House the concerns that residents of 150 Mile House in British Columbia have over the tax craziness that this government has in bringing in a goods and services tax.

The petitioners call upon the Parliament of Canada to reject, among other things, the current proposal for a goods and services tax and to reform the taxation system so that there is an effective minimum tax on wealthy individuals and corporations.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Madam Speaker, as well, the government has gone so crazy that residents of Ontario are expressing their concerns about its approach and attitude toward VIA Rail cuts.

These petitioners call upon Parliament to maintain VIA Rail, Canada's national network, to upgrade it with new equipment and to give VIA Rail a sufficient budget to maintain its national mandate for passenger service.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiaq):

[*Editor's Note: Member spoke in Inuktitut.*]

[*English*]

Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, it is my honour to present to you two petitions from two communities in my riding, one from Tuktoyaktuk in the westernmost part of my constituency one from and Copper Mine, Northwest Territories in the Central Arctic, objecting to the proposed goods and services tax.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the honour to present a petition signed by many people from my constituency, from Madawaska, Cross Lake, Petawawa, Pembroke, Cobden, Rankin and several other communities.

These people oppose the 9 per cent sales tax and they are asking the question, because the present manufacturer's sales tax has already gone from 9 per cent to 13.5 per cent, what guarantee do they have that this government is not going to increase the 9 per cent goods and services tax likewise. They are simply saying that after 31 increases in taxation by this government since it took power, enough is enough and they do not want this 9 per cent goods and services tax put on by this government.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Madam Speaker, I rise pursuant to Standing Order 36 on this special day of the rally for rails to present a petition signed by a total of 684 Canadians, the overwhelming majority of whom live in Edmonton and, in fact, 45 of whom live in one apartment block in Edmonton.

These people are calling on the government to maintain VIA Rail, Canada's present national network, to upgrade VIA Rail with new equipment and to give VIA Rail a sufficient budget to maintain its national mandate for passenger service.

We keep submitting these petitions in the hope that the government will listen to the overwhelming majority of Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions concerning what my constituents and residents of other ridings consider a major issue.

Your petitioners are against the VIA Rail cutbacks. Given that the Government of Canada has opted for abandoning a number of VIA Rail routes and eliminating thousands of jobs and that railways are the safest and most environment-friendly means of transport, your petitioners humbly call upon the House of Commons to urge the government not to dismantle or reduce Canada's rail passenger services.

[*English*]

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Jack Whittaker (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Madam Speaker, I was afraid I was so far up in the

corner that I was not able to be seen by the Speaker. I am pleased to be recognized.

It is my privilege, under Standing Order 36, to present to the 10 petitions signed members of my riding from Osoyoos, Oliver, Okanagan Falls, Kaleden, Summerland and Naramata, with a total of 1,163 names.

These petitioners are all in opposition to the government's proposed goods and services tax. They state that it is an unfair form of taxation because of its lack of regard for the taxpayers' ability to pay and they ask the government to reject the current proposal for the goods and services tax. They also ask the government to cease with the proposal which will shift the tax burden onto ordinary Canadians through a regressive consumption tax instead of through real tax reform.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Questions Nos. 135, 160, 166 and 168.

[*Text*]

PRIVATIZATION

Question No. 135—**Mr. Taylor:**

Is the government prepared (a) to provide the (i) titles (ii) authors (iii) dates of production (iv) content of any studies or other research undertaken by or on behalf of the government or Canada Post on the privatization of all or any part of the postal system or postal operations (b) to make these documents available to Members of Parliament?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): The Government is aware that the information that could be provided to the Honourable Member was in fact provided at the Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations on November 2, 1989, and therefore believes that the Honourable Member's question has been satisfactorily addressed through that process.

STATISTICS ON SENIORS LIVING IN SCARBOROUGH WEST

*Question No. 160—**Mr. Wappel:**

Does the government keep records on Seniors living in the constituency of Scarborough West and, if so (a) what number of them are there (b) what is their average (i) age (ii) income (c) what percentage (i) are married (ii) are single (iii) own their own homes (iv) are renters?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Statistics Canada reports:

Information on seniors (persons aged 65 years and over) living in the Federal Electoral District of Scarborough West is available from the 1986 Census and is shown in the attached table.

SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF PERSONS AGED 65 YEARS AND OVER, SCARBOROUGH WEST, 1986

A) NUMBER		
Total	11,190	
Male	4,445	
Female	6,750	
B) AVERAGE AGE		
Total	73.7 years	
Male	72.6 years	
Female	74.4 years	
C) MARITAL STATUS	**Number**	**Percent**
Now married	5,650	50.5
Separated	250	2.2
Divorced	335	3.0
Widowed	4,110	36.7
Never married	855	7.6
Total	11,190	100.0
D) AVERAGE INCOME, 1985[1]		
Total	$13,986	
Male	$17,933	
Female	$11,154	
E) PERSONS 65 YEARS AND OVER LIVING IN RENTED PREMISES[1]	**Number**	**Percent**
Total	3,390	33.8
Maintainer (responsible for payments)	2,650	26.4
Non-maintainer	740	7.4
F) PERSONS 65 YEARS AND OVER LIVING IN OWNED PREMISES[1]	**Number**	**Percent**
Total	6,630	66.2
Maintainer (responsible for payments)	3,980	39.7
Non-maintainer	2,650	26.4

1. The data on income and owner/renter status exclude residents of Scarborough West who live in institutions (such as home for the aged, chronic care facilities, etc.), and the data for average income are based only on those residents who reported earning at least some income in 1985 (over 0).

Note: The data are rounded to the nearest 5 in order to ensure confidentiality. Thus, the sub-totals do not always sum to the total.

LESTER B. PEARSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Question No. 166—**Mr. Keyes:**

Is the government aware of construction at Lester B. Pearson International Airport for the creation of a new runway or runways and, if so, have public monies been spent thus far on that construction and, if so, in what amount?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport): No construction for new runways has been undertaken at Lester B. Pearson International Airport.

Any new runway construction will not be undertaken until after the Environmental Assessment and Review Panel process has been completed.

The only airfield construction works underway at Lester B. Pearson International Airport are to improve existing taxiway configuration.

ESTIMATED COST OF (A) TEARING DOWN A PORTION OF THE FEDERAL BUILDING IN WHITEHORSE AND REFURBISHING THE REMAINDER (B) TEARING DOWN THE ENTIRE FEDERAL BUILDING AND BUILDING A NEW STRUCTURE

*Question No. 168—**Ms. McLaughlin:**

Has the government estimated the cost of (a) tearing down a portion of the Federal Building in Whitehorse and refurbishing the remainder with new infrastructure (such as water and heating, among other things) (b) tearing down the entire Federal Building and building a new structure which would meet the needs of the federal government in the Yukon and, if so, what is it?

Hon. Elmer Mac Intosh MacKay (Minister of Public Works): The estimated cost to:

(a) tear down a portion of the Federal Building in Whitehorse and refurbish the remainder with new infrastructure is $24,699,000; and

(b) tear down the entire Federal Building and build a new structure was not considered a variable option since major amounts of leased space are not available. This option would require a program of phased construction over a prolonged period of time. This in turn would create significant tenant disruptions and discomfort.

[*English*]

Mr. Cooper: I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The questions enumerated by the Parliamentary Secretary have been answered. Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

* * *

[*English*]

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Shall all notices of motions stand?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Before putting the motion standing in the name of the hon. member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte, since today is the final allotted day for the supply period ending December 10, 1989, the House will go through the usual procedures to consider and dispose of the supply bill. In view of recent practices, do hon. members agree that the bill will be distributed now?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SUPPLY

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte) moved:

That this House condemn the government for its obstinate failure to respond to the continuing public demands of the Canadian people for the maintenance of high quality national passenger rail services.

He said: Madam Speaker, because the time for the opposition day has been shortened by the necessity of other events today, with the Speaker's consent, we hope to share time here in the opposition benches. I will not

be using the full 20 minutes which is available to me. I will be sharing it with my colleague who is sitting next to me.

We have moved this motion today, taking advantage of an opposition day to put down this motion which condemns the government's failure to respond to the Canadian public and its view on VIA Rail for two reasons. One is that we as an opposition party do not intend to allow this issue to die within the walls of Parliament. More important, we want to take advantage of the opportunity of mayors from all across Canada being on Parliament Hill today again.

This is the third or fourth time in as many months that mayors from right across Canada, representing Canada's municipalities, have come to Ottawa to make their case, to continue to fight for VIA Rail. We wanted to show solidarity with those municipal politicians who have continued the fight, both at home and here in Ottawa.

• (1640)

On November 8, not members of the Liberal Party, not members of the New Democratic Party, but members of an all–party committee of the House of Commons, the Standing Committee on Transport, those members who are charged specifically with the responsibility to observe the Estimates of the transport department and the policies of the Minister of Transport and to comment on behalf of parliamentarians on those policies, brought in a report which was tabled in this House. The report called upon the Government of Canada to declare a moratorium on the cuts to VIA Rail which are scheduled to be implemented on January 15. That was on November 8, nearly a month ago.

On the day that that report was tabled, the Minister of Transport, who had it in his hands in the House of Commons, who had all of about 90 seconds to look at it, walked out of this Chamber behind those royal golden robes, out into the foyer of the House, and after 90 seconds of contemplation told the nation's media that he rejected the report.

We have in the House a Prime Minister who is proud to stand on his feet on many occasions and tell us that he takes great personal pride in the parliamentary reform that has occurred in this place. He takes great personal pride, and by implication one would assume, credit for the reform of committees in which all members increasingly express their own best judgment and not be subjected to the view of a party caucus on every given issue, but to really examine with their heart and soul, conscience and best judgment the important issues of the day and to pronounce themselves in the interests of Canadians, not in the interest of particular partisan advantage on any given day of the week. The Prime Minister does this, and he does so frequently.

On a major government initiative, a decision to cut VIA Rail's network by 50 per cent, to lay off 3,000 employees, to say to three million Canadians who rode the rails in 1988 that you cannot ride the rails in 1990, a standing committee of the House of Commons, having members from all three parties, and more important, having a majority of Conservative members, stated that that initiative is wrong. The committee has not thought it through carefully enough. It does not accept the environmental assessment. It does not believe the system can survive with these kinds of cuts. It does not believe that three million Canadians can find other adequate, affordable means of transportation. It does not accept that the environment will not be affected dramatically and negatively. It calls upon the government to declare a moratorium on those cuts.

Did we simply say to declare a moratorium and sit and twiddle our thumbs and wait for some great enlightenment to occur? No. The transport committee went on to say that since you, the Prime Minister of Canada, named a royal commission on transportation, since you, the Prime Minister, say you have confidence in the individuals you have named to this royal commission, since you, the Prime Minister, say we need to have a look at the total integration of Canada's transportation modes and we need a map for the future of transportation in this country, we need to chart a proper course, if you have confidence in these people, refer the question of VIA to them. Give it to the royal commission. Ask the commission to examine the question of rail passenger service and give us an interim report in one year.

In other words, let us turn not partisan minds, nor the vicious hand of the Minister of Finance to this question. Let us look at the long term. Let us examine Canada's position vis–a–vis the position of every other country in the industrialized world. Every other country in the industrialized world is in the business of building modern, efficient, high speed, high–tech, environmentally

friendly, mass means of transportation; that is, high-speed trains.

The committee has said it cannot accept that Canada alone among all nations of the industrialized world, Canada alone has to run up the flag of defeat, Canada alone has to make this massive expression of self doubt and lack of confidence in our own ability to run an efficient rail passenger service in this country. The committee has said it cannot accept that.

The report was tabled a month ago. In that month, there has been no concrete, substantial response from the Minister of Transport, nothing from the Prime Minister, no consideration.

In that month, the issue of VIA Rail and the determination of those Canadians who believe in its future has not wavered. The government makes a terrible mistake if it assumes that the issue will go away. In that month, even greater numbers of coalitions of citizens groups have been formed. In that month, the mayors of the corridor cities have come together and formed an organization to fight for VIA Rail. In that month, the mayors of every single town in Atlantic Canada have coalesced to fight for the future of VIA Rail. Why, Madam Speaker? Because the stats speak for themselves. While the cut to the national network is 50 per cent, in Atlantic Canada, 91 per cent of the service will disappear, effective January 15. The best number for the whole region is a 57 per cent cut. Many of the routes are totally eliminated.

What we want the Government of Canada to understand is what the Prime Minister said he understood when he went to eastern Europe. The Prime Minister went to eastern Europe and he said, isn't it a wonderful thing, isn't it a great day in the history of the world and civilization and democracy when the voice of the people echoes so loudly that those who have the power in the governments of eastern Europe not only must listen but must act. This is the true test of democracy.

Is it not tragic and ironic that a Prime Minister would hail the voice of the people in eastern Europe, those who not only insist they be heard but that their voice be heeded, would come back to this country and not only turn a deaf ear on the mayors of every major municipality in Canada, turn a deaf ear on the premiers of every province of Canada, turn a deaf ear on a standing committee of the House of Commons that recommended a moratorium, but would turn a deaf ear on the concept of democracy, representative government? This is the Prime Minister who promised us renewed federalism, co-operative federalism and who now faces every single interested group in this country, crossing every single political stripe telling them that he has made a mistake but who refuses to listen.

The Prime Minister and his government are not merely being stubborn or stupid in their decision. The Prime Minister and his government are being arrogant. They are turning away from the future, turning away from our roots the ribbon of steel that built this country and they are turning away from the ribbon of steel that can expand this country going into the future. They are taking us backwards. In so doing, this Prime Minister has said that he shall rely in future upon the tyranny of a majority in Parliament and will no longer hear the voice of people. We cannot accept that, Canadians cannot accept that and we shall continue the fight for the future of VIA Rail and for the future of rail passenger service in this country.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Questions or comments? I do understand that the hon. member wants to share the 20 minutes. I also thought that consequently, there would be a five minute question and comment period following each of the hon. members' speeches. Is that agreed?

Mr. Tobin: Madam Speaker, with the consent of members and if there is consent and, of course, consent by Madam Speaker, we might hear from the second member and there would be a question and answer period at the end. I am certainly not going anywhere, if that would facilitate the opportunity for as many members as possible to speak in this debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The Chair is quite prepared to go along with the hon. member's suggestion, even though there was one thing that seemed to stand in my mind. The questions or the comments would have to come after the last speaker's speech. Henceforth, I think there should be at this point a five-minute question period on the last speaker's intervention and then after the next speaker's intervention. I think everyone has understood what I meant to say.

• (1650)

I understand there is a question at this end. The hon. member has the floor.

Mr. Belsher: Madam Speaker, I have listened intently to the hon. member and we have heard some of his musings on this subject before, but I find it passing strange when he talks about the standing committee and its recommendations. Yes, a majority of the standing committee voted for the recommendation, but it was my understanding that it was not unanimous.

I also remember a while back when there was a standing committee of this House which on two different occasions recommended to the government that it find a ways and means of replacing the federal sales tax, better known as the manufacturers' tax. I find in this day and age that both opposition parties have seemingly forgotten that part of it as they seek to build fear into the Canadian public about what is happening regarding the GST.

More important, the member has talked about the mayors of the corridor and how united they are with regard to not wanting to see any cutbacks in the amount of service that VIA Rail now gives in their areas.

I would like to remind the hon. member just what is really happening in the corridor to make sure that people in Canada realize what the facts are in the plan that VIA had tendered and which has been recognized and given the okay by this government.

The Montreal to Quebec run is currently at 48 round trips a week. It is dropping to 21 trips a week. But also at the 48 trips a week, this past year ridership was at 39 per cent. From Montreal to Ottawa, it goes from 29 round trips occupancy.

We get the very same type of rationale on each of those runs. Does the hon. member not realize that there will not be as much frequency of the trains after January 15 but, nonetheless, the capacity for servicing those customers will still be there?

Mr. Tobin: Madam Speaker, this is an absolutely amazing question coming from the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport. The reason it is an amazing question coming from this gentleman whom I usually find well prepared is that it is the Minister of Transport himself, not the opposition, not the New Democratic Party, not those groups in Canada fighting for the retention of VIA Rail, who said—and I remember sitting in the theatre, and my hon. friend was there the day of the press conference—that three million people who rode the trains in 1988 and 1989 will be displaced in 1990–1991 because capacity was being removed. I believe that my hon. friend forgot that. That is the only explanation, because he is not a member who would want to mislead. I am sure of that. He forgot.

What the hon. member is now suggesting is that if you take away half the trains and you just stuff more people into the same number of trains, you will have the same capacity. However, the government has already admitted that three million people will not ride the trains who had in the past taken advantage of trains. It has suggested that they will be in cars, in trucks, in buses, and in airplanes and that is why the government did a so–called environmental assessment and told us, having done that, there is no problem with having all that additional carbon being burned. There is no problem with the additional congestion at airports. There is no problem with additional congestion on highways that are already blocked, as we would say in Newfoundland, to the rafters.

The question is profoundly surprising but gives me yet another opportunity to point out that this government has not done its homework and, whether by design or by accident, has now given us a phoney rationale for trying to sell these brutal, heartless cuts, especially cuts as they affect our youth, the handicapped and Canada's greatest citizens, our senior citizens, those who have already paid their dues.

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my friend and colleague for allowing me part of his time in order to make my comments with respect to what this government is proposing to do with passenger rail service in this country.

My friend commented on the transport committee report, a committee of which he and I are both members and which in its wisdom brought in several recommendations that the government has chosen not to follow.

It is incidental, I guess, that this morning our party produced its report on our proposal and our alternative as to what Canadians can expect with a Liberal government and passenger rail service in our country. Part of the recommendation's dovetail was what my friend and colleague has already said, but let me just comment for a

few moments, if I may, about the Liberal task force report on VIA Rail.

This summer there was a huge undertaking that this side of the House embarked on. We travelled across every section of this country with members of Parliament and with senators to talk to the people of Canada to get first-hand knowledge as to what they thought about this government's plan for passenger rail service in this country.

As a result of that trip and as a result of those excursions into areas that many of my friends from across have not had the opportunity to visit, we have been able to come up with some recommendations that we would like to put forward. One that seems to be predominant throughout all of the discussions is the one-year moratorium that my friend so ably discussed a few moments ago. What that means is just that, to stop everything in its tracks and let us do some studies and further assessments with respect to—

Mr. Belsher: Do you want to keep funding it?

Mr. Comuzzi: My friend keeps talking about letting the funding go on. If he would read the last annual report from VIA Rail and reports that came from the transport committee on the unions, he would find that by cutting out VIA Rail, the government in this next year is going to be spending more money in closing it down than it would be spending in operating and subsidizing it. The government would be spending more money by closing down VIA Rail, starting with this fiscal period, than it would be spending by operating VIA Rail as it is operating today.

There was a very shallow report brought in by this government on the environmental assessment, and that simply meant the impact of the closing down of passenger rail service on certain sections in this country and what would happen with the use of our highways and the use of our airways, the additional use of fuel. There was not a proper environmental study done according to the law of the land, and one of our recommendations was that that assessment be done.

We also said that VIA Rail required its own legislation, the VIA Rail act. That would allow VIA Rail to set its own rates, rely less on this House, and go out and do its business as a reliable and viable transportation mode in this country. It never had its own legislation, and that is our recommendation.

We also talked at some length about the negotiations that have been allowed to carry on between VIA Rail, which really has no teeth, and CN and CP. In particular, we discussed the elimination of costing order 6313, the moratorium on all non-itemized expenses charged by CN and CP to VIA Rail, an in-depth explanation, a question that I have asked several times in the transport committee, of the $142 million being charged to VIA by CNR and CPR and, in addition to that, the $107 million charged in the last annual statement by intergovernmental accounting against the expense structure of VIA Rail.

• (1700)

It was our considered opinion that these questions should be answered. This moratorium would allow those questions to be answered before any further action is taken on the passenger rail service in our country.

We also went into great discussion and had in depth study on analysing what new rolling stock would be needed. The financial statement states that in the last two years VIA Rail has purchased and paid for 72 new engines, as many engines as it needs to operate the passenger rail service in this country. What is needed is passenger rail cars. If I could plug my area, we make magnificent double decker passenger rail cars in Thunder Bay. They should be given consideration, along with other manufacturers in Canada, to provide good passenger rail cars for our passenger rail service in this country.

We do provide passenger rail service and we do finance those passenger rail cars for our friends in the United States, Amtrak. Certainly if we can do it for our friends in the United States we could do it for Canadians.

There is another consideration that we would want to study in some depth in our recommendations, that is, the high speed train in the corridor between Montreal and Toronto and between Toronto and Windsor. We say in our report that that is the area in our country which can least stand any lessening of modes of passenger transportation and we should start on that immediately.

We have also suggested that we look into something which has been looked at several times by both governments, that is, the rail bus which would be used to service remote lines.

The final recommendation that we make is with regard to the remote lines in this country. If my memory serves me correctly, $45 million a year is devoted to serving remote lines. In the answer to one of my questions to the minister and to Mr. Lawless we were told that the remote lines in this country, of which there are nine, were mandated and that they must be served.

I did some extensive law research into that particular question and found out that the remote lines were not mandated. It was suggested at one time when these remote areas in our country were not served by any other mode of transportation that they should be given passenger rail service.

I suggest that the government has not done its homework with respect to these remote lines because, as it stands now, eight of the nine remote lines are serviced by a Department of Transport airport, highways and adequate bus service, and are therefore no longer remote lines. Yet we continue to pay $45 million a year for servicing these areas.

All I am saying is that it is worth further study. Again we go back to the very first Liberal recommendation and the recommendation of the transport committee that we need that year of moratorium, of not doing anything, so that we are able to analyse these particular and very strong areas to come up with a plan to maintain passenger rail service in our country.

I can see that my time is getting short. Let me just mention that there is absolutely no wisdom or logic in the way that this government has decided to provide passenger rail service across northern Ontario. I will just leave that. It will be the subject of further discussion at a later date.

Sir John A. Macdonald, Canada's most famous Conservative, had a vision. He had a vision of this country united from sea to sea. When I talk about John A. Macdonald and the railways in this country, I am not talking about the lack of rail passenger service or an airline. What we are lacking is a concept and a vision of the transportation requirements of all Canadians, not just those Canadians living in highly populated areas who if they get train service or plane service on a less frequent basis will still not be jeopardized great deal.

I am talking about Canadians in areas of our country, in Atlantic Canada, northern Ontario and parts of the west, who when January 15 rolls around will not be able to travel on one very necessary mode of transportation. I am sure that John A. Macdonald did not intend that this country be operated without a viable network to maintain our unity and to maintain our economic basis. It is not fair to all Canadians, and it is not fair to Canada.

Mr. Belsher: Madam Speaker, my hon. friend talks about the vision of Sir John A. Macdonald and the uniting of this country. I would like to remind my hon. friend that when Sir John A. Macdonald had this vision we did not have a highway system from coast to coast. Airplanes had not even been invented yet. The only viable way for people to travel from one side of the country to another was to use the train. He is quite right in pointing that out.

The percentage of people making intercity trips in Sir John A.'s time was likely 90 per cent or more, whereas nowadays a very low percentage of people make such trips. Why does he not come up to the modern day and recognize the changes that have taken place in our country?

I was glad that he pointed out that there have been capital expenditures made for the new engines and so on, but he failed to point out that the government is continuing to spend money on capital improvement for the electrification of stainless steel cars. That is in the budget of VIA Rail for the coming months.

The opposition would like to make it sound like we have cut off all the funding to VIA Rail and nothing could be further from the truth. We are cutting down on the amount of funding that will be going to VIA Rail because we have a serious problem in our country. I wish the opposition would start to recognize it and try to help sell the idea that we have to get a handle on the overexpenditures of the Government of Canada. That is what this is all about.

Mr. Comuzzi: Madam Speaker, it is interesting that my friend would mention the absence of some transportation modes during the period that we are talking about. I spent a very interesting evening last Friday night at an institution in Thunder Bay called the Old Fort, which is a true replica of Canada as it was in the late 18th century.

It deals with the fur trading empires of the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company.

We went into great lengths and heard a very fine history about how people crossed our country at that time by canoe, portage and so on.

The reason I say that is that we have not changed in our spirit, we have not changed in our determination, and we have not changed in our thought. What these fur traders were doing, what we are trying to do today, and what the government is trying to break down is the effort to unify our country, to maintain the east-west structure of our country, and that requires a passenger rail service from coast to coast.

I think Mr. Macdonald did that some 100-odd years ago because he wanted to do away with the natural pull of the north-south influence. He was trying to create an east-west influence throughout our country to make the people in British Columbia as Canadian as the people in Newfoundland.

The government is trying to disintegrate that by disuniting this country, by taking away one of the fundamental modes of transportation that we as Canadians have come to expect as part of our heritage.

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to participate today in the opposition motion which reads:

> That this House condemns the government for its obstinate failure to respond to the continuing public demands of the Canadian people for the maintenance of high quality national passenger rail services.

I want to say at the outset that this is not a new issue for New Democrats. We have been fighting this issue ever since VIA Rail was created.

• (1710)

In fact, I think it is safe to say that my good friend, the member for Regina—Lumsden, was fighting for rail passenger service even before it came away from CN and CP and into the hands of the Crown corporation.

We did not start fighting for it just this summer. We did not start just after the budget earlier this spring when the reference levels were announced. We did not start fighting for VIA Rail just when the government decided not to purchase the new rolling stock, the transcontinental passenger rolling stock a few years ago. Nor did we start fighting for VIA just when this government came into power, when it announced great things for VIA Rail, great studies, task forces, or what have you. We did not start fighting for VIA Rail just when the previous Liberal government decided to cut 20 per cent of the system.

We have been in the fight for a long time because we, as New Democrats, recognize that VIA Rail plays a number of extremely important roles in the economy and the life of this great nation. It is important to Canadians from all parts of the country who see it as their only real option for transportation into and out of their communities. We see it as an economic tool to allow people to live in those smaller communities and commute to the larger. Although I realize that VIA Rail is not designed as a commuter service, it does provide it in a number of sectors. We recognize it as the only safe means of travel that we have in this country, particularly for our elderly and infirm.

When I was in Cape Breton this fall I learned about the tens of thousands of people who go from Cape Breton to Halifax on the train in order to go to the hospital to receive medical care. The road is not an option for them.

New Democrats also see it as an important environmental and energy question. It is an environmental issue because we recognize that in spite of what the government is saying—and every knowledgeable person in this country knows that what the government is saying about the environmental impact is bunk—rail passenger service is one of the most environmentally friendly forms of moving people long distances. It is also the most energy efficient form of moving people long distances.

We also recognize the historical importance of rail passenger service. How many of us had parents who came to this land as immigrants, who arrived by boat in Halifax and were taken by train to Quebec, to southern Ontario, to northern Ontario, to Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia and then on to the territories? All of us have stories about how those people moved at least into the interior by rail.

We also recognize the importance of rail passenger service in terms of an east-west link, an opportunity to see this vast and magnificent land. We recognize the value to tourism. Six hundred million foreign dollars a year come into this country, not for VIA Rail tickets but spent by VIA Rail passengers who come from other lands. This is extremely crucial in Atlantic Canada,

extremely crucial and growing so in British Columbia and Alberta.

We are not out to save our past. Let us face it; all of us on this side, in this corner, will be more than happy to get rid of that junk that VIA Rail calls trains. It is outmoded. It has been outmoded for the last 15 to 20 years if not longer.

My colleague, the member for Regina—Lumsden, was calling year after year for the government of the day to invest in new equipment; not to waste money repairing old junk but to invest in new equipment.

I think there were seven ministers of transport, Liberal and Conservative, who promised—it wasn't an election commitment or spending commitment; it was a promise—new passenger rail equipment, new coaches, new sleeping cars, new baggage cars: all of the tools needed to turn VIA Rail into a modern rail passenger service. Seven ministers of transport promised that in this House and on the hustings. Two different governments, Conservative and Liberal, promised legislation.

I listened with amazement to my neighbour, the member for Thunder Bay—Nipigon, as he read out this new report from the Liberal Party of what it would do for VIA Rail. I have heard it all before. In fact, if you turn to a report called *The Last Straw*, the report of the task force on rail passenger services of October 1981 of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada, it is almost word for word.

There is a saying: "What goes around comes around". We have said it from this corner time and time again. When in opposition the Liberals and the Conservatives are great friends of VIA Rail, but wait until they get to the government side. When the Liberals were over there they cut 20 per cent of the system and the Tories got on the rails and went from one end of the country to the other condemning the action, condemning the fact that the decision was made by cabinet without public hearings.

What do they do when they get into power? The same thing. Lo and behold, who is travelling across the country now to save VIA Rail? It is the Liberals.

The reality is that when the committee report says that VIA Rail was designed to fail it is the product of the sorry past of the Liberals contributed to the current history of the Conservatives. If members of the Liberal Party had lived up to their promises to bring in legislation to create VIA Rail and instead of a dollar item in Estimates had given it a legislative mandate and invested the money the money that they promised they would invest in new equipment, the Tories would not be able to do what they are doing today. That is the reality of this issue.

Having said that, the Conservative Government of Canada today has no right whatsoever to do what it is doing to VIA Rail.

Mr. Belsher: We have every right.

Mr. Angus: The hon. member says that they have the right. They may have the legal right, but they do not have the moral right. That is why since June of this year, when I tabled the first petition in this House, we have had hundreds of thousands of Canadians writing their names on petitions and letters that have been tabled in this House, sent to the Prime Minister, sent to the Minister of Transport, and sent to the man who wears two hats, the president of VIA Rail and CN. These are Canadians who say VIA Rail is important to them.

Well over 300 municipalities from one end of this country to the other—not just cities, towns and villages that are served by VIA Rail but others as well—have called on the government to hold public hearings and to put a moratorium on the cuts. They have appeared before the transport committee. They have appeared in the streets, in Toronto, in Windsor, in Vancouver and on Cape Breton. They appeared outside today, representatives of communities from across this land.

They are saying that VIA Rail is important. They are saying that the seven million people who use VIA Rail are important, that the service they use is important and must be maintained not as a *status quo* item but as a starting point to build a system which will take us to the year 2000.

• (1720)

It is entirely possible every other industrialized country in the world is doing it. Look at the United States with Amtrak, look at Great Britain with Brit Rail, look at the French rail services, the Japanese, the Italian, the German and the Australian. All major countries are investing in rail passenger services because they see it as the way to go.

When the mayors from the corridor were here appearing before the transport committee I think they said it best. Talking about Windsor to Toronto, to Ottawa, to Montreal, to Quebec City, they said: "Imagine if instead of a business person going from downtown Toronto through the traffic, rushing to get to the airport so that he can wait in line for his ticket and then for security, and waiting because of flight delays, he could take a high speed electrified train from downtown Toronto, be in Ottawa in the same amount of time, or even less perhaps, but in a much more sane and less frustrated environment".

Other countries have invested in their future. We are turning ourselves back in time. We are cutting 50 per cent of the service. We are decimating Atlantic Canada. We are destroying the tourist trade in western Canada. We have eliminated, for all intents and purposes, a transcontinental system. Nobody can tell me that three times a week on the northern line is a transcontinental service, particularly if that train is going to be stopping at every flag stop on the way. They will never be able to keep up the schedule and ridership will decline even more.

Once again VIA Rail is designed to fail. Neither this government nor the last one believed in rail passenger services. They talk a good line. The Minister of Transport says that he is doing this to save VIA Rail. Give me a break. That is like cutting off your legs and two arms to save your body. There is not much left. Eventually you wither and die.

This government is doing something extremely wrong to this country. There is no question about it. In responding to a question I put to him today the Prime Minister rejected the transport committee report which only called for some time to allow the royal commission, which was appointed after the fact to study the broad issue of passenger transportation, to take a focused look at rail passenger services.

Keep VIA rolling, even with the junk, for the next period of time. Not necessarily a year like has been suggested, because I think it would take a little longer than that, but I would not want to tie them down. It makes sense to give them the time because seven million people cannot be wrong. They choose VIA Rail. They do not want to ride in their cars or somebody else's car. They do not want to ride the bus. They cannot afford or do not want to take the plane.

VIA Rail passenger service is a viable option for them. Yes, it is costing the Government of Canada and therefore taxpayers a significant sum of money. There is no question about that. We on this side have argued long and hard over the years that there are ways of reducing it. The main one was through the investment in new capital equipment to lower the operating costs.

Much of that $5 billion in the last few years has gone to keep that junk rolling. When the temperature in a car is about 95 degrees you have to stop the train so you can crawl underneath the car to turn the valve. That is the problem with the system we have. It was never given a change. It was never given legislation that would allow it to pay only avoidable costs to CN and CP instead of being held ransom by them for a number of years.

Canadians across this country are saying loudly and clearly that they want the government to maintain VIA Rail and to reinvest in VIA Rail. We on this side of the House agree. In closing I would like to move, seconded by the member for Regina—Lumsden:

> That immediately following the word "services" the following words be inserted:
>
> —in particular the continuance of service on the following routes at 1989 levels: Regional Services—Halifax–Yarmouth, Halifax–Port Hawkesbury, Halifax–Sydney, Halifax–Moncton–Saint John, Moncton–Campbellton, Moncton–Edmundston, Montreal–Sherbrooke, Quebec–Mont Joli, Toronto–Havelock, Toronto–North Bay, Cochrane–Kapuskasing, Kingston–Toronto, Victoria–Courtenay; Other Services—Montreal–Trois Rivieres–Quebec (North Shore), Montreal–Ottawa–Sudbury–Winnipeg–Calgary–Vancouver (The Canadian), Montreal–Toronto, Winnipeg–Capreol.

Mr. Keyes: Madam Speaker, I just cannot let a couple of comments made by the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan, a fellow member of the transport committee go by, nor some comments made by the member opposite for Fraser Valley East.

First, the member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan refers to the government when it was in opposition, screaming and crying about the way VIA Rail, the national passenger rail service in this country, should be. Those members did that when they were in opposition. Members of the Liberal Party of Canada, Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, are standing in their place collectively saying that we cannot cut national passenger rail service.

I must remind the member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan that this party, the Liberal Party, is made up of new, dedicated, hard working members of Parliament who had nothing to say or do with the previous policy of the previous administration. I want to emphasize that by bringing forward a report released today, a report of the federal Liberal task force on VIA Rail of which I was proud to be a part. In its conclusion it states:

> It is not enough to say that we support the VIA Rail system as it currently exists. We believe that VIA Rail has the potential to serve this country without being a continual drain on the resources of the government.

That may in part also answer some of the queries from the member opposite, the member for Fraser Valley East. It continues:

> However, this can only be achieved if we have the foresight to invest now in a capital expenditure program to modernize the entire VIA Rail system.

That is to have the vision, to have the foresight, to look ahead. The report goes on:

> It is also important to allow the management of VIA Rail the flexibility and responsibility to make business decisions concerning the future of the company. We do realize that this Crown corporation must function within a public policy framework, but, just as responsibility for political decisions must rest with the government, the responsibility for business decisions must rest with the management. Presumably the management was hired to do a job; the government should let them do it.
>
> The Liberal Party task force on VIA Rail went though the process of listening to Canadians. We have done our best to reflect the aspirations that people have concerning our national rail passenger service in this document.

Also, one point that touches a nerve is the situation on the environment. The government likes to talk about the environment and its environmental record, but it is only lip service.

• (1730)

By removing 51 per cent of the trains, taking them off the map of Canada, we are putting more strain and diverting passengers who used to use the train to buses and automobiles, those vehicles which supply this environment with that deadly product, carbon dioxide. Noted environmentalists, including Dr. David Suzuki have said that if for any reason we have to put additional CO2 into our atmosphere it is wrong. That is why we call for the moratorium. Let us just take one step back. Let us have a listen to the people, to the mayors, to the premiers and to the environmentalists. Because only a true environmental study in its full capacity, not something cooked up by the Department of Transport but by the Minister of the Environment—

Mr. Benjamin: What is the question?

Mr. Keyes: It is a comment—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I may have to stop the hon. member. I must say I have a difficult time seeing the relevancy of the hon. gentleman's comments in terms of the intervention just made by the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan. However, he still may want to comment.

Mr. Angus: Madam Speaker, I have not heard revisionism like that since the recent events in the eastern bloc. The sins of the fathers are handed down to the sons. There are members of the hon. member's caucus who were around when those cuts were made and who are now front-benchers. One has to accept the reality that in opposition Liberals say one thing and in government they do the opposite.

Mr. Benjamin: You are stuck with it, buster. It's going to haunt you for years.

Mr. Dionne: Madam Speaker, if I could get the hon. member from the NDP to pipe down, I would make a few remarks.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Dionne: In 1981 we, as a government, made a mistake when we cut VIA Rail by 19 per cent.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I will have to interrupt the hon. member. There was still some time left for questions and comments. Was the hon. member rising on debate?

Mr. Dionne: On debate, yes.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I will have to recognize someone from the government side on debate. It was on questions or comments that I recognized the hon. member.

Is the hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur rising on a question or a comment?

Mr. Arseneault: Yes, Madam Speaker. I just want to make a few quick comments.

It has been said in the House many times by government members that the government has no funds. If it had funds, we would probably have VIA Rail and there would be no problem. I wish to point out to government members, including the Minister of Transport, that in estimates made by the Minister of Finance, if the government took one percentage point off the interest rates, there would be a saving of $1.6 billion in one year.

In over four years the saving would be $10 billion. In so doing the government would have enough money to fund VIA Rail as it now exists and even invest in new rolling stock.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I would like to tell the hon. member that questions and comments following an intervention by an hon. member should relate directly to the intervention just made.

Mr. Keyes: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I just want to say that we are on the subject of VIA Rail and everything that the member referred to, environmental, financial or whatever, is directly related to the remarks of the hon. member.

With all due respect, Madam Speaker, I believe that any comments we have directed toward that hon. member all have to do with that collective pot we know as VIA Rail.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The hon. member can of course debate anything that may relate to VIA Rail, which is the subject of today's motion. Following an hon. member's speech, questions or comments should be related directly to the speech that has just been given in the House. It should not be debate by itself.

Mr. Pagtakhan: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. With all due respect to the Chair, I think it is essential that we have guidance when you make a ruling such as this. Could you point out, Madam Speaker, if it is permissible, exactly what my hon. colleague said that was not relevant? I thought he was being very relevant.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I am sure the hon. member from Winnipeg does not at this time want to enter into debate with the Chair. I think that later we could look at Beauchesne's and those rules together.

The time for questions and comments is now over. I recognize on debate the hon. Minister of State for Transport.

Hon. Shirley Martin (Minister of State (Transport)): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to enter into this debate in the House. In listening to the remarks of members opposite in this last hour or so, one would think that we were cutting rail service completely in Canada, that there will be no trains left in Canada, that there will be no coast-to-coast service in this country. Nothing is further from the truth.

Yes, we have reduced the services on VIA Rail, and we have reduced them for reasons. They are reasons about which members across the way know. I think it is unfair to the public watching this debate to put forward comments that would make people think that there will be no future rail service in Canada. In fact, that is not true.

This government is committed to building a strong economy, encouraged by incentive and opportunity, an economy which is competitive with the world's trading nations. In order to fully achieve this goal we must create a solid base which will allow our economy to flourish in the coming years.

Measures which seek to control the deficit and reduce the national debt are an essential element of this foundation for the future, an element about which members opposite do not seem to have any concern whatsoever. Equally, measures which seek to establish a sound fiscal framework to sustain continued economic development are also essential to this purpose.

These objectives are reflected in this government's commitment to a sound transportation policy. Transportation is and always will be at the heart of our nation's economy. That is why we have undertaken to provide Canadians with a safe, effective and efficient transportation system. This commitment is the core around which our policy of economic regulatory reform was built.

With the advent of free trade the role played by the transportation system in our economic development has become increasingly vital. As we enter into the next decade and the next century, a cost effective transportation system is essential if Canada is to preserve and enhance its position in world trade. In order to meet this challenge we must make the best use of each mode of transportation: air, rail, marine, car, truck and bus.

Continued subsidization of a mode of transportation which costs more and more and is used less and less is not a sound investment in our future, particularly when that investment is being made with the Canadian taxpay-

ers' money. That is exactly the situation we are facing with respect to our national rail passenger network.

VIA Rail subsidy rose to an unprecedented $641 million in 1988. This translates into an average subsidy of $100 per passenger. We are asking all Canadians to pay this subsidy, but only 3 per cent of the travelling public uses this mode of transportation. Canadians have demonstrated their preference for other modes of transportation. With a market share of 84 per cent, the automobile is clearly the mode of choice.

• (1740)

Contrary to all of the rhetoric which has been bandied about in recent months, VIA Rail's performance is worsening, not improving. While revenues did increase by 13 per cent, or $26 million in 1988, costs increased by 15 per cent, or $94 million, with the result that government subsidies to VIA increased by $68 million. As you can see, Madam Speaker, prompt action had to be taken to stop this drain on the public purse.

Reducing the subsidies to VIA Rail was a difficult decision to make. We had a system that was expensive, ineffective and inefficient.

Many other countries are making decisions concerning rail passenger services based on their unique demographic and economic realities. The government's decision is based on Canadian economic and demographic realities.

Our decision has to be considered in light of the fact that we have the second largest country in the world with one of the smallest populations. VIA service must be consistent with the realities of the density of the Quebec–Windsor corridor, and also the different needs of the Atlantic Canadian and western Canadian regions.

Contrary to the wording of the motion before us today, I believe that we have taken the action necessary to ensure the future of VIA as a national, affordable and sustainable rail passenger network.

Since making this announcement we have taken every possible opportunity to discuss with Canadians the importance of this decision. All Canadians are aware that we must reduce the burden of the debt. Canadians have been asked to tighten their belts, and VIA cannot be an exception.

This government has distinguished itself during the past four years through fiscal responsibility and judicious allocation of federal financial resources. When money is scarce, it is spent where it is most needed, where it is most likely to produce results.

I invite members opposite and, indeed, all Canadians, to look at the facts and to judge for themselves the validity of the fiscal realities under which we currently labour. If we had to make difficult decisions, it is that in 1984 we inherited a legacy of debt. This is a legacy which I personally do not want to pass on to my children or to their children.

The difficult choices that we have been forced to make have allowed us to reduce the deficit and to bring the rate of inflation down to a more acceptable level—not a 22 per cent interest rate and the 13, 14 and 15 per cent unemployment rates that we had when the opposition was in government.

Responsible fiscal management, combined with sound economic policies, have paved the road to a rate of economic growth which ranks among the highest in the industrialized world. As responsible Canadians we owe it to our children to leave them with every opportunity for development that we ourselves have enjoyed.

Mr. MacLellan: Madam Speaker, I would just like to respond to what the minister said about the debt that was inherited. The debt is much worse now than it was when this government came to power in 1984.

I also want to mention the fact that this government cannot absorb—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. MacLellan: Come on! The fact is that this government just does not care. What it is doing is nickel and diming the Canadian public and letting the chances for true savings in spending go by the wayside because it may rock the boats of some of its elitist friends in big business.

So what does the government do? It picks on the people and the regions in this country which can least afford it. It allows a man like Mr. Lawless to take over as president of VIA Rail so that he can set up exactly what he wants to do and thereby create the case for CN to

reduce its activity in the regions of this country. CN is now well on the way in Cape Breton, eastern Nova Scotia—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Order, please. It being 5.45 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and to put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply pursuant to Standing Order 81(15).

The question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Call in the members.

The House divided on the amendment, which was negatived on the following division:

(Division No. 137)

YEAS

Members

Anawak	Angus
Arseneault	Assad
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)	Baker
Bélair	Bellemare
Black	Blackburn (Brant)
Blaikie	Boudria
Brewin	Butland
Caccia	Callbeck
Campbell (South West Nova)	Catterall
Clancy	Comuzzi
de Jong	Dionne
Duhamel	Fisher
Flis	Foster
Fulton	Funk
Gaffney	Gardiner
Gauthier	Gray (Windsor West)
Harvard	Harvey (Edmonton East)
Heap	Hopkins
Hovdebo	Jordan
Karpoff	Keyes
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)	Kristiansen
Laporte	LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
Lee	MacAulay
MacDonald (Dartmouth)	MacLellan
MacWilliam	Maheu
Manley	Marleau
McGuire	Mifflin
Milliken	Mills
Mitchell	Murphy
Nunziata	Nystrom
Pagtakhan	Phinney
Pickard	Proud
Prud'homme	Rideout
Riis	Robichaud
Rocheleau	Rodriguez
Simmons	Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Stewart	Taylor
Tobin	Vanclief
Volpe	Waddell
Wappel	Whittaker
Wood	Young (Gloucester)
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—83	

NAYS

Members

Anderson	Andre
Atkinson	Attewell
Beatty	Belsher
Bernier	Bertrand
Bird	Bjornson
Blackburn (Jonquière)	Blais
Blenkarn	Bosley
Bouchard (Roberval)	Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Bourgault	Boyer
Brightwell	Browes
Cadieux	Cardiff
Casey	Chadwick
Champagne (Champlain)	Chartrand
Clark (Brandon—Souris)	Clifford
Cole	Collins
Cook	Cooper
Corbeil	Corbett
Côté	Couture
Crosby (Halifax West)	Darling
DeBlois	de Cotret
Desjardins	Dobbie
Domm	Duplessis
Epp	Ferland
Fretz	Friesen
Gérin	Gibeau
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	Greene
Guilbault	Gustafson
Halliday	Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hawkes	Hockin
Hogue	Holtmann
Horning	James
Johnson	Jourdenais
Kempling	Koury
Landry	Langlois
Larrivée	Layton
Leblanc (Longueuil)	Lewis
Loiselle	Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)	MacKay
Malone	Marin
Martin (Lincoln)	Mazankowski
McDermid	McDougall (St. Paul's)
Merrithew	Monteith
Moore	Nicholson
Oberle	O'Kurley
Plourde	Porter
Redway	Ricard
Richardson	Roy-Arcelin
St-Julien	Schneider
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)	Shields
Sobeski	Soetens
Sparrow	Stevenson
Tardif	Thacker
Thompson	Thorkelson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)	Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Turner (Halton—Peel)	Valcourt
Van de Walle	Venne
Vézina	Vien
Wenman	White
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)	
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)	Worthy—119

• (1815)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I declare the amendment lost.

The next question is on the main motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Mr. Gauthier: Madam Speaker, in the interests of saving time, I think you would find there is unanimous consent for the House to apply the vote taken on the amendment to this motion, but if the government insists in reverse, we would not mind that at all.

Miss Grey: Madam Speaker, I chose not to vote on the amendment, but I would like to register a yea vote on this main motion in the interests of saving time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The House has heard the suggestion made by the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier. Is there unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The vote of the hon. member for Beaver River will be added to the yeas.

The House divided on the motion which was negatived on the following division:

(*Division No. 138*)

YEAS

Members

Anawak
Arseneault
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bélair
Black
Blaikie
Brewin
Caccia
Campbell (South West Nova)
Clancy
de Jong
Duhamel
Flis
Fulton
Gaffney
Gauthier
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hopkins
Jordan
Keyes
Kristiansen
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacAulay
MacLellan
Maheu
Marleau
Mifflin
Mills
Murphy
Nystrom
Phinney
Proud
Angus
Assad
Baker
Bellemare
Blackburn (Brant)
Boudria
Butland
Callbeck
Catterall
Comuzzi
Dionne
Fisher
Foster
Funk
Gardiner
Gray (Windsor West)
Harvard
Heap
Hovdebo
Karpoff
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Laporte
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacWilliam
Manley
McGuire
Milliken
Mitchell
Nunziata
Pagtakhan
Pickard
Prud'homme
Rideout
Robichaud
Rodriguez
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Taylor
Vanclief
Waddell
Whittaker
Young (Gloucester)
Riis
Rocheleau
Simmons
Stewart
Tobin
Volpe
Wappel
Wood
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—84

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Beatty
Bernier
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blenkarn
Bouchard (Roberval)
Bourgault
Brightwell
Cadieux
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cole
Cook
Corbeil
Côté
Crosby (Halifax West)
DeBlois
Desjardins
Domm
Epp
Fretz
Gérin
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Guilbault
Halliday
Hawkes
Hogue
Horning
Johnson
Kempling
Landry
Larrivée
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Loiselle
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Malone
Martin (Lincoln)
McDermid
Merrithew
Moore
Oberle
Plourde
Redway
Richardson
St-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van de Walle
Vézina
Wenman
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)
Andre
Attewell
Belsher
Bertrand
Bjornson
Blais
Bosley
Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Boyer
Browes
Cardiff
Chadwick
Chartrand
Clifford
Collins
Cooper
Corbett
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Dobbie
Duplessis
Ferland
Friesen
Gibeau
Greene
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hockin
Holtmann
James
Jourdenais
Koury
Langlois
Layton
Lewis
Lopez
MacKay
Marin
Mazankowski
McDougall (St. Paul's)
Monteith
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Porter
Ricard
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Shields
Soetens
Stevenson
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Valcourt
Venne
Vien
White
Worthy—119

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I declare the motion lost.

Mr. Lewis: Madam Speaker, immediately before proceeding to the rest of the votes that are normally taken at this point, I wish to advise the House that the business for tomorrow at 11 a.m. will be Bill C–49.

CONCURRENCE IN SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (B), 1989–90

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board) moved:

That Supplementary Estimates (B), 1989–90, laid upon the table Wednesday, December 6, 1989, be concurred in.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: On division.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Carried on division.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. de Cotret thereupon moved that Bill C–50, an act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the Government of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 1990, be read the first time.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: On division.

Motion agreed to and Bill read the first time.

Mr. de Cotret thereupon moved that Bill C–50, an act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the Government of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 1990, be read the second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: On division.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Carried on division.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): We would like to have the bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The bill was distributed earlier in the day by consent.

Mr. Gauthier: Madam Speaker, the bill may have been distributed but we did not get it, and until we get it we are not ready to deal with this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The Pages will be distributing copies of the bill immediately. It was done earlier, by unanimous consent. I thought the bill had been distributed to all hon. members.

• (1820)

I am advised that the bill has been distributed. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: On division.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I declare the motion carried.

Bill read the second time and the House went into committee thereon, Mrs. Champagne in the chair.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Shall Clause 2 carry?

The hon. member for Windsor West on a point of order.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): Madam Chairperson, I want to ask the President of the Treasury Board the customary question. I hope he can give us the assurance that this bill is in the usual form and does not depart therefrom.

Mr. de Cotret: The bill is the same as the bills for other Supplementary Estimates in previous years.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Prud'homme: Madam Chairman, on a point of order.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: The hon. member for Saint–Denis, on a point of order.

Mr. Prud'homme: Madam Chairman, the matter I am about to raise has been raised for many years in the House. When we get a bill of this kind which is always in English alphabetical order, members who, like me, like to be able to work in French, are always switching from page to page because there is no alphabetical order in French.

An Hon. Member: Right on, Marcel!

Mr. Prud'homme: I really wish that in future, and I don't intend to make an issue of it today and prevent consideration of this bill—after all, I think that I am a fairly reasonable person—I believe the Department of Justice, and I see the Minister of Justice who seems to agree, might be able to provide for the requisite accommodation in this bill so that—–I realize it is easier to go by alphabetical order in English. But for instance, if I am looking for "Affaires extérieures" I have to—–

[*English*]

If you would like, I may make that point in English, if you want me to. It is just to see if, once in a while, members are sensitive enough to understand what many members have to go through all the time.

[*Translation*]

So without getting into any kind of a debate today, Madam Chairman, I hope that as of today we could take a considered look at this problem and perhaps one of these days something will be done about a problem that was often raised in this House well before my time.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: The point just raised by the hon. member for Saint-Denis has been raised previously in the House on many occasions. I agree that it would be appropriate if the minister responsible would pursue the matter and find out whether something can be done about responding to the request made by the hon. member for Saint-Denis and by other members as well. I am sure the minister would like to look into this as soon as possible.

[*English*]

Shall Clause 2 carry?

Some Hon. Members: On division.

Clause agreed to.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Shall Clause 3 carry?

Some Hon. Members: On division.

Clause agreed to.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Shall Clause 4 carry?

Some Hon. Members: On division.

Clause agreed to.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Shall Clause 5 carry?

Some Hon. Members: On division.

Clause agreed to.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Shall Clause 6 carry?

Some Hon. Members: On division.

Clause agreed to.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Shall the Schedule carry?

Some Hon. Members: On division.

Schedule agreed to.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Shall Clause 1 carry?

Some Hon. Members: On division.

Clause agreed to.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Shall the preamble carry?

Some Hon. Members: On division.

Preamble agreed to.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Shall the title carry?

Some Hon. Members: On division.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported.

[*Translation*]

Mr. de Cotret moved that the bill be concurred in.

Some Hon. Members: On division.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. de Cotret moved that the bill be read the third time and do pass.

Some Hon. Members: On division.

Motion agreed to and bill read the third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): It being 6.21 p.m., the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 6.28 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, December 7, 1989

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the three House leaders with respect to the terrible tragedy that took place in Montreal yesterday.

There was a feeling among the House leaders that the House should comment on this particular tragedy. We have agreed that at 2.15 p.m., after the usual Statements by Members and immediately prior to Question Period commencing, a representative from each of the three Parties would be recognized in the House for a brief statement of condolence to the victims and their families, those who were injured, and those who witnessed the tragedy.

I do not think we need a House order to do that, but I did want to advise the House that this agreement had been reached among the parties.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, we agree with this procedure. At 2.15, we will have an opportunity to express our sympathy for the relatives, friends and witnesses of this terrible incident, for the victims of a madman.

[*English*]

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, we were all shocked at the news yesterday of the terrible tragedy in Montreal. Our hearts went out to the victims and all of those who were part one way or another of the terrible incident.

We would certainly like to join with the House in making appropriate comments at 2.15 today.

POINT OF ORDER

SUPPLY DAY MOTIONS—SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: I am going to ask the indulgence of the House. Before Routine Proceedings I have two rulings to make. The first is on a point of order raised by the hon. parliamentary secretary. I will be dealing immediately thereafter with the question of privilege or perhaps more properly a question of contempt raised by the hon. member for Victoria.

On Monday, October 30, 1989, the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader raised as a point of order several questions regarding the conduct of business on a supply day.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands and several others offered comments on these questions. I want to thank members for their contributions to this debate on an interesting procedural matter. I have considered the matter carefully and am now prepared to respond.

[*Translation*]

The first question asked by the parliamentary secretary was whether it was necessary for the government to designate a supply day before the opposition can give notice of a motion they want debated. The parliamentary Secretary maintained that it was a necessary precondition. The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands suggested that in this specific case it was not necessary and that, in any case, it had been done in anticipation of Friday being a votable supply day.

[*English*]

According to our rules and practice, the purpose of notice is to give warning to the House of an item of business that might be raised for debate. The notice does not necessarily mean that the item will actually be debated or that it will be debated any time soon.

Speaker's Ruling

The Order Paper contains numerous items for which notice has been given but which have not yet been debated. The parliamentary secretary suggested that proceedings on supply days are different.

While I agree that certain aspects of supply have a character distinct from other proceedings, it seems to me that unless the rules on supply are explicit, the usual practices should be followed. This is the case with notice.

It is competent for any opposition member to file a motion that might be debated on a supply day. Normally what happens is that members file supply day motions at the latest possible moment after a day has been designated by the government, but this does not preclude the right to give notice of the supply motion well in advance of a supply day. Indeed this has happened.

In 1982 a supply day motion originally filed on February 11 remained on the Notice Paper for almost six weeks and through three supply days before being taken up on the final allotted day in the supply period ending late in March. While it may be unusual to have the supply day motion filed well in advance of a designated day, it is not prohibited by either our rules or our practice.

As his second point, the parliamentary secretary asked a question relating to the intent of Standing Order 81(12)(c), which gives the Speaker the power to select opposition motions on allotted days when notice has been given of more than one. He felt that the idea behind this Standing Order was to cover those situations where motions had been put on notice by both of the opposition parties, but that it was not the intention that one party could put down more than one notice or the same notice but in the name of another hon. member.

The recognition of two opposition parties is not explicitly contemplated in the Standing Orders. Speakers in the past have indicated that they have selected motions with a view to the proportional balance of the opposition parties in the House, but this does not necessarily address the entire issue of selection.

Other considerations might need to be taken into account, particularly in instances where there are several notices, some of which could be submitted by members of the same party. The date of the notice, the sponsor of the motion, the subject matter raised and whether the motion is votable or not can be weighed by the Speaker when making a final decision.

I would agree with the parliamentary secretary that the political parties are factored into any decision, but I would have to add that it is not the only criterion used nor is it necessarily the most important one and, as I have stated earlier, there is nothing in the Standing Orders which in any way limits the number of notices which may be given.

[*Translation*]

The third question of the parliamentary secretary has to do with the withdrawal of a notice of motion. The parliamentary secretary asks if it is in order "for any or all notices for such motions to be withdrawn without the consent of the House." The simple answer to this question is yes. As long as a motion has not been proposed to the House, as long as the House is not properly seized of the motion, then it is still only a notice and it remains possible for the sponsor to secure its withdrawal unilaterally. The sponsor of the notice of motion could even refuse to move it when the order is called and it would be dropped. Once it is in the possession of the House, however, the motion becomes the property of the House and it is the House which must then consent to the motion being withdrawn from further consideration or possible decision.

• (1110)

[*English*]

The authorities are clear on this. Beauchesne, Bourinot and May all confirm that members retain the right to withdraw notices of motions before they have been proposed to the House. See, for example, Beauchesne's Fifth Edition, Citation 398 on page 144 and Bourinot Fourth Edition, page 296 where one reads:

> A notice of motion may be withdrawn at any time by the member upon merely notifying the Clerk of the House of his desire so to do.

British practices are comparable to our own with respect to withdrawal of notice, and I would refer members to pages 353 and 377 of May's Twentieth Edition: "Notice withdrawals are usually done by a letter to the Clerk signed by the member concerned."

In the fourth issue raised by the parliamentary secretary I am asked to deal with the power of selection as set out in Standing Order 81(12)(c). In the 20 years that this

rule has been part of our Standing Orders the Chair has only occasionally been obliged to select motions for debate on a supply day.

The task is perhaps not as daunting as the parliamentary secretary suggests. It is not so much impossible as unenviable. As I pointed out earlier, there are certain criteria which the Speaker uses in evaluating the supply day motion when more than one has been filed.

Speakers in the past have tried to announce to the House as soon as they are able what motion will be selected for the supply day, but this may not always be satisfactory given that notices can be filed up to the very last minute, that is, up to six o'clock in the evening prior to a supply day or five o'clock on a Friday thus leaving little time for members to prepare for a debate.

While the Speaker can be sympathetic to the pressures exerted on members who routinely have to come into the House with speeches on short notice, there is little that the Chair can do except to enforce the rules as they are written and as they have been applied for two decades since the rules of supply have been changed.

[*Translation*]

I hope that this explanation of the rules relating to opposition day motions and notice has been helpful to the parliamentary secretary and to the House and I thank the member for giving me the opportunity to clarify the matter.

* * *

[*English*]

PRIVILEGE

GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS—SPEAKER'S RULING

Last Monday, on December 4, the hon. member for Victoria rose on a question of privilege to bring to the attention of the Chair and the House a matter which he asserted constituted a contempt of Parliament.

The matter related to the announced appointment of several members of the Security Intelligence Review Committee including the chairman of that committee. According to the hon. member the appointments were made in violation of the statutory requirement for consultation between the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and the leaders of all other recognized parties in the House.

Because the consultation was in the form of a letter written two days before the announcement was made, the hon. member for Victoria claims that the consultative process was not adequately followed and that the actions amount to a contempt of Parliament.

[*Translation*]

The hon. Minister of Justice (Mr. Lewis) claimed that there was no question of privilege. He argued that the consultative process was followed in that the Prime Minister solicited the advice of the Leader of the Opposition and also the Leader of the New Democratic Party. The Minister also indicated that the hon. member for Victoria ought not to be raising this issue since the statute refers only to consultation between the head of government and the opposition party leaders of the House. The Minister went further to suggest if the member for Victoria truly felt that appointments were invalid in law, that "he would have to argue that in another court or in another forum."

Other hon. members also contributed to the discussion of the question. Let me express my appreciation to all hon. members for their presentations on this issue.

[*English*]

In ruling let me begin by saying that a question of privilege must involve some restriction upon rights and immunities historically claimed by the House and enjoyed by all members collectively and individually in the performance of their duties. In my view the matter of the process to be followed by law in the appointment of certain officials does not infringe on any of those rights and cannot therefore constitute a question of privilege.

Does the complaint involve a contempt of Parliament? A contempt must in some measure at least suggest a disregard for the rightful authority and dignity of Parliament. The provisions of the law in this case make no explicit reference to Parliament.

Section 34(1) of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act describes a process which is to be followed antecedent to the appointment of certain officials. The process involves, as I have already mentioned, certain specific individuals—the Prime Minister and the leaders of the recognized opposition parties of the House. Parliament is not directly implicated in this process and therefore I would be reluctant to agree that a question as to the adequate compliance with the provisions of the appointment process in the act could amount to a

contempt of Parliament. While it may be a question for the courts to decide upon as to whether or not the law has been respected in this instance, it does not constitute a contempt of the House.

In summary, therefore, the issue raised is neither a question of privilege nor a contempt. It is rather a question of law, and consequently I cannot offer my opinion as to the merits of the case either as argued by the hon. member for Victoria or as rebutted by the Minister of Justice. The Chair is not in a position to decide upon questions of law. That is a matter best left to the courts.

I think I should add, in the interests of the hon. member for Victoria and others who are concerned about this and also in fairness to the government, that this ruling deals only with the question of privilege or contempt. It does not of course preclude questions being asked in this chamber with respect to the other factors surrounding the incidents which have been brought to the attention of the Chair.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

TABLING OF ANNUAL REPORT

Hon. Gerry Weiner (Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Citizenship)): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to table today, in both official languages, the first annual report to Parliament on the matters relating to official languages for which I am responsible.

[*Translation*]

The report I am tabling pursuant to Section 44 of the Official Languages Act relates to fiscal year 1988-89.

[*English*]

ORDER IN COUNCIL

TABLING AND REFERENCE OF APPOINTMENTS

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, a number of order in council appointments which were made by the government.

Pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 110(1), these are deemed referred to the appropriate standing committees, a list of which is attached.

* * *

PETITIONS

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I have the duty and honour to present a number of petitions today.

The first is signed by 25 residents of Thunder Bay and area who are concerned about the government's legislation dealing with unemployment insurance. It calls upon Parliament to reject these cuts in the unemployment insurance system, to propose more meaningful reforms and to concentrate on labour force development strategy combined with a full employment policy and effective regional development policy.

NORTHERN TAX ALLOWANCE

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by 80 residents of the community of Atikokan who are upset that the committee appointed by the Government of Canada to review the northern tax allowance has not only refused to include them in the geographic area but has removed many other communities.

They call upon Parliament to declare the township of Atikokan and the surrounding area to be eligible for the northern residence deduction.

• (1120)

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): I have two petitions, bearing a total of 259 names of residents from the communities of Hurkett, Dorion, Kaministiquia and Thunder Bay, primarily collected at the Family Diner in Victoriaville.

All these petitioners call upon Parliament to maintain the existing VIA network, to upgrade VIA equipment, and to guarantee VIA sufficient support to carry out its mandate to provide passenger service.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Finally, Madam Speaker, I have a petition bearing the names of 115 residents of Atikokan and 25 residents of Balmertown, in northwestern Ontario, members of Local 950 of the United Steelworkers of America, all of whom object to the government's proposal for the goods and services tax.

They call upon Parliament to cease with this proposal which they believe will shift the tax burden on to ordinary Canadians through a regressive consumption tax instead of through real tax reform.

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Madam Speaker, I rise, pursuant to Standing Order 36, to present a petition duly signed by the clerk.

There are 40 signatures on this petition of people from Shearstown, Bay Roberts, Harbour Grace and Bryants Cove. They are concerned that the unemployment insurance system, which is very vital to their well-being and is providing income protection to them, will be changed significantly, to the point where it is going to affect them drastically. They are concerned about the promises that were made and are not being kept. They are terribly concerned about the $2.5 billion that is going to be taken away from them in the long run.

They are joined by my constituents from Old Shop, Blaketown, Upper Island Cove and other areas. They are calling on Parliament to reject Bill C-21 that is causing us so much grief in my constituency and to get on with some meaningful changes, particularly in the job development area.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Madam Speaker, I rise, pursuant to Standing Order 36, with the latest in what seems to be a never ending series of petitions on the subject of VIA Rail. These petitioners are particularly upset by the imminent closure of the Canadian line which is one of the best used and has one of the best cost recoveries of any section of the VIA network.

There are some 311 signatures on four separate petitions calling on Parliament to maintain VIA Rail's present national network, to upgrade VIA Rail with new equipment, and to give VIA Rail a sufficient budget to maintain its national mandate for passenger service.

The use of the line is evidenced by the large number of communities along the railway and by the many tourists who use that line and overuse it in the summertime from Golden, Sicamous, Kamloops, Revelstoke, Nakusp, Mica, Trail, Nelson, Ganges, Comox, Kelowna, Vancouver, Salmon Arm, Burnaby, Castlegar, Victoria, North Vancouver, Sparwood, Chetwynd, Whistler, Coquitlam, Vernon, Surrey, Calgary and Edmonton, Alberta, Winnipeg, Manitoba, and even two signatories from Sweden.

Mr. Gardiner All aboard!

[*Translation*]

OPPOSITION TO TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATION ON TAX BENEFITS FOR NORTHERN AND ISOLATED AREAS

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am tabling a petition signed by some men and women of Lebel-sur-Quévillon. They reject the recommendations of the task force on tax benefits for northern and isolated areas because this task force did not consider that in 1989, the government of Quebec recognizes northern Quebec as beginning at the 49th parallel in Abitibi and that places like Lebel-sur-Quévillon, Joutel, Matagami and Chapais were not consulted on their isolation in northern Quebec before this report was tabled in the House of Commons on October 27.

[*English*]

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the duty and honour to present a petition approved as to form and signed by approximately 3,342 constituents.

Briefly put, the signatories believe as do I that the proposed goods and services tax would be "inflationary, regressive and would reduce the standard of living of Canadians generally".

They therefore call upon all members of Parliament to reject any such legislation put before this House.

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions to present to the House today, pursuant to Standing Order 36.

The first is signed by residents primarily of 100 Mile House, British Columbia, and also Lac La Hache.

The petitioners express concern about this tax crazy government and its plan to introduce a goods and services tax. They call upon Parliament to reform the taxation system so that there is an effective minimum tax on wealthy individuals and corporations and to pursue a number of other measures that will ensure we have a fairer tax system.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Madam Speaker, the second petition, also certified correct under Standing Order 36, is with regard to VIA Rail and is signed by residents in the province of Ontario who express their concern about this government's cuts to VIA Rail.

They call upon Parliament to maintain VIA Rail, to upgrade it with new equipment, and to give VIA a sufficient budget to maintain its national mandate.

I know they share my concern that probably the next step under this government will be to introduce legislation to create VIA Rail in HO scale, and that is not what we want in this country.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to present a petition on behalf of a number of western Canadians, pursuant to Standing Order 36 and certified correct by the clerk of petitions.

If I could summarize, the petitioners simply cannot believe that the government would actually impose a tax on diapers and coffins and everything in between. Virtually anything that moves is going to be taxed at 9 per cent.

The petitioners list a whole range of things which I will not take time to read, but there must be at least a dozen different reasons why they oppose the tax. They simply ask the government to reject the proposed goods and services tax, to reform our tax system with a minimum corporate tax, and to ensure that there is no taxation on essential goods such as haircuts, certain food products and the like.

The petition goes on for pages and pages.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Madam Speaker, I also have a petition on another matter relating to the ongoing saga of thousands of Canadians speaking out every day against the government's decision to reduce passenger rail service in Canada.

The petitioners point out that we are virtually the only country in the world that is doing this. Because of the fact that passenger rail service is environmentally friendly in terms of a way to travel, most other countries are expanding, investing and modernizing their passenger rail, whereas this government in its traditional fashion is curtailing and eliminating this service in large parts of the country.

The petitioners are asking the government to come to its senses and do what every other western industrialized nation is doing, that is, expand and modernize passenger rail service.

[*Translation*]

OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to present today a petition signed by over 2,000 citizens who oppose the government's proposed tax, the goods and services tax.

The community is very disturbed, shocked and annoyed to see that for the fist time in history, there will be a federal tax on services. Instead of only some products, on which the manufacturers' tax has been increased, now all or nearly all products will be taxed. We have not yet seen the details of the proposal. Now services! In the community, merchants are seriously concerned, as are consumers. Moreover, the interest rater are real cause for concern.

[*English*]

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Madam Speaker, it is my honour today to present three petitions signed by many concerned Canadians who object to the proposed goods and services tax. They believe that this new tax will cause higher inflation, higher interest rates, and higher unemployment.

Therefore they call upon the government to reject this proposed goods and services tax.

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain): Madam Speaker, today I have the privilege and duty to present petitions signed by a few hundred more residents of Hamilton Mountain who are against the proposed 9 per cent goods and service tax. The petitioners believe that it will place an unnecessary burden on the low and middle income Canadians.

The petitioners humbly pray and call upon this House to reject the 9 per cent goods and service tax proposal.

• (1130)

BILL 178

Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Prince Edward—Hastings): Madam Speaker, I have petitions this morning on three different topics. The first is a petition from some 35 people in my riding of Prince Edward—Hastings calling upon the government to pass a resolution of the House of Commons urging the Governor General In Council to give full force and effect to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms by the exercising of its constitutional power of disallowance with respect to Bill 178 of the province of Quebec.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Prince Edward—Hastings): I have a group of petitions again this morning, Madam Speaker, calling upon the government to reconsider its ludicrous cuts and alterations to VIA Rail passenger service in Canada.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Prince Edward—Hastings): I also have some 35 petitions with the names of 2,000 people who are calling upon the government to reconsider and go back to the drawing board on the goods and services tax.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Madam Speaker, I want to present a petition on behalf of a couple of hundred Canadians who again call upon Parliament to reject the proposed goods and services tax. They note in their petition the increase by over 50 per cent in the manufacturers' sale tax which this is supposed to replace and question that and other tax increases that Canadians have suffered in the last number of years. They are concerned about the imposition of the goods and services tax and the unfair hardship it will cause to low and middle-income Canadians.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Madam Speaker, it is my privilege to stand this morning and present a petition, duly authorized by Standing Order 36, on behalf of 36 Canadians from such centres as Toronto, Etobicoke, and Waterloo, who are condemning the government for the $400 million cuts it is making to VIA Rail. They point out that this is going to result in a serious devaluation of passenger service in Canada and will result in layoffs of Canadian workers in the railway industry. They call upon the government to upgrade VIA Rail to the standard that the mandate given to VIA calls for rather than to take these drastic measures and cut services to people who desperately need them.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I ask that all question be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Shall all questions stand?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

GOVERNMENT SERVICES RESUMPTION ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board) moved that Bill C–49, an Act to provide for the resumption of certain government services, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, I rise in the House today to introduce the second reading of Bill C–49, an Act to provide for the resumption of certain government services.

Madam Speaker, hon. members are aware that ships' crews have now been on strike for three weeks and that hospital services employees went on strike last week.

Clearly, if we do not terminate the strike action taken by these two groups, the health and safety of Canadians will be threatened.

That is why the government has acted without delay to order these employees back to work.

[*English*]

Let me say as I stated yesterday in this House, even with the legislation introduced, I would be willing to negotiate. I will repeat that commitment. I am available and I will be willing to negotiate any time so that we can reach a mutually agreeable negotiated settlement.

Members of the House are aware of the inherent dangers and the increased risk to the safety and security of Canadians caused by these two strikes. Where the services provided by the employees are in the interest of safety and security of the public, it is particularly important that the parties negotiate seriously and responsibly to reach a settlement. Now this may require considerable skill. It certainly requires a willingness to compromise and, perhaps, most of all, perserverence. We owe nothing less to the Canadians we serve. It is the public who suffers the consequences of the denial of government services and many of those services are essential to health, safety and security. The government is not prepared to wait any longer.

Canadians must be able to count on the Coast Guard to rescue them. Canadians must be able to navigate safely in Canadian waters. Canadian veterans must be able to count on being given proper care.

I want to deal for a moment with some clear examples that show why we must act now. Let me point out to all hon. members the importance of safe navigation in the St. Lawrence Seaway. Traffic passing through the system include ships carrying grain, coal, iron ore and many other essential products. Many Canadian jobs are dependent on the reliable and safe operations of the Seaway. People who work in our refineries, in the aluminum industry, the Port of Montreal, all depend on the safe and secure passage of ships in the St. Lawrence.

The western Canadian grain farmers rely heavily on our normally dependable shipping system.

The early closure of the Seaway caused by this labour dispute affects Canadian jobs throughout Canada. We are very concerned also about the health and safety issues in the case of health service workers.

[*Translation*]

There are currently 726 veterans requiring care at Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Hospital, one-third of whom are bedridden. Rideau Hospital has 131 veterans. In Saskatoon, 31 veterans are now in hospital, while another 29 have had to be sent home or transferred to other hospitals.

[*English*]

We cannot jeopardize the health of veterans, many of whom are disabled or chronic care patients. These people have served their country with honour and pride, in difficult times, and we must ensure their care is not put in jeopardy by this work stoppage.

With little prospect of a settlement through the normal collective bargaining process, it is becoming increasingly difficult for management to make sure that all essential services are being carried out. The government must therefore become the defender of the public interest. The bill before this House provides for an immediate return to work by all ships' crews and hospital services employees and for binding conciliations on the issues.

[*Translation*]

We can be proud of our record in the federal Public Service, when 95 per cent of the agreements have been settled without employees having to resort to strike action.

[*English*]

I wish to take a moment to outline the specific provisions of the legislation. As I indicated, the bill provides for an immediate return by ships' crews and hospital services employees. It also requires that the Public Service Alliance of Canada call a halt to the two strikes and inform striking employees that they are to resume their duties. If the law is ignored, employees who continue to strike will face fines of between $500 and $1000 a day. Union representatives who fail to comply could be fined between $10,000 and $50,000 a day and the union itself could be fined between $50,000 and $100,000 a day.

The government is not proposing to legislate a settlement. It is providing, with this legislation, a process for a fair and equitable resolution of these disputes.

• (1140)

Immediately following the passage of the legislation, the chairman of the Public Service Staff Relations Board will establish a binding conciliation board for each of the two groups. Each party will then nominate someone to represent their interests in the binding conciliation process. The two boards will have 90 days to resolve outstanding issues. Should a conciliation board fail to resolve the issues it will render a decision that will be binding on both parties.

The government could have imposed its own settlement but as you can see we are approaching the problem with a much more open mind. We will solve the critical issue in a manner that is as fair and equitable as possible.

[*Translation*]

Ships' crews and hospital services are the last two groups represented by the Public Service Alliance of Canada in the current round of negotiations for a collective agreement. Last March, a temporary agreement was reached with the alliance for 27 groups covering 160,000 employees. Three groups rejected the agreement, which provided for a contract spread over 42 months and an annual wage increase of 4.1 per cent, a settlement I feel is reasonable and fair.

[*English*]

Madam Speaker, every effort has been made to reach a settlement with both of the groups that are still outstanding. For ship's crews workers in terms of pay equity, for example, we offered to establish, immediately upon signing, the agreement of pay equity between the east coast and the west coast.

In terms of meeting hospital services workers' demands *vis-à-vis* pay equity we have already acted. Even though this is not an issue in this dispute, some members have referred erroneously to it as an issue. I want to set the record straight. Retroactive pay adjustments totalling $28 million have already been paid out. We are in the process of paying another $10 million. We are living up to our obligations, no less.

All these responsible efforts at reaching settlements through the normal process have failed. However, at no point can the government let a clash of wills take precedence over the safety and security of the public. We must intervene and we are doing so in the fairest way possible by submitting both sides to the decision of an independent third party.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate the government's resolve to ensure the health, safety and security of Canadians, and equally the government's resolve to ensure that its employees are dealt with in a fair and equitable manner. We believe that this bill provides for both. I call upon all members of this House to co-operate in ensuring speedy passage of this legislation. It is legislation that is in the national interest. It is legislation that will allow the government to meet those two resolves; ensuring the safety, security and health of Canadians, and providing for a fair and equitable manner of resolving a conflict that now appears to be in a stalemate. I ask colleagues on the other side of the House to sit, discuss, debate this bill but I also ask them to give it speedy resolution. Thank you very much.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Madam Speaker, the fact that this bill is before us at all today is the result of the failure of the government to deal fairly with its employees, to act expeditiously and properly when it should have acted. It is the end of a sorry path of negligence, administrative bungling and mistakes on the part of the government. It is part of a pattern that we have been attacking in this House on debate on a number of issues.

We see here a failure of the government to act when it should have acted to protect the safety, health and security of Canadians through proper legal channels at the proper time.

We see a failure to bargain in good faith, the use at every step of every possible means of delaying the process of collective bargaining. We see a total lack of respect for the people who work for Canada, and particularly we see a determination that those at the lowest end of the salary scale, working for the people of Canada, are the ones who will bear the brunt of the government's arrogance and mismanagement.

We have seen this in a number of other pieces of legislation that we have spoken on in this House, whether it is the unemployment insurance bill or the clawback of Old Age Security, or the clawback of family allowances or tax reform. It is those who are most

vulnerable who are hit by the policies of this government.

This legislation is attempting to put an end to two strikes that are going on. The ships' crew workers have been on strike since November 11. The hospital service workers have been on strike since November 30. Both groups have been without a contract for two years. Both groups are among the lowest paid groups in the Government of Canada.

One of the most fundamental freedoms in a free society is the right to work and the right to withhold work, to bargain for decent wages and decent working conditions and to organize with other workers to do that.

Canada is a signatory to a number of international conventions that legitimize those rights, that validate those rights, that intend to protect those rights as fundamental human rights regardless of where one lives in the world. It is a right that should only be abrogated for the most serious of reasons in the national interest.

I listened carefully to the minister's reply to my question yesterday when I asked what the justification was for this extreme measure. I listened carefully again today to the documentation on the serious nature of the situation that requires withdrawing the fundamental human right to strike, withdrawing services as a means of bargaining for more favourable and adequate compensation, more favourable working conditions and appropriate recompense for the work one does.

What I heard yesterday causes me a great deal of concern. The minister talked about the failure of negotiation, with only a passing mention of public safety and security.

I heard the minister say that the real reason for the legislation is to break an impasse that does not seem to be able to be resolved through negotiations. Throughout most of his answer, he spoke about the failure of negotiations and said very little about public safety and public security.

Again this morning I heard very little documentation of what is the severe risk to the national interest that demands the withdrawal of a fundamental right of workers in a free and democratic society.

The minister referred to a letter from the president of the Professional Institute of Public Servants of Canada in which he talked about the consequences of the disruption, the costs, the effects on research activities of the Government of Canada and on the maritime economy of our country, implying that the letter was written in support of back-to-work legislation. In fact, the president of the Professional Institute of the Public Service said: "I would urge you to encourage your officials to work toward an early resolution of the conflict and to ensure that they have appropriate mandates to successfully conclude these negotiations in the best interest of the party and the country as a whole". That letter is certainly not an endorsement of back-to-work legislation.

• (1150)

On the other hand, we had the Minister of Transport assuring the House only two days ago that it is not a question of safety, that the safety of the public is protected. We have the President of Treasury Board ensuring the House last week that all contingency plans have been put in place to protect the safety and security of the public.

If those two ministers were accurate in the assurances they were giving the House, I can only ask them what has changed since then. Where is the sudden risk to the safety and security of the country that both ministers assured us was well in hand and well under control?

I think it is important for the House to know about these people whom the government is legislating back to work, what they do and the value of that work to Canadian society. These people are among the lowest paid workers in the federal Public Service. Their beginning wages and even their average wages are below the poverty level in every province in this country. Some of them do the most dangerous and dirtiest work that needs to be done and yet work that is essential to Canadians who use our waterways, essential to people who use national defence medical facilities, essential to our veterans to get the care and the caring that they need in their old age.

Let me just give some examples. The ships' crew workers keep our harbours and our shipping lanes safe and operating. We know that in a country like ours these are in fact the vehicles of all our economic activity. These people put out to sea to rescue and safeguard the lives of others at great risk to their own lives. They

dredge our harbours, they run our ferries, they leave their families sometimes for months at a time. They can spend three or four months at a time on a ship in the Arctic.

What is the effect of their not working? We saw it just 10 days ago when 1,700 lobster fishermen put out to sea in high waves and high winds in support of an $85 million industry for Canada. Those fishermen put out to sea without the normal search and rescue operations that safeguard their lives and safeguard their contributions to the economy of this country.

The cost of not having these people working is $2 million a day to ships that are trapped in the seaway system and in the Great Lakes system. We are seeing grain not being able to move out of the prairies and into the shipping system. Contracts are perhaps being abrogated. Grain is not meeting that important window of opportunity for shipping. We are seeing our inability to respond to environmental spills. We are seeing overfishing in Canada's fishing grounds because these ships' crews are not out there patrolling and protecting an important resource of Atlantic and Pacific Canada.

We see ships moving through the Great Lakes system and through the seaway system without adequate guide services, without adequate navigational aids and we see those ships carrying chemicals, crude and refined oil and we should realize that without the navigational aids provided by these ships' crews workers that passage is not as safe and not as secure as it should be.

One may wonder why the ships' crews workers are so adamant about getting a decent settlement this time. The last collective bargaining for their previous contract produced the conciliation board's report that recommended a settlement.

This government chose to ignore that settlement because it had these people designated as essential workers and it knew they could not go on strike. The government ignored that conciliation board report and imposed its own settlement.

I want to talk about the hospital services workers. These are the orderlies, the nursing assistants, cooks, cleaners, seamstresses, the people who provide all of the essential services in both National Defence hospitals and veterans homes. They provide the community health services to our veterans. They care for our veterans who are elderly or disabled, those whom time and injury have robbed of ability to care for themselves, or in many cases even to relate to the world on a day to day basis. They feed them, bathe them, clean their soiled linen.

The effects are less visible, but no less real than the scenes we have seen of the shipping lanes in the last few days. We have people in these institutions getting inadequate meals, lacking personal care, with not enough attention to their needs for cleanliness and just plain personal attention.

I repeat, both these groups are among the lowest paid workers. Both are seeing their ability to provide for their families whittled away as this contract drags on over two years. Inflation has eaten into their purchasing power. The government knows that the longer it delays the more taxes it gets to collect on these wages.

Lest you think I am exaggerating, let me say that these workers start at $16,000 to $18,000 a year. The average person is earning in the very low $20,000s. Government ministers sit in their fancy offices collecting a fat pay cheque and drafting laws to force these people back to work at those wages.

I said earlier that the reason we find ourselves in this position today is because of government bungling, government arrogance, government mismanagement over the last two years. If the government is concerned about the safety, security and health of Canadians, it has a perfectly legal tool to use to protect the safety and security of the public in case of a work stoppage. That tool is called "designating essential workers". Once the contract ends and the bargaining agent has said it is ready to get down to negotiating a new contract, all the government has to do is table a list of people that it thinks are essential workers. Those people are then prevented from going on strike.

Treasury Board failed to do that. It failed to do it because of what is called "administrative ineptitude" by the Public Service Staff Relations Board's negligence. It failed to do it because it arrogantly thought that it did not have to live under the laws passed by this Parliament.

The deadline for designating people came and went. Nine departments with essential services workers failed to get their lists in. Treasury Board failed to make sure that it was getting done. It thought it could just go after the fact, saying it made a mistake and needs these workers designated. It certainly wants to designate a lot of workers. Over 100 per cent of the ships' crews workers were to be designated and over 100 per cent of the

hospital services workers were to be designated. They failed to do that.

• (1200)

Mr. Friesen: How do you designate over 100 per cent?

Mrs. Catterall: Ask Treasury Board how they can designate over 100 per cent. I am sure they will be happy to explain it to you.

They failed to do that and then they had the temerity to go to the Public Service Staff Relations Board and say, "Yes, we have not lived within the law but please let us do it anyway".

What they tried to prove, and this eventually went to the Federal Court, is that when the government passes a law that says Treasury Board shall, it does not really mean shall, it means might if you feel like it. I think the meaning of the word "shall" in legislation is pretty darn clear. That is Parliament saying, "This must be done".

The arrogance was such that through the Public Service Staff Relations Board, through the court process, they offered no justification as to why they had not been able to meet the deadline because there was no justification. Good management knows four years ahead of time or three years ahead of time when a contract ends. If it is responsible at all and it believes it has essential workers, it has that list ready to be tabled at any time and it keeps it updated.

It really is no wonder that the Public Service Staff Relations Board eventually said, and the court eventually agreed, that it is the government's own inefficiency, negligence and lack of foresight that has caused this problem and do not expect us to get you out of it.

Well, that was the first goof. But instead of just admitting it and getting on with the business of being a reasonable employer and getting into negotiations, the government went to the Public Service Staff Relations Board, then to the Federal Court, then it went back to the Public Service Staff Relations Board and was told yes, it had to obey the laws of Parliament, and it went back to the court to appeal that.

But it did not end there because in September when that decision finally came down from the Federal Court, a spokesman from Treasury Board, back then in September, when it had not even gone to conciliation, said, "We might have to bring in back-to-work legislation". Well, here we are in December and it is back-to-work legislation on the table.

That is a great attitude to take into conciliation and it is not much wonder the conciliation board, a couple of weeks later, had to say, "The parties are so far apart we cannot even make any recommendations". One of the parties was already before the conciliation saying, "Well we will bring in back-to-work legislation".

It did not stop there though. When the hospital services went on strike, the government immediately went to court to get injunctions to prevent them from exercising their legal rights to have picket lines. From east coast to west coast, in Saskatoon, in Whitehorse, in Halifax, in Victoria, in Montreal and in Ottawa, the government got injunctions to stop people from having picket lines.

Does the government really believe that people who go into our hospitals and go into our veterans' homes to clean, to cook, to care for and to sew are so dangerous that they cannot be allowed to hold a picket line outside, that these people earning $18,000 or $19,000 a year have to be prevented from even walking in front of their places of employment with pickets?

I guess the question we have to ask is if this is the government's only alternative. We see that it has already missed several alternatives. It had to act like a good employer and to get reasonable settlements with these employees.

To answer that question we have to ask, why are these groups on strike? What are their outrageous demands that this government is not prepared to meet? What outrageous things are they force them back to work?

First, we have ships' crews workers who really feel that when they risk their lives, it really should not matter if it is in eastern Canada or in western Canada. We have the ridiculous situation of a line that runs up through

Canada virtually along the Manitoba border and up to Cambridge Bay. If you dock on the east side of the wharf at Cambridge Bay, you get paid $1,800 less if you are coast guard worker than if you dock on the west side of the same wharf at Cambridge Bay because then you are a west side coast guard worker. They want that pay inequity corrected.

The minister has said, "That is on the table. The day they sign the contract, we are prepared to correct it". Well, it has taken them a long time to get to that point.

What the minister did not mention is that there are all kinds of strings attached to that. He said that if you accept the rest of this package that you do not like, then you can have parity in salaries. So let us have a look at the rest of the package.

In July of 1987, just before this contract ended, there was already a wage disparity of up to 28 per cent between able seamen working for the Government of Canada and able seamen working in the private sector. That disparity has grown over the two years since the contract expired to well over 45 per cent. Remember, we are talking about wages here of $16,000, $18,000, and $20,000 a year.

The government says it does not want to give one group different treatment than it has given everybody else and they are going to have to be satisfied with the same percentage increase that the rest of federal public workers got. In fact, there is such solidarity within this group that the west coast workers have said: "We're prepared to accept less of a percentage increase to our salaries so that the workers in the eastern region can get the same salary as we get."

Frankly, I feel that when you are talking about the lowest paid workers in the public service of Canada, that is a good reason to sit back and ask ourselves, "For them, at the lowest levels, is what we have given the rest of the public service, including top level professionals, really adequate to reflect the value of the work they do?"

There is a solution though. If the minister insists on treating everybody the same, whether the situation is the same or not, there is a solution and the ships' crews workers have proposed it. It is called sea allowance. It is an accepted practice within the government. National Defence employees get a sea allowance every time they put out to sea. They get an extra amount per month just because they are out at sea.

The minister will say, as he has tried to say, that the difference is that DND employees do not make overtime. That is true, they do not, but they are also better paid.

If the government wanted to, it could settle this strike in a matter of hours. I have no doubt about that at all. The costs of meeting all the demands that are on the table are approximately $6 million. That $6 million just happens to be the value of the navigational aids that are at risk just in the Great Lakes and the seaway shipping lanes alone, if they are not brought in and replaced by winter navigational aids.

We know that the cost to shipping is $2 million a day and that again is in the Great Lakes alone. Valuable research is being held up. Disruption of commerce is the result. We are starting to see the value of the work these people do and we are still content to say they should be paid poverty level wages.

I want to deal with the hospital service workers. The reason they are on strike is that they have been waiting nearly a decade for pay equity, and it has been clear to the government that until that situation is solved, these workers are not going to be satisfied with accepting poverty level wages.

I have to give the House a bit of history on this. In 1981, this group of workers went to the Human Rights Commission arguing under the Human Rights Act which had been passed several years before that health service workers were paid less for doing exactly the same work as government general service workers and that the reason for this was that the hospital service workers were largely female and therefore there was a clear wage inequity that should be corrected.

The outcome of that in 1987 was that there was an interim consent order for $28 million to pay back these people for the inequity they had suffered. To demonstrate the scope of it, for one individual alone, that payment was $40,000 over the seven years during which they had been deprived because of inequitable pay scales.

• (1210)

This was just an interim settlement. Then two things were supposed to happen after that. One, their job classifications were supposed to be made comparable to

those of the general service workers, and then the government was supposed to go back and adjust that $28 million payment to what it really should have been. That is the $10 million the minister is talking about.

Now, he did mention that the government is in the process of having that $10 million paid out to people. This is December, and it was August when the minister wrote to tell me that that was happening. I gather from comments today that it is still in the process, it has not happened.

The other thing that was supposed to happen is that the classifications were supposed to be changed so that from 1987 on, those workers would be treated the same and paid the same as the other workers doing the same kind of work. The government has a neat little trick here. It does not like to change classifications and it does not like to change pay scales. So what it does is say: "We will give you instead an equalization payment". That is such an abrogation of the whole concept of pay equity and equal pay for work of equal value.

The government says: "We are not prepared to give you the wage you are earning, nor do we recognize that in your classification and pay scale. We are prepared to give you a little token payment to bring you up to what your proper pay rate should be. You will go on getting this token payment, but you will never get the classification and the wage salary scale that you are entitled to".

If it seems that the hospital services workers are being a little tough on this, I ask the House to bear in mind that since they first started this action, since this inequity in pay first started getting their attention, many of them have seen their children grow from pre-schoolers to adolescents, deprived of an adequate income into their household that would have provided many of the things that the children and grandchildren of those of us in this House take for granted. It means quite simply that their children have done without because this pay equity issue has not been settled.

Again, it is not a minor matter. Their salaries were from 10 to 40 per cent behind those of people doing exactly the same work. A worker getting up on a ladder to clean the ceilings or the walls in the Rideau vets' home out on Smyth Road could be getting as much as 40 per cent less than a worker performing exactly the same work down at 240 Sparks Street. Now, that is not fair in anybody's books.

At the salaries these people are earning, the average adjustment should be $3,000 a year. At our salaries, and certainly at the salary of ministers, that might be an extra little bit of disposable income, an extra little holiday. But for these people, it is money that is needed for the essentials of life.

I cannot help but feel that there is deliberate manipulation here. The minister said in his answer to a question on this issue a few days ago that it is not really a female dominated group. That is true. The balance is shifting. It is evening out. I cannot help wondering if there is some attempt here to wait them out, and whether there is some deliberate manipulation to move that group toward a group that is 50–50 male–female and therefore no longer considered a pay equity issue.

The fact is the Human Rights Commission determined it is a pay equity issue. It has reaffirmed that decision and yet this government was back before the Human Rights Tribunal just on November 8, arguing that the Human Rights Tribunal had no jurisdiction in this matter. That is nonsense.

I want to close by saying that these workers in all cases have acted responsibly throughout this strike. The ships' crews workers have, in all cases, provided emergency rescue services any time the need existed. They have not once failed to meet the normal response time, to put down their pickets, to go out to sea to save lives or to prevent a disaster when that was needed. They missed once by three minutes. Sorry, they were once 33 minutes instead of 30 minutes because of high waves that were so bad that they eventually had to put back.

The hospital services workers offered to continue to provide emergency services in the veterans' homes and in the national defence hospitals but the government was not able to reach an agreement with them, I suspect because there was no inventive. They thought they could provide these services with the military and with volunteers. It just is not working, Madam Speaker.

I would like to quickly summarize the strike-breaking techniques that have been used and the attempts to try to get around the law that have delayed negotiations. Also, there were attempts to designate 100 per cent of each of these groups so they could not go on strike and could not use the ability to withdraw their services. The

government has sought injunctions to prevent the picketing and now we have back-to-work legislation.

If these people are essential to the safety and security of the nation, as the minister contends with this legislation, then that should have been protected two years ago. It is not these workers who are responsible for the current situation. It is the Government of Canada and specifically the Treasury Board.

I think we are in a situation where it is more a question of winning and losing, and Treasury Board likes to win. That is fair if you have a fair situation, but it does not cost Treasury Board anything to sit back and wait. It does cost these people. It costs them wages, and at that level, you cannot afford to go without your full pay for very long.

That has been the pattern. First it was the clerical workers, again, the lowest paid, who were out on strike for months. The welfare program workers just settled. Then the ships' crews workers went out. It is always the lowest paid groups which seem to be the ones with which this government wants to take the hardest line.

At a time when most employers, particularly in the private sector and a lot in the public sector, are going more toward the idea of a co-operative management-labour relationship, of mutually resolving difficulties, going toward the idea of partnership as opposed to opponents, it seems this government wants to go the other way. It wants to force people to accept something that is not right and just.

It is particularly ironic when we see walls coming down all over the world in defence of freedom and democracy, in a growing move toward freedom and democracy and against state control, that we sit here in this Parliament today forcing people back to work.

It certainly is a strange turn of events, Madam Speaker, for a Prime Minister who came to Ottawa promising pink slips and running shoes to public servants to now be saying we cannot do without you, we need you back, we need you back so badly that we are prepared to pass a law to force you back to work.

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Madam Speaker, you would think it would be a compliment to be called essential. You would think it would be gratifying to be needed. How gratifying it really is for most of us to feel that for someone with whom we have a degree of relationship, we are considered to be essential to the relationships.

• (1220)

Let us look at the two groups of employees of the government which are the subject of today's legislation. In the light of what I have just said about the feeling one would usually get when one is considered to be essential, you would think that they too would feel some kind of a glow of gratification from being so considered.

It seems, however, that in relation to the ships' crews and hospital services workers being designated essential by the government is the kiss of death. I, of course, have been speaking somewhat facetiously because I know very well how these people felt when the government designated these people or tried to designate them over the years.

In fact, ever since 1967 when the Public Service people were first given the ability to go on strike, there have always been many employees who have been designated essential. Of course, what that really meant was that their right to strike was taken away. When you were designated essential there really was no warm feeling of gratification because it was something to be avoided at all costs if at all possible because to be so designated meant that likely, over the long run any way, you would end up being much worse off than anyone who was not so designated. That is what has happened with the ships' crews and the hospital workers over the years.

In this round of negotiations, the government, for whatever reason and in whatever fashion, did not designate these two groups of people whom heretofore had always been designated as essential so to be. They found themselves, because of that situation, to be in a legal strike situation. As the course of time went on, they did exactly that and went on strike.

As I said: "essential to the government" means that you can negotiate with groups of people who are your employees but you do not really have to bargain seriously because you know that if you are not able to come to the kind of agreement with them which you think you would like to come to with them, they can force upon you whatever they want. They can use the force of the courts.

They can use the force of law and they can do that all in the name, as the minister has just very recently done, of protecting the public.

Being called essential by this government really means that you have been given the kiss of death. It means that you have never been able to strike. It means that you have had to take whatever minimum wage–benefit package the government thought it could get away with without recourse to being able to bargain freely as most other Canadians are able to do and in a way which is set out by the International Labour Organization to which the Canadian government is a signatory, and thereby make the kind of living for yourself and your family which you should justifiably be able to make.

Speaking of the International Labour Organization, I think it would be rather interesting to read, in its entirety, a citation that has come down from the International Labour Organization, because it speaks so directly to the situation we find ourselves in. A committee of the International Labour Organization had this to say in relation to postal workers, and the issues are the same. I quote:

> 95. The Committee feels however compelled to state that the cause is basically this: the postal workers were legally on strike and the Government, through special legislation, ordered them back to work after seven days of work stoppage.
>
> 96. The Government points out, rightly so, that the Committee has recognised in the past that there are circumstances where restrictions and even prohibitions of strikes are justifiable. However, the Committee hastens to say that these are exceptions to the general rule and that the right to strike is one of the legitimate and essential means through which workers and their organisations may defend their economic and social interests. [*Digest of Decisions and Principles of the Freedom of Association Committee of the Governing Body of the ILO*, third edition, paras. 362 and 363, and cases cited.]
>
> 97. It follows that these restrictions and even prohibitions of the right to strike can only be justified in a limited number of situations: civil servants and workers in essential services in the strict sense of the term, i.e. those services whose interruptions would endanger the life, personal safety or health of the whole or part of the population—provided however these workers have access to adequate procedures, such as conciliation and arbitration, where the parties concerned can participate in all stages and in which the awards are binding on both parties and are fully and promptly implemented.

The "fully and promptly implemented" has some particular significance which I will get into shortly.

As a result of the government being heavy-handed and using the full force of its legislative power, we have two groups of people, the ships' crews and the hospital workers, who have become, quite literally, within the Public Service, the two lowest paid groups of employees of the Canadian government.

If we look at the history of these two disputes, there are two trains of activity which go on and, other than the fact that they have almost by accident become able to strike the specific situations because they do entirely different work, are not identical.

As far as the ships' crews are concerned, in the last round of negotiations for the ships' crews after having gone through the process of negotiation and after having gone through the process of conciliation and all the other things which are laid out by law and required of the parties, the conciliation board made a recommendation which, of course, was not binding. This recommendation awarded the ships' crews more benefits and higher rates of pay, in general, than the government wanted to pay and higher in percentage and so on than what had been arrived at in other general settlements of the Public Service. This was done for very good reasons. I have to repeat that they did that because they found themselves in the situation of being vulnerable, not many of them, with very little bargaining power, in addition to the fact that they are not even allowed to go on strike.

• (1230)

The conciliation board's decision was that these people should get a higher award than the rest of the settlements in the public service. The reason was quite simple; they were so far behind. In 1987, in the matter of the ships' crews, those working on the west coast were 28 per cent behind the general comparable wage in the public sector, and those on the east coast were 16 per cent behind. That was in 1987.

The government stated that it would not pay any attention to what the conciliation board had to say and refused to implement the suggestions of the board. Of course, as I have said, it did not have to because it was not binding. When the government did that to its employees, the employees admittedly and knowingly went on an illegal strike. They had no other recourse. As far as they were concerned, in this daily struggle which we as wage earners have, they had to draw to the

attention of the government and the Canadian public that their situation was desperate because their wages were so far behind everyone else's.

They went on strike illegally. Summarily, within 24 hours the government had an injunction brought down against those people and they were forced back to work by the order of the courts. Even the judge who granted the government the injunctions said that the government's action was Draconian but he had no other choice than to order those people back to work, and they obeyed.

In this round of negotiations the government failed to designate these people as being essential. They have to do that within 20 days of receiving notice from the union of a desire to bargain. if the government does not do it, anyone who is not designated as essential by that time is simply not an essential service person and free to carry on the whole process of collective bargaining, including striking, as any other free Canadian is entitled to do.

I suspect that in most instances an employer finding itself in a situation such as this would have accepted reality for what it was, realized that it had made a mistake and continued to bargain, one would hope in good faith, to come to an agreeable settlement to both sides. That is not what this employer did. That is not what this government did. The government, having made a mistake, went to the courts to try to get its booboo overturned.

I do not know the levels of the courts; that is more for the lawyers in the House. In any event, the first level of the courts it went to, the government lost. As if that was not enough, still in an effort to try to designate these people as essential servants—and I think there is something important to point out here. Many of the civil servants are designated as essential. There are some areas of the public service where it is 60, 50 or 40 per cent. The minister's official told us yesterday that it may even go down to zero of those who are designated as being essential.

In the whole history of the hospital services group and numbers like 60 per cent, or 40, or maybe, zero. It has always been 100 per cent. Believe it or not, Madam Speaker, there have been instances where it has gone as high as 110 per cent. It really does escape me how one could do that, but I presume they may even include some of their supervisory staff, I do not know. Or maybe they spread themselves into some other department in order to make sure that these people are going to cause no embarrassment whatsoever.

The government lost at the first level of the court system. Not satisfied with taking its lumps, it still went to the second level in order to try to get this 100 per cent. Make no mistake about it, we are talking 100 per cent designation in the case of these two groups; 100 per cent designation in the case of these two defenceless groups for all intents and purposes.

If you do not believe they are defenceless, look at what is happening to them in this House today as a result of their perfectly legal action. We are ordering back to work a mere 3,900 people, of all the hundreds of thousands of civil servants. These are the poorest paid people in the civil service. There is no joy in the House of Commons today to be doing such a thing. I think it would be most appropriate to borrow the words of the judge in the case of the previous round of negotiations when he called the government's action Draconian.

In the case of the ships' crews there are not all that many outstanding issues. There are some misconceptions which ought to be clarified here as well. from the government side, in response to a question from this side, said that these employees were asking for 14 per cent, or something like that, a year over the next three years. Of course that is not the case. What they are asking for is something around 5 per cent, 4.8 per cent and 4.6 per cent over 42 months. As far as that is concerned, most of it has been settled anyway.

The one outstanding issue is that of sea duty. It is a very common thing in the maritime industry, something which the private sector certainly has. I am led to believe it is the one remaining outstanding issue which would bring a settlement about in the case of the ships' crews group within the public service, for a total cost of somewhere around $5.5 million. In the total government budget for wages, it is not a large amount of money.

The total amount of goods and services and value to everything from the buoys, which these people so efficiently distribute as a guidance for shipping throughout our waterways in the St. Lawrence, I understand that they are now quite probably being either destroyed, sunk or becoming loose and floating around causing danger to shipping themselves. Compared to the value of that in

one day, the settlement of $5.5 million per year is certainly not a great deal of money.

It is my understanding that the issue of the sea duty will settle the strike. It is incomprehensible to me that we should be here in the House forcing a group of very valuable employees.

• (1240)

In some ways the circumstances surrounding the strike of the hospital services group is not all that much different in that the government has failed miserably. We must bear in mind that when we are talking about the court action it refers to this group as well. It refers to an innumerable number of people within the civil service whom they had not designated. It just turns out that these are the groups who, in modern parlance one could say found their one window where they were able to exercise their democratic rights.

Never in the past and certainly not in the future will these people ever be able to take this kind of action again. This is their one opportunity in their lifetime, unless the government changes its mind, smartens up and treats these people with the justice, dignity, and honour which they deserve. I am not saying, and I am sure the union is not saying, that there are not some who are essential. But to just heavy-handedly describe 100 per cent of these people as being essential defies all credibility.

The government also wished the hospital services group to be designated as essential and, as I have already pointed out, failed to do so. The hospital services group are the people who clean the government hospitals, handle the food in the veterans homes and the hospitals, are the certified nursing assistants and the registered nursing assistants. In short, they are the less well paid people within our society and, surprise of surprise, they are mostly women. Perhaps not so unsurprisingly, many of them are single mothers with families, as well as many older women who depend on their jobs for a livelihood. These people on average make somewhere in the neighbourhood of $20,000 a year. In most regions of the country $20,000 a year for a family of four, unless resident in a place populated by less than 30,000, is below the poverty level.

These are the kind of people we are dealing with and this is the condition they find themselves in as a result of the government's intransigence and unwillingness to treat them in a fair manner, and bargain with them in a justifiable way. These are not women in the workforce who earn a second income for the family. These are primary earners in the family and they depend entirely on this kind of work for their livelihoods.

Here we have the heavy hand of the government trying to designate these people as essential so they would not be able to strike. We now have them designated as having to return to work because they are so sorely needed by the hospitals and the veterans homes where they work. In the two general elections in 1984 and 1988, women were promised by this government that they were going to be front and centre as far as affirmative action was concerned. They were promised equal pay for work of equal value, that yes, it was part of the government's policy. The government was going to do the very best it could to make sure that any private sector company dealing with the government would be encouraged and hopefully, before too long, forced to comply with the equality principles of equal pay for work of equal value and all the things that go along with the niceties of human rights.

Not so. To repeat myself again, we find ourselves in this House trying to force these people back to work. It strikes me rather strange that the government would be able to consider this type of action, which can only be described as Draconian, as having any similarity to human rights and to equal pay for work of equal value. That is one of the major issues which we come across because just as surely as the government used its heavy hand to try to get these people to be considered essential service, we have a history of doing everything we can to prevent, in spite of an order by the Canadian Human Rights Commission in 1981, of not these people what they ought to be paid.

I will read what the Canadian Human Rights Commission actually said in their decision.

> The parties are agreed that the Health Services group, which is predominantly female, has received less wages than the general workers, a group predominantly male, for performance of work of equal value.

The Canadian Human Rights Commission in 1981, for all intents and purposes, said to the government: "Clean up your act. Pay these women in the HS group, for the

most part women but some men among them as well, on an equal basis with the GS group". For almost seven years, from 1980, the government of this land did everything it could to avoid complying with that decision.

In July 1987, the government finally did what it should have done years previously, what it should have been forced to do previously, and paid the retroactive pay to these people. Since July 26, 1987, there have been no equalization adjustments until, wonder of wonders, November 1989. All of a sudden in November 1989, equalization payments started coming to these people again to make up for the payments they had not received since 1987.

Part of the decision of the Canadian Civil Rights Commission was that this kind of action had to be in consultation with the union, but without any consultation with the union on the conversion rates. Also, I think, not so strangely, the government has never put those equalization payments into wages. if the general services group was making $1 an hour and the health services group was making only 50 cents, the government in order to equalize it would give them the 50 cents but not as part of wages. Those equalization payments—and I do not wish to be trivial about the amount—were 13 per cent and let us forget about the $1 and the 50 cents part. The equalization payments are not a part of wages. The government refuses to put them into wages. Since 1980, even though these people have received retroactive pay, they are not a part of wages. Believe it or not, these people will not be receiving their pensions when they retire on the basis of what is justifiably a higher rate of pay, which it ought to be. The equalization payments do not form part of their earnings for the calculation of pensions. I cannot think of anything that is much more despicable than that.

• (1250)

Maybe we should not give them any pension at all. Would that be more despicable? Can one think of anything worse in relation to these people? I suppose the action we are taking right now is probably more despicable. One ought to be rather careful with one's choice of words, I suppose. It is certainly more despicable to be forcing these people back to work than not including the equalization payments in their wages. But to make such a comment as that is to trivialize a very serious matter.

The hospital services groups have other issues. They work 12 hour shifts, and because of an inability to come to some kind of agreement on the organization of shifts, these people often have to go back to work after only 8 hours of rest.

I am sorry I was not here for the President of the Treasury Board's entire introductory speech on the legislation. I suspect the government said that in order to be able to make sure the Canadian public was adequately protected as far as safety of navigation is concerned, or as far as health services in the veterans homes is concerned, it was essential to bring in this legislation.

The fact of the matter is, both the hospital services group and the ship's crews offered to provide the essential services.

If the government was so intent on designating 100 per cent of these employees as being essential, anything less than 100 per cent would probably not be acceptable. I think it ought to be pointed out that in the case of the ship's crews, the government has accepted the union's offer of supplying essential services. I do not have a list of all the essential services, all the emergencies the ship's crews have responded to since they went on strike. There have been innumerable cases where they have done that.

We will get to the hospital services group in a minute. Regarding the services that the ships' crews provided and the excellent behaviour they demonstrated, as well as the unions, I would like to point out that I was a striker a couple of times myself. In every instance we offered to provide essential services to the company and, as with the hospital services group, our employer turned it down. But that is not because we did not offer them.

As far as ship's crews are concerned there is absolutely no reason whatsoever for us to be here today arguing that these people ought to be forced back to work. I am more than pleased to be standing here arguing that they should not be. The group has behaved in an absolutely responsible manner. If one makes a comparison between the way the government has responded and the way these people have responded, there is no question that the Public Service Alliance of Canada and the ship's crews group have shown themselves to be absolutely trustworthy in so far as the Canadian public is concerned. They deserve a tremendous amount of credit for that.

We could have had a similar situation with the hospital services groups as well. There is a veteran's home in Saskatoon and many of the families of the residents in that home have contacted my office and indicated to me that they were particularly distressed that their family members would be moved. The fact that the government moved them indicates that it had very little intention of bargaining in a very serious manner.

I cannot tell you how disturbed these people are that their family members were moved out of that home. I do not understand the situation in that I do not have anyone who is living in a home such as that. I am told that when one has been a resident of a veterans' home for a considerable period of time, one develops a routine and a relationship with the people around one. This includes the people who are on strike at the present time.

The union's offer of essential services should have been accepted. Who, Madam Speaker, knows better than the people involved, what those absolutely essential services are? I am very confident that just as surely as the ships' crews behave responsibly in relation to their dispute with their employer, the hospital services people would have done as well. I think it is despicable that the government did not take the Public Service Alliance of Canada up on its offer and use the people which the union was willing to supply them with in order to get through what, of course, is a rough time for all concerned. It is despicable that we should find ourselves in this position

The legislation itself does have the usual Draconian elements. Initially being forced back to work, then the salve of trying to show that things are going to go smoothly, followed by conciliation, there is no imposed settlement in the agreement. Nonetheless, the hammer is still there. Can you imagine one of those single parent women out there fined "as little as" $500 a day. Do you know how much $500 a day is in relation to what they earn in a year? I suppose it may be 5 per cent. I think a 5 per cent per day fine is rather high for almost any activity that one could find oneself in.

Madam Speaker, I see my time is up. I can only reiterate that this legislation is unnecessary in both cases. This thing could have been settled amicably.

Hon. Gerald S. Merrithew (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Madam Speaker, noting the hour and knowing that all hon. members would want the fullest possible opportunity for debate on Bill C–49, pursuant to Standing Order 26(1) I would move:

> That the House continue to sit between one o'clock and two o'clock p.m. this day for the purpose of considering Bill C–49.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The hon. member for Carleton—Gloucester (Mr. Bellemare), on a point of order.

Mr. Bellemare: Madam Speaker, I am no expert on parliamentary procedure, but my NDP colleague cut short his speech because members on the other side of the House were shouting that he had gone over the time allowed. Just look at them, the two ministers from Montreal who seem to think it is great fun to shout down the hon. member, who wanted to speak until one o'clock. They cut him off. Madam Speaker, when a bill is introduced, does a party's first spokesperson have limited speaking time?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Order, order! To answer the question put by the hon. member for Carleton—Gloucester, the hon. member was allowed 40 minutes and I can assure the hon. member that when I signaled to the hon. member for Saskatoon—Dundurn that his 40 minutes had expired, there was still one minute left before one o'clock.

We are now on the motion.

[*English*]

Will those members who object to the motion please rise in their places.

And more than 15 members having risen.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Pursuant to Standing Order 26(2), the motion is deemed to have been withdrawn.

[*Translation*]

It being one o'clock, I do now leave the Chair until two o'clock this afternoon.

At 1.03 p.m. the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*Translation*]

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

Mr. François Gérin (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead): Mr. Speaker, a week ago in New Hampshire, in the United States, a Canadian, Richard Bilodeau, was involved in a road accident which unfortunately left three people dead, including two New Hampshire policemen.

Since then, the U.S. Department of Justice has claimed, in writing besides, that the extradition treaty between Canada and the United States does not concern an individual who is accused of criminal negligence or manslaughter as a result of an automobile accident.

It is obvious, Mr. Speaker, presumably because of pressure on the New Hampshire police, and perhaps also on the judicial system, that a Canadian is treated very differently from an American, and certainly very differently from the way we here in Canada treat Americans who are involved in automobile accidents.

I ask the Minister of Justice of Canada and the Secretary of State for External Affairs to see to it that Richard Bilodeau, a Canadian citizen now held in an American prison, is treated fairly and with all the respect for his rights.

* * *

[*English*]

REGIONAL INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, I have received a letter from the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion which represents yet another blow to eastern Ontario. His department is closing its economic development district office in Ottawa. This will create a great inconvenience and a lack of regional service.

Regardless of the reason given by the minister, we realize that this office is being closed because the department's financial resources have been slashed. The resulting change in mandate is ridiculous and insensitive to communities in this part of the province of Ontario.

In the last year alone two major plants have closed in Renfrew. Plans to eliminate thriving VIA Rail passenger service from Ottawa through Arnprior, Renfrew, Pembroke, Petawawa, Chalk River and further up the valley have been introduced. The forest industry has been attacked, and the list goes on.

This part of the province of Ontario in the east should not suffer because this government bases its decisions under the guise of dollars and cents instead of plain common sense.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Larry Schneider (Regina—Wascana): Mr. Speaker, over past months we have witnessed some remarkable developments throughout the East Bloc. One of the most stunning was the arrival of the freedom trains in West Germany loaded with jubilant East German refugees.

From the capital of Saskatchewan which was built by immigrants, many of them from Germany and eastern Europe, we in Regina realize that the only lasting solution to the problems in eastern Europe are to be found in real political reforms.

In the meantime we would like to do what we can to help those who have chosen a start to a new life in a free world. That is why I would like to take this opportunity to welcome those East Germans to Regina and Canada.

* * *

EAST TIMOR

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, December 7 marks the anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbour, a day which President Roosevelt predicted would be a day of infamy. He was right. It is a day of infamy, not only because of Pearl Harbour but also because of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor on December 7, 1975.

Sadly the Canadian government refuses to recognize just what the Indonesian occupation of East Timor has meant. It has meant the deaths of almost one-third of the East Timorese population; it means continued growth and systematic abusive human rights; and it

means a society kept in isolation by the Indonesian government.

The Canadian government's record on East Timor is disgraceful. It has voted against United Nations resolutions calling for the right to self-determination for the people of East Timor. It has lobbied to have the issue removed from the UN Human Rights Commission agenda.

It is hardly coincidental that Canada is the third largest foreign investor in Indonesia and that the Canadian government seeks to expand its economic relations with that country.

We cannot change what has happened on December 7 in history, but we can make December 7, 1989 the day the Canadian government adopts the correct, humane policy on East Timor, the day it puts human rights ahead of greed.

* * *

[*Translation*]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Jean-Guy Guilbault (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that this weekend, December 10 to 12, a national agriculture conference will be held in Ottawa.

The theme of the conference is "Growing Together: a vision for the Canadian agri-food industry". Leaders of farm organizations, the federal and provincial governments and all the major interest groups will be able to exchange ideas on the big issues affecting the Canadian agri-food sector.

This conference is an important step in the development of a new national policy.

We must meet the challenges and take the opportunities for growth that will come our way in the 1990s and beyond.

"Growing Together: a vision for the Canadian agri-food industry" augurs well for productive discussions that will determine the future of Canadian farming. I invite all farmers in my riding to take part in this important conference.

* * *

MISSIONARY IN NEW FRANCE

Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Québec-Est): Mr. Speaker, on December 1, I had the privilege of attending the launching of *Missionnaires en Nouvelle-France*, a new comic strip. The date coincides with the 350th anniversary of the arrival of Father Chaumonot in Canada, with the first Augustine and Ursuline nuns. The launching took place at the Ancienne-Lorette church in my riding, on the site of the Notre-Dame-de-Lorette Chapel built in 1674 by Father Chaumonot.

Pierre-Joseph-Marie Chaumonot, companion of the Canadian Martyrs, was ordained a priest and came to New France in 1639. For fifty years he worked among the Amerindians, mainly among the Hurons around the Great Lakes, on l'île d'Orléans and finally at Ancienne-Lorette. *Missionnaires en Nouvelle-France*, published by Anne Sigier, pays tribute to this historic figure, with an excellent text by Gilles Drolet of Ancienne-Lorette and Drawings of Paul Rioux, an excellent illustrator and cartoonist. I am reminded of our motto in Quebec: "Je me souviens".

* * *

[*English*]

EAST TIMOR

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, to corroborate the remarks of our colleague from Winnipeg—Transcona I would like to tell the House that today marks the anniversary of the illegal invasion of East Timor by Indonesian troops.

East Timor at that time had just become an independent colony of Portugal. An island inhabited by an indigenous population of 700,000 with a rich cultural tradition, it is also rich for its natural resources.

The resultant annexation of East Timor by Indonesia only came after the slaughter of 200,000 of its indigenous population and the imposition of policies which continue to destroy East Timor's cultural traditions.

The Canadian government is out of step with other western countries and the United Nations in not participating in actions against Indonesia. The reason appears to be the very high level of economic investment and trade that Canada has been developing with Indonesia. We would address East Timor human rights abuses at the peril of losing important trade and economic benefits.

Canada must develop coherent policies which link international human rights to aid trade and refugee determinations. The parliamentary subcommittee on international human rights must be given every support necessary to achieve this important objective in order that legitimate concerns for international human rights abuses may be addressed.

* * *

NATIONAL ENERGY BOARD

Mr. Lee Richardson (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, in a decision on November 20 the National Energy Board denied four applications for export of Canadian gas into United States markets. No reasons have yet been given by the board for this decision.

Western gas producers are rightly concerned that the National Energy Board appears to be adopting an inappropriate level of involvement in a contracting process between willing buyers and willing sellers.

This decision is sending unfavourable signals to United States buyers of Canadian gas, casting a shadow of uncertainty over many contracts and negotiations currently in progress in the industry and generally creating the impression on instability in the Canadian gas supply.

There is an obvious need for clarification. National Energy Board decisions appear to be contrary to both the spirit and the letter of the free trade agreement in that they prejudice pricing arrangements and imply there is a minimum price for U.S. buyers which does not exist for Canadian buyers.

As a result the National Energy Board should be encouraged to release the reasons for its decisions as quickly as possible.

* * *

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Glenda Simms on her appointment to the presidency of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women. This is an historically significant occasion and I am very proud to mark it here today.

Dr. Simms is a well-known activist and a moving speaker. She is the former president of the Congress of Black Women and involved with the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women.

She has shown herself to be committed to working hard to break the oppression of women of all economic classes, races and sexual orientation. Her extensive involvement in a variety of issues of concern to women such as housing, employment equity, and native education, is impressive. It gives her a background of knowledge that will serve her well in dealing with the many areas of research undertaken by the council.

Her appointment will bring a valuable perspective, skills, experience, vision and vitality to the advisory council. The New Democratic Party wishes her well, as I am sure do all members of this House today.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated in the past, I am proud to represent the communities of north and east Preston and Cherrybrook, one of the largest native black communities in Canada. They have contributed greatly to the development of this area, the province of Nova Scotia and their country.

However, even after 200 years, their quest for equality is still a dream.

• (1410)

On September 21 I released a major survey entitled *Education and Income in the Preston and Cherrybrook Area*. The study's conclusions were startling. For instance, the income for young black males was fully 42 per cent less than that of their white counterparts.

I sent a copy of this report to the Minister of Employment and Immigration and requested that she initiate discussions on implementing real solutions to these long-standing and unacceptable problems. Despite my repeated requests to senior officials and to the minister herself, no action has yet been taken.

I therefore call upon the minister once again to urgently review this document and initiate the dialogue necessary so that 1989 will be the year we initiated an end to inequality and discrimination in Canada's black communities.

S. O. 31

[*Translation*]

TRAGIC SITUATIONS

Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue (Outremont): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for this opportunity to offer, on behalf of all residents of the riding of Outremont which I have the honour to represent in this House our sincere condolences to the families and friends who have suffered a tragic loss and are going through a time of great sorrow. What happened was unheard of in this country, and I am sure the memory will remain with members of the campus community for many years.

Mr. Speaker, as a member of this academic community, I would like to add that I and my colleagues in the House wish to offer our support after this unthinkable occurrence.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps you will allow me to observe a moment of silence, during the seconds I am allowed, to honour the memory of these young people, Canadian hopes that died in such terrible circumstances.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member will recall that later on this afternoon, the House will observe a minute of silence to meditate on this tragedy of which he spoke with such emotion. I am, of course, prepared to mark this occasion by observing a moment of silence to honour the memory of the victims.

* * *

[*English*]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, representatives of the Taiwanese Canadian community in Canada have joined their voices in front of Parliament today to express their deep concern about the situation of Mr. Yi-Shih Leo, a Canadian of Taiwanese origin who is currently imprisoned in Taiwan.

Mr. Leo has been one of the leaders of the movement for democracy and justice in Taiwan and was harassed during an earlier visit to Taiwan in August of this year.

I would call upon the Secretary of State and appeal to the Secretary of State for External Affairs to voice Canada's concern about the treatment of Mr. Yi-Shih Leo. I would as well urge him to call upon the Taiwanese government to end its harassment of Canadian citizens who are seeking visas to visit Taiwan. Too often these visas are delayed or denied for no reason whatsoever.

We all call for full protection of human rights in Taiwan where there have been too many abuses of human rights. We join with the appeal of Mrs. Leo and the Taiwanese Canadian community in urging the Government of Canada to speak out most strongly for the release of this defender of human rights in Taiwan.

* * *

[*Translation*]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ECONOMIC REGIONS IN NEW BRUNSWICK

Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Beauséjour): Mr. Speaker, this Tory Government once more missed the boat in its in depth revision of UI economic regions in New Brunswick. I had asked the Minister in charge to separate Moncton's urban area, with an 8.2 per cent unemployment rate, from the rural area where the rate is 19.4 per cent.

The new redistribution separates the Kent rural area from Moncton's urban area. But the Westmorland rural area, where unemployment is very high, is still part of Moncton. This perpetuates the existing injustice. Let the Government treat Moncton separately, as it does the majority of other urban centres like Trois-Rivières, Sherbrooke, Hull, Saskatoon and Regina.

[*English*]

I urge the government to correct this injustice to the people of rural Westmorland. These people also live in a high unemployment area, an area comparable to Kent County. It is grossly unfair to the people of rural Westmorland to be treated differently than the people of Kent County.

I call on the government to rectify this situation without further delay.

[*Translation*]

VIOLENCE IN MONTREAL

Mr. Guy Ricard (Laval): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in this House to deplore yesterday's tragic incident in Montreal's École polytechnique.

I rise today, Mr. Speaker, not because two of my children were in the building when the shooting took place, and I had to wait late through the night before I could know whether they were all right, but to condemn that violence, that sadistic slaughter of innocent students.

Mr. Speaker, I spent a terrible night waiting. But what must have been the anguish for the victims' parents!

When are we going as a government to do something to control violence? When are we going to force broadcasters to ban TV violence? When are we going to remove from store counters the toys that incite violence, especially at this time of year?

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my deepest sympathies to the aggrieved families and to offer my best wishes of prompt recovery to those students injured in that savage attack.

* * *

TRAGEDY IN MONTREAL

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, today, Canada is in mourning. All Canadians were horrified upon hearing the news of the senseless shooting that took the lives of 14 young women in Montreal yesterday.

Our hearts go out to the parents and friends of the victims of this terrible tragedy, and on behalf of the Canadian people and all members of this House, I wish to extend our sincere condolences.

We also sympathize with the suffering and shock of the young men and women who were wounded during this terrible incident, especially those who are now patients in hospitals in Montreal's metropolitan area.

On behalf of all members of this House, I have transmitted our condolences to Mr. Louis Courville, acting director general of the École Polytechnique of Montreal.

I have also asked that flags on the Parliament Buildings and on all federal buildings in Quebec be flown at half-staff.

Today we all share the same feelings of sadness and indignation, offer one of the most cruel criminal acts in our history. These killings are particularly barbaric because the gunman selected women as his victims.

[*English*]

Why this brutal slaughter? Why this vengeful act against innocent young women? Why such violence in a society that considers itself civilized and compassionate?

This senseless criminal act is a grim reminder of the vulnerability of our society, its imperfections and of the precariousness of life itself. It is indeed a national tragedy.

I speak for all Canadians, I believe, in expressing our deepest sympathy for the families, relatives and friends of these young people who lives have been so brutally ended just as they showed such splendid promise.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, united in sorrow and sympathy, Canadians mourn the death of 14 fellow Canadians, the flower of a generation, cruelly crushed in the springtime of their lives.

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): Mr. Speaker, yesterday 14 of our most promising young Quebecers lost their lives at the hands of a half-crazed individual. More than a dozen others were wounded, most of them seriously. This is the worst catastrophe we have known since the last war.

This tragedy is horrifying, not only because there were so many victims but also because they were young people, working very hard to acquire the skills that will shape tomorrow's society.

In addition to dedicating several years of their lives to their academic training, these young women were unique in having opted for a non-traditional profession. That in itself reflects their courage and their determination to participate fully in the development and emancipation of Quebec society.

Our thoughts, our prayers and our sincere condolences go out to the families of these students whose lives were so abruptly cut short. Try as we may, we can never fully fathom the suffering of parents who be-

stowed so much love and care on their children, only to have them leave this world through an accident of fate.

Mr. Speaker, I also wish to express our feelings of profound sympathy with Inspector Laurent Leclair who, as the first person to arrive on the scene, found his own daughter among the victims. A terrible shock and a heart-wrenching example of the harsh realities with which the police is sometimes confronted.

This tragedy also demonstrated the dedication and effectiveness of our ambulance services, our police force and our medical teams whose professionalism was exemplary, in the circumstances.

• (1420)

[*English*]

On behalf of the right hon. Leader of the Official Opposition and the members of the Liberal caucus, I extend my deepest and heartfelt sympathy to the families of the victims of this horrible and senseless crime.

We also want those who witnessed this shocking event to know that our thoughts are with them as they attempt to deal with the pain and anguish of losing so many friends.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Leader of the Official Opposition and all my Liberal colleagues, I want to again extend our deepest, most sincere sympathy to the families and friends of the victims and assure them of our prayers.

[*English*]

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, like most Canadians, it was with great horror that we learned of yesterday's tragedy at Ecole Polytechnique, University of Montreal.

[*Translation*]

Unlike other regions of the world where large cities are often the scene of this kind of horrifying drama, neither Canada nor Quebec has ever had such a killing.

Fourteen young women in the prime of life were savagely killed by a mad gunman; at least 13 others were injured, several of them seriously.

[*English*]

Those lost lives were our future; young minds who were attending school to acquire an education to work in their community, to share their abilities with their friends and families; young minds who wanted to contribute to Canada, and I guess young hearts that wanted to love. We will never know what gifts of joy or of laughter were extinguished by this act of horror.

Our hearts and our deepest feelings are with the families and with the friends of these young victims even though we know that this can be of little comfort to them.

We in this House grieve today as does every other Canadian. We will never be the same again.

[*Translation*]

On behalf of my colleagues in the NDP and all Canadians, I offer the families and friends of these young victims our sincerest condolences.

Mr. Speaker: I ask all hon. members to observe a minute of silence.

[*Editor's Note: The House observed a minute of silence.*]

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Finance, I would like to address my question to the right hon. Prime Minister.

Yesterday the Canadian dollar reached a nine-year high, 86.13 cents American. This is up from 71 cents just a few years ago in 1985. We are seeing the results in terms of jobs in our economy due to these very high exchange rates.

In the second quarter of this year, our trade surplus fell to $.5 billion from the previous quarter of $5.5 billion. We know that for every 1 cent increase in the value of the Canadian dollar, we lose $1.3 billion in export sales.

Just this morning Mr. James Taylor, the president of the Canadian Exporters Association, called on this

government to change its policies and to get the Canadian dollar down to the neighbourhood of 80 cents.

This high exchange rate hurts Canadians in every part of our nation. When is the government going to reverse this disastrous course that it is on?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I do not understand my hon. friend when he says "reverse this disastrous course" that we are on.

There have been nearly 200,000 new jobs created so far this year. Some 85 per cent of them are full time, and some 59 per cent of them have gone to women. The economy continues to grow, although at a less impressive level than has been the case over the last three or four years.

The Governor of the Bank of Canada has stated very clearly why the interest rate policy is required to squeeze the inflation out of the economy. We cannot have a return to the situation that existed in the early 1980s when inflation skyrocketed and the economy went into a tailspin.

• (1430)

The day before yesterday the OECD pronounced judgment in respect of the policies of the Government of Canada. It believes that compared with all other important international economies, the Government of Canada and the Governor of the Bank of Canada are doing the right thing in following these kinds of economic policies.

I, too, look forward to lower interest rates. I believe that if we follow this kind of sensible policy, difficult though it may be on an interim basis, and get inflation under control, then lower interest rates will follow. With that will come greater growth and greater job creation, but in a non-inflationary context. That is what we are seeking to do.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Peterson: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister referred to the inflation rate. He forgot to say that the inflation rate in Canada is now almost the same as in the Unites States. However, the interest rate in Canada is some four percentage points higher than in the U.S.. It is 7.5 per cent higher than in Japanese and in Germany. Can he explain how Canadians can compete internationally wich such high interest rates, one of the highest in the world?

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, my Hon. friend is referring to the interest rate in the United States. He could have referred the ones in Great-Britain, which are higher than ours, and the inflation rate there which is hovering 8.3 per cent. So much for another competitor. The situation is about the same in other major countries around the world.

Each country indeed has its own serious problem, and we also have serious problems in our Canadian economy. Our aim is to ensure that inflationary trends in the economy do not overcome economic growth and that six or eight months down the road we do not find ourselves with an inflation rate such as we had unfortunately when my friend was in government. And I know that he deeply regretted during his temporary exile from politics that his Government did not act with more speed and energy to control inflation, inflationary trends in this country, which we are now doing.

I therefore believe that basically my hon. friend is a knowledgeable businessman. He will know that this government and the Bank of Canada are implementing consistent policies which will lead to economic growth in a non-inflationary context.

[*English*]

Mr. Peterson: Mr. Speaker, what the right hon. Prime Minister does not mention is that if Canadians have to pay much higher interest rates in order to build the type of plant and manufacturing structure and economy that we need, that in itself is highly inflationary. He also did not mention that for every increase of 1 per cent in our interest rate, our deficit increases over $1.3 billion in the first year and $3 billion in the years thereafter.

A couple of days ago the Minister of Finance admitted that the economy was slowing down. He finally admitted it. He did not have to be a rocket scientist to do this, all he had to do was listen to the workers—

Mr. Speaker: I would ask the hon. member to put his question.

Mr. Peterson: My question is this, Mr. Speaker. Will he share with us and with the workers of Canadian Airlines, Gerber, Ford, General Electric, Indal, Inglis, and all the other workers who are losing their jobs what they intend to do about this disastrous course they are on?

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend speaks of jobs that are lost. In a dynamic economy such as ours, there is an enormous turnover in any given year in terms of plants closing and plants opening. That is the way it is in an internationally competitive world.

My friend says that the Minister of Finance finally admitted that the economy was slowing down. The Minister of Finance predicted that the economy would slow down when he brought in his budget. Part of the plan was to drive the inflation out of our system. We are trying to create a climate of non-inflationary economic growth. My friend asks how it can be done. A principal way that it can be done is to keep program and other government spending under reasonable control.

In the decade that preceded the swearing in of this government, program spending increased by some 12.0 per cent a year. Since this government has been in office it has been held to 3.5 per cent a year on average.

My hon. friend might give some advice to the Premier of Ontario whose spending has been rising at 10 per cent a year. That is not good for Ontario and it is not good for Canada.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TREASURY BOARD

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board. The Minister would have us believe that this bill, which would force ships' crews and hospital services employees back to work, is necessary to protect the public. However, the Minister and the Minister of Transport have admitted that the shipping dispute does not affect public safety. Will the Minister acknowledge that the problem is not caused by the fact that these employees are on strike but by the government's failure to designate these employees as essential and thus get results in these negotiations? What explanation does he have for this kind of incompetence?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I want the Hon. Member for Ottawa West to listen carefully to what I have to say. Mr. Speaker, at this very moment, operations on the river are perfectly safe, but we do have 126 ships operating on the river and in the Seaway, and no one has any control over the weather or over ice conditions on the river.

Mr. Speaker, we have three weeks left before the St. Lawrence Seaway is closed. Millions of tons of Western wheat are now on the river and in the Seaway, and there is a risk that this wheat will be stuck on the river for the duration. If the hon. member doesn't agree we may have an emergency on hour hands, Mr. Speaker, I think that is totally irresponsible.

[*English*]

Mrs. Catterall: Mr. Speaker, winter and freeze-up come every year. The minister's officials knew last year that they should have been declaring these workers essential.

The minister knows now that all it would take to settle this issue is a decent fair wage offer that would cost far less than the strike is costing every day.

Will the minister admit that his back-to-work legislation is just a sham to cover up the government's abysmal failure to respect the collective bargaining process and to reach a just and fair settlement which could be reached in hours?

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, once again I call upon my colleague to understand that the St. Lawrence River and the St. Lawrence Seaway today face a safe circulation of ships on the Seaway. The hon. member states that one year ago we should have done something. I am asking members to do something today: support the legislation which is here.

Thousands of Canadian jobs depend upon the traffic of the St. Lawrence Seaway. I ask the Liberal and NDP Parties to be serious and to keep those jobs for Canadians.

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I have a very serious question for the Minister of Labour. Could the Minister of Labour tell this House how he could possibly justify bringing back-to-work legislation against the ships crews and the hospital services workers of the federal Public Service when both of the groups are more than willing to continue negotiation?

• (1440)

Both of the groups are more than willing to provide emergency service.

As the minister knows, only two days ago the striking ships crews workers provided emergency service and rescued a U.S. Coast Guard vessel. I think these workers have shown their good faith.

The hospital workers have also shown their good faith by offering to provide emergency services. That offer has been turned down by the Treasury Board. I include those hospital workers in my own riding in the Yukon. Obviously, the solution to these disputes is good faith bargaining. Why doesn't the government do this?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows I have mentioned time and time again in the House that at the time negotiations broke off, one group was asking for a wage increase of 17.4 per cent and the other group was asking for an increase of 14.3 per cent.

An Hon. Member: Over three years.

Mr. de Cotret: Given that 95 per cent of all public servants have settled for rates of increase in the range of 4.1 to 4.2 per cent, we felt this was a rather exorbitant demand to be placed on government at this time.

I would just like to underline for my hon. colleague what the bill does. The bill does two things. It attempts to ensure that the safety, security and health of Canadians is assured by back to work legislation. It also tends to assure that we deal with this situation with fairness and equity by going to a binding conciliation process, which is essentially a third-party process, which will bind both parties to the eventual conclusion of the current dispute. So, we are being fair and equitable, and we are preserving the safety, security and health of Canadians.

Ms. McLaughlin: Mr. Speaker, what I understand from what the minister is saying is that fairness is just too darned expensive for this government and it does not have much of a commitment to it.

The Prime Minister has often bragged about his commitment to pay equity for Canadians. Yet in 1987, a Human Rights Tribunal told the federal government that it had to resolve the major pay equity problem which exists in its hospitals and in the hospital services. These problems still have not been resolved. The government refuses to negotiate with the union and now says that the Human Rights Tribunal had no jurisdiction.

If the Prime Minister truly supports the concept of pay equity, will he immediately direct the President of the Treasury Board to return to the bargaining table and renegotiate a true pay equity agreement?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. de Cotret: Mr. Speaker, following the decisions that were brought down over the years, we have already paid the hospital services group $28 million in retroactive pay to meet the pay equity standards to which this government is firmly committed. We are in the process of paying an extra $10 million to meet the second stage of the process. The third stage of the process is before the Canadian Human Rights Commission, and we believe all the provisions that have been handed down will fully be met. The Prime Minister's commitment to pay equity will be honoured in full with the measures that Treasury Board has already taken.

When we look at pay equity from the other point of view, pay parity if you like, in the ships crews dispute, I have mentioned to this House time and time again that I have put on the table a firm offer to have pay parity between the east coast and the west coast workers on date of signing of the collective agreement. That is already on the record.

Ms. McLaughlin: Mr. Speaker, in the New Democratic Party we only look at pay equity one way, and that is justice. It is justice based on the role of people, on regional justice from the east to the west for women and men.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Ms. McLaughlin: Madam Speaker, the International Labour Organization has already condemned this government's unjustified use of back-to-work legislation.

Does the government really want another black mark from the international community? How can the government justify statements to the effect that the public interest demands we put an end to this strike, when Treasury Board has turned down the union's offer to provide essential services?

Mr. de Cotret: Mr. Speaker, the government has conducted lengthy negotiations in order to reach a settlement with both groups. Again, I may point out that we are talking about two groups out of 29. The other 27 managed to negotiate with the government an agreement they felt was viable, and did so fairly and squarely. The demands of these two groups, however, go far

beyond the levels we set for the government. We are prepared to negotiate. We have negotiated for the past months. We are prepared to negotiate at any time. I have said so in the House, and I say it again today: If the unions want to sit down at the bargaining table this afternoon, this evening, tonight or tomorrow, the government will be there to negotiate an agreement and to do so consistently and fairly, instead of having to consider binding conciliation.

* * *

[*English*]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Right Hon. Prime Minister and it pertains to his recent visit to the Soviet Union and to the NATO meeting.

On November 27, the Prime Minister stated this about Mr. Gorbachev in the House, and I quote from *Hansard*, page 6235:

> But I was struck by his determination to succeed and by his confidence that success is possible—
>
> I also believe, strongly, that it is in everyone's interests, including our own, that he succeed.

On November 5, in Brussels, he said, when referring to Mr. Gorbachev,"His economy is in such God-awful shape it would take the treasuries of everyone around the table to fix it and then some". Who is the Prime Minister fooling? The 240 business people that he took to the Soviet Union, encouraging them to invest in the Soviet Union economy, or the NATO leaders? Does he not realize that by undermining the leadership of President Gorbachev, he has just set back the termination of the Cold War for another 10 years?

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, it may be a surprise to the hon. member that the Soviet economy is in very difficult circumstances. That was not a surprise to the Canadian business people who were there looking for an opportunity to participate in the rejuvenation of that economy.

It is not a surprise to Mr. Gorbachev. During the conversations between the Prime Minister and Mr. Gorbachev in the Soviet Union, Mr. Gorbachev himself was brutally frank about the state of his economy and the extent of the challenge that he faces. Rather than trying to conceal the difficulty of that problem, we believe it is important to analyze directly, to be frank with the Soviets, to be frank with the world and to try to put together a series of actions that could help the Soviet Union achieve the kind of fundamental changes that the Soviets require.

Mr. Gorbachev knows that we think that they cannot achieve those changes without moving toward a price system, without becoming more competent in dealing with the market principles on which the world economy is based.

What the Prime Minister said in Brussels is what the Prime Minister said in Moscow. It is an accurate description of the state of the Soviet economy and an accurate beginning for the reform that is essential to that economy, and consequently to the progress of world peace.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Flis: Mr. Speaker, that is not what the Canadians are hearing. They are hearing the Prime Minister—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Flis: —say one thing at one meeting and the direct opposite at the other meeting.

Also on November 27, the Prime Minister told us in this House that with respect to grain trade, he responded on behalf of the Canadian agricultural producers "with great enthusiasm". With all due respect, Mr. Prime Minister, the Russian people cannot eat enthusiasm. They would rather have bread and butter on their tables.

When is the Prime Minister going to take the initiative and offer Mr. Gorbachev some tangible assistance to ensure that he can meet the population's expectations?

• (1450)

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, I confess to having a certain advantage over the hon. member in terms of what the Prime Minister said in Moscow and what he said in Brussels because I was at both meetings. The hon. member was not. The Prime Minister said in Brussels what he said in Moscow. He said what the Soviets themselves understand and, indeed, are asking the rest of the world to understand, that they have a

mammoth economic problem that needs to be solved. There is an opportunity for those of us in the rest of the world, who are interested in the strength of the Soviet economy, to participate in restructuring that economy. We are prepared to meet that challenge.

The hon. member asks about specific proposals that Canada might put forward. The Prime Minister has already put forward several. One includes the encouragement of the chairman of the economic summit each year to consult regularly as a matter of course with the President of the Soviet Union. Another is the indication by Canada that we would be prepared to move toward observer status for the Soviet Union in the GATT so that the Soviets can become more fully integrated into the world market economy in which they ultimately have to compete. We have talked about relaxation of Comecon rules. We have talked about a range of other specific proposals.

The Prime Minister was also prepared to take part in a mission, which I think the hon. member was belittling, the mission by some 240 Canadian business persons, who are prepared to go over and apply their expertise and capital to help in practical ways to allow the Soviet Union to begin the kind of recovery that is essential.

* * *

[*Translation*]

HOUSING

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Housing.

On November 23, I asked the Minister of State for Finance whether his government was prepared to agree to have the rental part of the federal home renovation program apply at the very least to any Canadian municipality with a program that complements the federal one.

Two weeks later, I note that the government has still not acted and I ask the Minister whether his government is prepared to recognize the tremendous harm which this government decision is causing many Canadian municipalities, and whether he intends to accept my proposal.

[*English*]

Hon. Alan Redway (Minister of State (Housing)): Mr. Speaker, about the same time the hon. member asked that question in the House I was attending a meeting of housing ministers of the provinces and myself dealing with the question of allocation of federal funds to the provinces in coming years.

At the same time I had the opportunity to meet the Quebec Minister of Housing, Mr. Picotte, and discuss with him the question which the hon. member has raised. It was agreed at that meeting that we would deal with it in the context of Quebec on the basis of tripartite discussions between the federal government representatives, provincial government representatives and municipal government representatives. A tripartite committee has been established in Quebec made up of federal-provincial representatives from the city of Montreal, the city of Verdun and the city of Quebec.

As I understand it they had their first meeting to deal with the subject last Friday and they will be meeting again soon.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for the remarks he just made to the House, which show the need to solve this problem, in particular for municipalities with a program that complements the federal one and which are more affected—I am thinking especially of Montreal. I wonder whether the minister knows that this arbitrary decision of the Conservative government is depriving Montreal of 95 per cent of the federal funds for home renovation.

Montreal now has 60,000 homes which need major renovations. Will the Minister do something to correct this unspeakable injustice to Montreal—yes or no? A committee is all very well, but a decision can only be made by the Minister and I ask him to act quickly.

[*English*]

Mr. Redway: Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, I met with representatives of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to discuss the same issue. We will be having

ongoing discussions and there will be the discussions taking place on a tripartite level in Quebec. Hopefully we will be able to come up with some answers that will be helpful for the city of Montreal, for cities right across this country and for all Canadians.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister or someone in cabinet who can speak for agriculture. They must know that Canada's farm debt is now more than $22 billion and that the Farm Credit Corporation and the banks are foreclosing on a record number of Canadian farms.

Will the Prime Minister or a representative of the government commit this government to bringing in specific legislation which would halt foreclosure action until such time as there is completed a full investigation of the farm financial crisis in Canada to ensure that we know specifically what impact the debt crisis is having not only on farm families, but on the entire farm-based western economy?

Mr. Murray Cardiff (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the hon. member that the government is very aware of the farm debt crisis. We have worked with farmers on an individual basis through the debt review boards and various other activities and will continue to assist agriculture wherever possible in any way because we do recognize the difficult times they are facing. We look forward to working with them.

Mr. Taylor: Mr.Speaker, the member will know that two days ago Canadian food processors told farmers they had to lower their prices so that the processors could compete better under the free trade deal. Today, Quebec farmers said that they no longer trust the federal government to protect them and they called on the Quebec government to take control of the jurisdiction of agriculture.

Does every province in this wonderful country of ours have to take control of agriculture because this government cannot be trusted to protect the interests of the Canadian farm community?

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Speaker, this government has responded better to agricultural needs than any previous government in history. We have to recognize in the 1980s that because of the difficulties of the 1970s, agriculture has had a difficult time not only in this country but in may parts of the world.

This government has provided additional assistance to the producers, in the area of at least $4 billion a year, since we formed the government. I want to add that that is more than in the previous administration, when it was about $2 billion. We have responded and will continue to respond and work with agriculture and producers until we have a strong viable industry.

* * *

CUSTOMS AND EXCISE

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Revenue. Customs and Excise officials have for years been conducting immigration and pre-clearance at U.S. airports on behalf of the Department of Employment and Immigration. This service was terminated on October 31, 1989.

In light of the fact that we have a 1974 treaty between Canada and the U.S. allowing this, that Section 115 of the Immigration Act allows the Governor in Council to make regulations, and in light of the fact that we have a free trade agreement that is trying to promote relations and the transfer of goods and services between the two nations, can the minister give us an indication as to how he can deal with this problem and hopefully resolve it for us?

Hon. Otto Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raises a very interesting question and I can assure him that I intend to consult with my appropriate cabinet colleagues, particularly the Minister of Employment and Immigration and the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

However, in the meantime I understand that customs service is not hampered because of the closure. Aircraft are now receiving free and prompt customs clearance at their destinations or at other airports along their flights. However, because of the hon. member's sincere interest in this matter, I will talk to my cabinet colleagues on this and get to him with an appropriate answer in the not too distant future.

• (1500)

SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday of this week, the Minister of Finance told the House of Commons that the One Voice Seniors Network supported the government's clawback of old age pensions. Yesterday, One Voice said that the minister was twisting its words by saying, and I quote:

> Seniors were appalled yesterday to see their words twisted to support the government's controversial clawback legislation.

I would like to ask the acting prime minister, if you have one over there, will the government apologize to the seniors of Canada for the irresponsible way in which the Minister of Finance has distorted the words of Canadian seniors to try to justify this discriminatory tax?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Privatization and Regulatory Affairs)): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the hon. member raised this because I want to point out to him very carefully what has been said by Jean Woodsworth who is the president of One Voice, the Canadian Seniors Network. One of the quotes that was mentioned yesterday is that, "social benefits are given to every Canadian citizen as a right. They can be taxed back from the rich because the rich should pay more taxes than the poor," and it goes on to say, "but to extend the social safety net to some and not to others makes it a charity, not a right".

In the pre-budget consultations which the Minister of Finance had with various interested groups, Mrs. Woodsworth was there, and I want to quote exactly what she said as part of the presentation that was made to the Minister of Finance. She said:

> —we agree with the Economic Council that people with over $50,000 of income should have their OAS taxed back.

Now, going on to quote what the National Council on Welfare said:

> —the advantage of the clawback is that it saves money, not by tampering with the contentious principle of universality, but rather by increasing the progressivity of social programs—the clawback does no damage to universality—

Mr. Manley: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted that the acting prime minister raised that meeting because here is what the One Voice Seniors Network says about that meeting: "At that meeting he—" the minister—"specifically promised us he would not touch universal social programs". That, they say, was a real betrayal. "Now, he is taking our own words out of the context of our brief to make it look as though we agree with the clawback. Mr. Wilson has aggravated the anger and mistrust seniors are already feeling".

Is this government so desperate to find somebody who supports its tax measures that it has to go around twisting the words of senior citizens in Canada?

Mr. McDermid: Mr. Speaker, I believe it is the hon. member who is twisting the words of the Minister of Finance. It is very plain exactly what Mrs. Woodsworth, who was representing that group, said. She said it, and I will read it to you again. I will do so slowly:

> —we agree with the Economic Council that people with over $50,000 of income should have their OAS taxed back.

Yes, the minister said he would not tamper with universality. The National Council of Welfare says that in increasing the progressivity of social programs, the clawback does no damage to universality.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. It has now been five weeks since the minister announced the special response program to assist fishermen and fish plant workers who suffered a disastrous season this year. Yet to date, during those five weeks, fewer than 50 per cent of the fishermen and fish plant workers throughout Atlantic Canada who have applied for assistance have been given any.

In my riding alone, some 459 of 912 families who have applied have been refused assistance under the minister's program.

Will the minister, in the few remaining days before Christmas, acknowledge that the program announced to date has been inadequate? Will the minister design new criteria to allow those fishermen and their families not to have to cancel Christmas this year?

It is not simply a matter of whether or not there will be gifts under the tree, it is a question of whether or not there will be turkey on the table.

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, while I appreciate the seriousness with which the member asks this question, I do, however, disagree with his premise because this program is especially designed for people with an attachment to the fishery. I have reviewed this very carefully in response to questions that have been asked before and people have already qualified under the extended criteria.

I want to point out one aspect that he may be missing and that is that in any community, where most people engaged in the fishery are unable to meet the criteria, a person who can demonstrate, within that community, a continuing legitimate attachment will be considered for eligibility. I should say that this approach we are taking has been accepted by people in the industry, both labour and management, and we are making accommodations for a range of needs within the industry.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, despite the words of the minister, despite the attempt to assure members of this House and through this House Canadians that this program is working, in my constituency alone, on the great northern peninsula, over 50 per cent of the fishing families affected have had essentially no income since May 15. The member for St. John's West, the minister from Newfoundland, knows that and the parliamentary secretary, who is from Newfoundland, knows that, and the minister knows it.

My question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, who chairs a cabinet committee on what has been acknowledged by the government as a crisis in the fishery. Given that fishing families can expect no help from the Minister of Employment and Immigration, can expect nothing but a cancelled Christmas this year, a bitter pill for their Christmas dinner, will the minister intervene, on behalf of these families who are being told that they have nowhere to go whatsoever but to welfare and nothing to do but move to Toronto and take a minimum wage job? Will the minister help them now?

Mrs. McDougall: Mr. Speaker, we have said all the way along that it is our view as a government that we want to help people who are affected by this very special problem.

Let me just quote, if I may, the Minister of Fisheries of Newfoundland who seems to disagree with the hon. member. The fisheries minister of Newfoundland, Walter Carter, said that the $5 million federal emergency response program for the fishery will be adequate to look after the fishermen who need assistance.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. The minister is quoted in *The Globe and Mail* today as saying that she is satisfied with the new refugee system the way it is. I want to ask her, considering that out of 15,611 claimants, 5,603 have not started their claims, 2,985 are waiting for a full hearing and 2,301 are listed as adjourned, postponed or pending, can the minister tell this House why she has allowed a total new backlog of 10,889 to develop, two-thirds of the whole, and how she intends to overcome it?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I would certainly dispute the numbers that the hon. member is putting forward today. I think what is very important to know is that as of October 31, there have been 15,000 new claims.

The program was a little slower getting started than I had hoped in the beginning, as people were being trained. I think that the members of the refugee determination system have been very conscientious in how they have viewed these cases. However, we have seen some improvement in the last few months. We are watching it very closely to ensure that the system does work and that that catch-up on the new cases continues.

Mr. Heap: Mr. Speaker, since the figures are from the minister's own board of IRB, she had better look at them again because Canadians are asking why she is allowing a new build-up. They want to know whether she is putting forward a list of so-called safe countries to which refugees will be sent back without a full hearing and whether the United States is on the list of safe countries for refugees from El Salvador.

• (1510)

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I have said all the way along that the concept of the safe third country is in the legislation. It has not been proclaimed.

It was my hope certainly and continues to be my expectation that the system will work and that we will not move to a third safe country concept. I can certainly assure the hon. member and the country that if that is what is necessary, that is in the legislation for me to use at some future time should we need it.

* * *

[*Translation*]

BROADCASTING

Mr. Guy Ricard (Laval): Mr. Speaker, a few days ago, a TV channel in Montreal showed a film where a commando entered a school and started firing at the students.

Last night, we had a similar scenario at the Montreal École Polytechnique, with disastrous results.

My question is directed to the Minister of Communications. I would like to know whether in the near future, the Minister intends to table a bill dealing with violence on television, both in films and TV in programs, and will he do so as soon as possible?

An Hon. Member: Right on, Guy!

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, in responding to the question by the hon. member for Laval, I would like to join the Prime Minister and the two opposition leaders who, earlier today, expressed their sympathy and extended their condolences to parents and friends of the victims of this senseless act.

The hon. member for Laval is no doubt aware that broadcasters are responsible for their programs, subject to CRTC supervision. We can only hope that in the light of what has happened, the broadcasters and the CRTC will take some kind of action.

The hon. member for Laval is also aware that the CRTC's autonomy in these matters precludes the Minister of Communications and the government from intervening with respect to program content.

However, I intend to inform the Minister of Communications of the hon. member's concerns which, I imagine, are shared by all members of this House.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Gander—Grand Falls, a single question and it must be short.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mr. George S. Baker (Gander—Grand Falls): Mr. Speaker, we are faced with the worst fish plant closures in the history of Canada and some companies have gone to East Bloc countries asking for a supply of fish to operate their fish plants.

Canadian fishermen are not allowed to fish within the 200-mile zone of the Soviet Union or Bulgaria or Cuba or Japan or Norway, but they have been guaranteed quotas this year inside Canada's 200-mile zone.

I want to ask the Government of Canada, will it now cancel all foreign fishing within Canada's 200-mile zone as the United States has done, as every other country in the world has done, so we don't have to go to the Soviet Union and say: "Please, Soviet Union, will you give us some fish to operate our fish plants?"

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Finally, Mr. Speaker, we have had a question. The position is, as the hon. gentleman well knows, that certain stocks in our 200-mile limit are straddling stocks like the hon. gentleman opposite. They try to straddle every issue that comes forward.

The hon. gentlemen will also know that under the Law of the Sea, both Canada and all other countries that have a continental shelf have no choice but to offer foreign countries access to Canadian stocks which are clearly surplus to our needs. For example, we had a TAC for silver hake this year, 135,000 tonnes. Canadian fishermen actually caught 100 tonnes despite special programs and grants and we had to offer the surplus to Russia and other countries. That happened with silver hake. It would also happen to the hon. gentleman's silver tongue.

Government Orders

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

WEEKLY STATEMENT

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I will ask the usual question, and pursuant to your instruction, I will make it very short.

I want to ask the government House leader to give us the statement of business he intends to call for the coming week.

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow we will resume debate on Bill C–49. Monday, December 11, we will deal with the report stage of Bill C–4 and Bill C–23.

In view of the seriousness of the situation on the St. Lawrence Seaway, the risk to the movement of grain, the risk to safety and the serious question of service to veterans, I wish, at this time, to give notice that at the next sitting of the House, immediately before the Order of the Day is called for resuming debate on the motion for second reading of Bill C–49 and on any amendments proposed thereto, I will move that the debate shall not be further adjourned.

* * *

POINT OF ORDER

ADVERTISING

Mr. Bill Attewell (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville): Mr. Speaker, I wish to rise on a point of order. I would like to quote from a recent issue of the *Eastern Graphic* of Montague, P.E.I. It reads:

> Cardigan Liberal MP Lawrence MacAulay is selling handcrafted Christmas wreaths to other MPs—

Mr. Speaker: Just a moment. Excuse me. That matter is presently in front of the Speaker. I think it is appropriate that that is where it stays until I return to the House on it.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask a question of the government House leader concerning legislation and to ask him, at this traditional opportunity on Thursday when the government intends to move forward with long overdue legislation respecting more effective gun control in Canada.

It was in 1986 that the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police pointed out that there was a world–wide surplus of automatic and semi–automatic weapons primarily designed for purposes of warfare now finding their way into the Canadian market–place.

It was in 1986 that the member for Don Valley East questioned the then minister who said that the legislation was coming soon. In 1987 we were told it was coming soon.

The minister said, in June of this year, he would be bringing forward this legislation on gun control in the near future. He has the unanimous agreement of the provincial attorneys general. How many more tragic deaths must there be, Mr. Speaker, before this minister moves forward on this—

Mr. Speaker: Orders of the Day.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT SERVICES RESUMPTION ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. de Cotret that Bill C–49, an act to provide for the resumption of certain government services, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): On a point of order, the hon. Minister of Veterans Affairs.

Hon. Gerald S. Merrithew (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Madam Speaker, at one o'clock I had the floor and it is my understanding, according to the rules, that I would continue to make my remarks at this time.

Mr. Gauthier: Madam Speaker, we have a procedural difficulty here. It is true the minister had the floor at one minute to one o'clock. He proceeded then to put a motion to the House which was disposed of. The normal practice for anyone having the floor is to finish his speech by moving a motion. This member has finished his comments, he can move that motion and sit down.

The difficulty I have at this time, since the minister moved the motion at the beginning of his so–called speech, which we did not hear, is that I took it then that the minister had made his remarks, that he was ending

them with a motion and that we would dispose of that motion. If it is to be otherwise, I would like to be informed.

Mr. Lewis: Madam Speaker, the House will know that the government has been making every effort to move this bill forward in order to deal with this serious situation. The minister was recognized immediately before Question Period. As the Minister of Veterans Affairs, he wished to bring to the attention of the House the difficulties that we have with the safety and service to veterans.

• (1520)

I appreciate that my hon. friend technically may be correct, as he often is. In this case there was an effort by the minister to see if the House would agree, under the circumstances, to sit through lunch.

There are often cases in this place where there can be agreement because of the tone and the seriousness of the subject that is being debated. One might ask—and I would ask at this time—if there might not be a disposition in the House to recognize the minister in view of the very important part that he will play in this debate and so that members opposite will know what is the position of the Minister of Veterans Affairs. Members opposite may wish to respond and at the end of his remarks, question him in that 10-minute question period.

I would ask if there might not be unanimous consent for the minister to deliver his remarks.

Mr. Gauthier: Madam Speaker, I rose on the point of order because I thought it was a good point of order to be taken up.

I do agree with the minister that the Minister of Veterans Affairs has a contribution to make to this debate. We would like to hear him. We are not obstructing his right to speak in the House. I just do not want it to be a precedent. I would like to see the House strictly adhere to rules so that we do have order in this place.

In this case we have no objection to the minister speaking at this time.

Ms. Mitchell: Madam Speaker, this party would agree to the hon. minister speaking at this time.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): It is with pleasure that the Chair does recognize the hon. Minister of Veterans Affairs.

Hon. Gerald S. Merrithew (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Madam Speaker, I wish to extend to both opposition parties my appreciation. I feel very strongly about what we are doing here today.

I do think I can make a contribution because it is my employees who are affected in this and, of course, what kind of impact this legislation will have on the people we serve, the veterans of Canada.

I thank very much the opposition parties for their co-operation in this regard.

I know full well that no one likes to go on strike. Such action is taken only as a last resort. I also know that no government likes to end a legal strike with back to work legislation. It, too, is a last resort and one that can only be employed when national interests, above those of the right of the employees concerned to withdraw their services, must prevail.

That, indeed, is the situation that has been reached in the Department of Veterans Affairs. The health and safety of our veteran clients is now threatened.

Before going further I should like to set the stage by saying a word or two about the department of which I have the honour to be minister because I believe this will give a contextual framework for what I have to say later.

I know from the letters I receive and from the discussions I have with members of all parties in the House that no department of the government has more dedicated employees than has Veterans Affairs Canada.

It is a department pointed to with pride by the Public Service of Canada for the quality of service it gives to those who serve Canada so valiantly in wartime. The department is a family and normally a very happy family dedicated to this purpose and the values of the department are clear to all.

Second only to the veterans we serve we place the highest importance on seeing our employees treated fairly. I think members of this House will understand, given what I have just said, my great regret that our members of the Hospital Services Group felt compelled to go on strike. I also regret that we, as a government, now feel compelled, with the co-operation of this House, to order them to go back to work. This will require putting in place a process that would, within a reasonable period of time, see an independent third party, first to assist and then to resolve if necessary, the

differences that exist between the employees and the Treasury Board.

[*Translation*]

Within Veterans Affairs, Madam Speaker, we have one hospital and two veterans' homes. The hospital is at Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue in the west end of the island of Montréal. The homes are the Rideau Veterans Home, here in Ottawa, and Saskatoon Veterans Home.

I shall be concentrating what I have to say, Madam Speaker, on the situation at Ste. Anne's and Senneville. I shall be doing this because it is there that the situation is most grave and this in large part results from the fact that the patients there need much more intense care than in our two homes.

[*English*]

There are more than 726 patients in Ste. Anne's, veterans all, people who served their country well and deserve nothing but the best during the latter days of their lives. Of these 726 patients, about 250 are permanently bed-ridden. Another 400 are able to get by only with the help of a wheelchair and some of them are not capable of operating a wheelchair themselves. We have patients with Alzeihmer's disease and many with milder forms of dementia.

To visit Ste. Anne's is to see humanity enduring the travails of old age. Alert minds in wasted bodies and bodies that function while the mind has all but disappeared.

In Ste. Anne's hospital, more than half our staff belong to the hospital services HS group. There are procedures in the event of a strike, as the House will be aware, that allow designations of positions. And since it has been mentioned previously in debate, I do want to add my words to this particular issue. This requires people in such positions to continue to perform their duties if a strike is called in order to provide essential levels of service. In this case, of course, the essential service is to safeguard the health and security of our patients and to maintain their welfare. In Ste. Anne's and our veterans homes, we judged that approximately 90 per cent of our employees in the hospital services group were needed in the event of a strike if we were to run the hospital on normal lines of three shifts a day, seven days a week.

The department did receive an offer to provide essential services at Ste. Anne's from the Public Service Alliance of Canada. Of the 614 employees eligible to strike, the union was prepared to allow 45 to work, 8 per cent of the workers, not the 90 per cent which we judged to be necessary. Even by switching to a two-12 hour shifts a day system, such an offer fell far short of the most minimal requirements.

In addition, in making the offer, the union imposed two conditions which we found too difficult to swallow. One, was that we not contract out any services normally provided by the department. Second, that we not reassign non-striking staff to do the duties of staff who were on strike.

In responding to the offer from the union, the department indicated that while it was most gratifying that the union had been prepared to make an offer at all, the offer of 45 employees or 8 per cent of the staff fell well short of what was needed. Attached to it were conditions, of course, that were absolutely unacceptable to the department and to the hospital management. So the department literally had no option but to reject the offer.

I believe we should now inform the House how the Ste. Anne's has been operated during the strike. I think it is important, first of all, to recognize that the strain on our employees at the hospital did not begin when the strike started, but had begun some considerable time in advance. If you will, Madam Speaker, a war of nerves was in progress before the strike was called. I do not wish to belabour the point or go into any great detail because of my conviction that those who sought to disrupt the hospital's operation were and are a very small minority.

• (1530)

The House may wonder how a hospital with over 800 patients could possibly cope even for a day without the help of orderlies, those who prepare the food and those who keep the institution clean. I would like to tell you a bit about this.

Our doctors, our nurses and our other professional and support staff have been working 12-hour shifts. The nurses, in addition to their own work, have been doing the work normally undertaken by the higher levels of orderlies. The work of other members of the hospital services group has been covered in two different ways: first, by the normal group of volunteers who assist this hospital on a regular basis like many others across Canada. The number of volunteers has been augmented in the community. With the special efforts of members of the Royal Canadian Legion, the Korea Veterans Associ-

ation and other local veterans groups, these people have been feeding patients, helping to shave them, generally caring for their personal needs and keeping up their morale. I wish to thank them publicly for their help to our veterans.

[*Translation*]

Our doctors, our nurses and our other professional staff have been working 12–hour shifts. The nurses, in addition to their own work, have been doing the work normally undertaken by the higher levels of orderlies. The work of other members of the Hospital Services group has been covered in two ways. First of all, by the normal group of volunteers who assist this hospital, like many others across Canada. The number of volunteers has been augmented in the community and with the special efforts of members of the Royal Canadian Legion, the Korea Veterans Association of Canada and others. These people have been feeding patients, helping to shave them and generally caring for their personal needs and keeping up their morale.

[*English*]

In addition, we at Veterans Affairs have moved considerable numbers of people from both our Charlottetown and our Ottawa head offices and from offices across Canada. Some of these managerial employees have worked as managers. Many more, along with colleagues from Ste. Anne's have found themselves doing unaccustomed work in preparing and serving food and keeping the hospital clean. All have been working very long hours. As one might expect, all are now getting very tired.

I should like to pay particular tribute—and I am sure the House would wish to join me in so doing—to those people who volunteer to do work that they are really unaccustomed to doing. I should like to pay special tribute to our staff at our institutions, to those who have come to join them from other parts of Veterans Affairs Canada, and to those wonderful people, the volunteers who have helped out in so many ways.

My heart is filled with pride at their dedication in serving our veteran patients. Indications that despite our best efforts the health and safety of our patients was coming into jeopardy were first detected a couple of days ago. Our concern became even greater on Tuesday as the drawn faces of our nurses, many of whom have family responsibilities to face after a 12–hour shift, were indicating fatigue and the potential breakdown of the system.

On Tuesday my deputy minister went to Ste. Anne's to form at first hand an impression of how much we could continue without endangering the lives of our patients. In the deputy minister's report to me after returning from Ste. Anne's where he had spoken with virtually all the staff on both ships, he informed me that in his judgment the situation at Ste. Anne's, despite the superb efforts of all those involved, was approaching crisis proportions.

He told me, based on the advice he had received, and the evidence of his own eyes, that were we not to act now the health, the safety and the security of our patients would be in danger.

I believe that I have shown why we cannot allow the situation at Ste. Anne de Bellevue to continue any longer. The members of the hospital services group in Veterans Affairs are still very valued members of our department. We need them back at work and will welcome them as members of the team.

[*Translation*]

As I said earlier, in my department, second only to the veterans we serve, we place the highest importance on our own people being treated fairly. I am quite sure that the arrangements proposed in this legislation, will allow an independent third party to help settle the dispute. Our staff can count on receiving fair treatment.

[*English*]

I would ask, Madam Speaker, that the House respond rapidly to pass this legislation so we may properly care for our veteran patients who did so much for us and who are now not able to look after themselves.

It is for this reason that I fully support the government's back to work legislation which is absolutely justified under the circumstances.

Mrs. Catterall: Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to see the minister finally addressing this issue. I wonder if he is aware that for two years we have been getting to

this point. He has delivered a very fine tribute to the people who work for National Defence, in the veterans homes and in the hospitals. In fact he has delivered a very fine explanation of why this contract should have been settled months and months ago and of why the issue of pay equity should have been settled years ago.

I ask the minister: Does he think $16,000 a year is enough pay for the valuable work he just described, for the love, care and attention these people give to our veterans? Does he believe that they should have to wait an additional two years, after already waiting seven years for pay equity? Does he believe that this is a fair and just situation? Above all, where has he been for the last six months? What kind of message has he been sending to the President of the Treasury Board about the importance of this work and the need to settle this strike?

Mr. Merrithew: Madam Speaker, in response to the member for Ottawa West, I appreciate her concerns and her kind remarks about the concern I share for the veterans of Canada.

I might mention, though, that the President of the Treasury Board, in his remarks this morning and in answer to questions throughout this past week or so, has indicated time and time again that there have been months and months to negotiate. The two parties were a considerable distance apart. He has indicated publicly in Question Period here in the House and said again this morning: "I am available and I will be willing to negotiate any time that we can reach a mutually agreeable settlement". He has made that offer over and over again.

I am perfectly aware that there have been discussions going on with PSAC, the employees, members of the bargaining table, and the minister himself. While it is his responsibility to do the actual negotiations, I think he has been more than willing to sit down with them. I would put out the offer once again on behalf of the President of the Treasury Board that the place to resolve differences of opinion in bargaining is at the table. The only way to do this is to go back to the table.

Mrs. Catterall: But not in the House, not here.

Mr. Merrithew: We are willing and the minister mentioned that this morning: "I am available, and I will be willing to negotiate any time".

The minister did mention the issue of pay equity this morning and again in Question Period this afternoon. The Government of Canada is not running from that particular issue.

• (1540)

He mentioned this morning that an amount of $28 million had already been paid to deal with that particular issue. He said that there were other adjustments, and I quote exactly: "retroactive pay adjustments totalling $28 million have already been paid out". He continues: "We are in the process of paying another $10 million".

Second, today in Question Period he mentioned that they were now awaiting a ruling from the Human Rights Commission with regard to the third stage. It is not that the government has not dealt with that issue. The government has dealt with it and in fact has spent $28 million in redressing that grievance.

Mr. Brewin: Madam Speaker, the government has said that it favours pay equity. It is perfectly simple for the government to include that principle in the bill, to direct the conciliation boards, and, in the final analysis, to reach a decision which incorporates the principle of pay equity in the bill.

If the government intends its words to be accepted at face value by the people it is forcing back to work, why does it not do the just and proper thing and include this in the bill? It leaves the workers who are being forced back to work under this legislation bitter. They have been through a three-week strike. The minister makes nice sounds about how much he welcomes them back to work.

Could the minister say that he and the government will agree at the outset of the conciliation process that pay equity will be conceded? If so, why will the government not put it into the bill?

The minister portrays in eloquent terms the problems at Ste. Anne's and the aged and sick veterans about whose care we are all concerned. If the care of those veterans is in fact required now by those on strike, then it is a simple matter for the government to narrow this legislation to those workers. If there are other individual situations where it is absolutely essential for employees to go back to work, it is possible for the government to narrow the legislation.

Instead, the government presents a broad sweep putting all these workers back to work. They have not been declared essential by the government. They are entitled under the law of this country, under international convention, to free collective bargaining. Why will the government not give to these workers the rights that it asks the governments of eastern Europe to give to its workers?

Mr. Merrithew: In response to the question of the hon. member for Victoria, I might mention he was again asking about the principle of pay equity. I do not know how much clearer I can be as to the government's position.

The President of the Treasury Board has indicated publicly and in responses to questions in this House that he is prepared to deal with it. We have been dealing with it. We have not tried to escape from our responsibilities with regard to dealing with pay equity. He has done that. He is willing to do so again. We chose, personally, not to try to put any aspects of the points in dispute in the bill.

The bill does three things. It orders the workers to return to work immediately. It sets up, rather than tries to legislate, a settlement of the outstanding issues. I think the bill is very fair in that it sets up the process by which we can bring in binding conciliation in which to deal with the outstanding issues. They will go back to the table and try to deal with those outstanding issues, assuming that is a very fair way of trying to deal with the issues. It was not that we forced or legislated the solution to the problem. We just legislated the process by which those solutions might be achieved.

The second issue the hon. member mentioned was as to why we did not legislate back the essential workers. In my remarks I indicated that when we met with the bargaining unit concerned—and of course Treasury Board deals with bargaining units which in this case are the HSs from my department, the Department of National Defence and National Health and Welfare bargaining as a unit—we said that in order to run Ste. Anne's Hospital and our two nursing homes for veterans in an adequate fashion and without putting at risk the lives, health, safety and security of our veterans, obviously we had to have a very large percentage of the employees. We indicated very clearly that this figure would be in the vicinity of 90 per cent. They offered 8 per cent.

Obviously 8 per cent would not do. There is a difference of opinion there as to what they perceive as being essential and what the Government of Canada and my employees perceive to be essential around Ste. Anne de Bellevue Hospital. Obviously 8 per cent or 45 employees cannot run a hospital with 726 veterans, most of whom are bedridden or in wheelchairs. Obviously one could not do that.

There was not going to be a meeting of the minds on that particular issue. It was deemed impossible, especially because of the two conditions attached to that term "essential employees" and their offer of putting some of the employees back to work on an essential basis. There was no meeting of the minds. It was not doable so we dealt with the bargaining unit as Treasury Board normally does.

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Madam Speaker, I join in the debate today with a great deal of trepidation because I never quite thought that I would have to participate in a debate in the House of Commons, a place for which I have a great deal of respect, on a piece of legislation that is a vivid example of the complete disdain and contempt of the men and women who work in the Public Service of Canada as this government has currently been showing.

This particular piece of legislation is nothing short of sledge hammer legislation forced upon members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada for the ship crews on the east and west coasts of Canada and along the St. Lawrence Seaway, as well as hospital workers right across this country.

This particular legislation really smells of the rot and deceit of this government in dealing with thousands and thousands of Canadians who are members of the Public Service. I firmly believe—and I know that a lot of people in the Public Service and a lot of unionists believe the same as I do—that it has been a very long time since staff relations or union management relations between the Public Service of Canada and the government of this country have ever been this bad.

This government has set about since 1984 systematically to dismantle the Public Service. It has set about to try to undercut the union movement, the trade union movement. The government set about to do it so that it could do things like privatize Canada Post.

Break the backs of the unions and then sell pieces of it off to your friends in private enterprise. Forget about the great jobs that the public servants have done since this country came into existence in 1867.

Over the last few weeks I watched the minister opposite responding to questions about ship crews on the east coast. I am going to try to keep my remarks to that because I know my colleagues on this side will be addressing the problems and the concerns of the hospital workers as they relate to this particular legislation.

I could not quite believe that the government was going to try their heavy-handed tactics on members of the ship crews. Since I have been elected I have seen, witnessed and heard from many people in the Public Service who are fed up with the treatment they have received from this government. I only have to think back to the hundreds of letters I received—and most members of this House have received them—from employees of a place like Canada Post, a Crown corporation.

We saw what happened in that Crown corporation. The government said: "Whoa, we had better get rid of this place. We are going to sell it off, but before we do that we have to get the union turned on itself". It set out on a pattern of forcing every single small issue, to get all of the postal stations and post offices across this country into the grievance procedure.

We get up in this House time after time after time and ask the minister responsible to respond to the real concerns that we hear about harassment at the post office, harassment of pregnant women at the post office, harassment of minority groups in that Crown corporation. We asked the minister over and over again to please tell us what kind of management instruction that Crown corporation was getting to be treating those men and women at Canada Post in such a callous and cruel manner.

• (1550)

Every time one asked a question of that particular minister he would get up, always have a little roll of his belly and a drop of his jaw, and he would laugh as he responded. I was hoping, and it is a terrible hope, that Canada Post was an isolated example. I thought perhaps it was just the insensitivity of top management at a Crown corporation. Maybe I am really stretching it to see this as almost a conspiracy from the top down.

Then we had the ship crews, 2,200 of them across Canada. I said earlier that they do a great job for this country. They ply the waters on the east coast, on the west coast and up the St. Lawrence Seaway. To listen to some of the rhetoric that has been falling out of the lips of some of the members opposite, they would have you believe that these are terrible individuals who are trying to destroy the economy of both coasts and of the St. Lawrence Seaway. Nothing could be further from the truth.

I just want to put it on the record so people know who these faceless men and women are when this type of nonsense comes from the government. These people have faces, they do a job, and they do a good job for the Public Service and for all Canadians.

I have here a newsletter which was to explain to people who were concerned about the lack of progress in the negotiations who the workers are. It says:

> We are the employees. We work on Canadian Coast Guard vessels on the east and west coasts and the Great Lakes, from large ice-breakers to buoy tenders, to Hovercraft and lifeboats, engaged in search and rescue operations. We work on armed fisheries vessels that ensure that proper monitoring of our fisheries resource is maintained both in policing the laws and in the research on improving and expanding the oceanographic resources that we all depend on. We work on Canadian Forces Auxiliary vessels in providing support for our naval vessels in the protection of our national sovereignty. We provide a service to our country in an honest and forthright manner.

That is who they are. Down in my neck of the woods on the east coast there are probably 1,500 of them. These are people you never hear of nor think of. But these are the individuals who for $18,000, $19,000 or $20,000 a year put themselves out on the high seas on the east coast. These are the very individuals who go out for $20,000 in five-storey swells when a vessel has put out a distress call. They do that for $20,000. It is not a pleasure cruise they are on. It is a tough job. It is a hard job and it is a job that they do and they feel proud of doing, and all they wanted was a decent wage for doing it. That is all that they asked for. They did not ask for anything special. They did not make any unreasonable demands. They were at the negotiating table for two years, two solid years.

It is nice that the President of the Treasury Board finally found out what these people do and that they are essential to the Public Service of Canada because for two years he and his negotiators did not negotiate in good

faith with that union. For two years, they negotiated in bad faith.

I submit that they did that because they felt that when the time came and there was no agreement they would then designate those employees as essential and make sure they had to accept the contract from this government which does not want to negotiate in good faith with the trade unions and the Public Service. But they screwed up. When it came time to designate them as essential services, government members missed the deadline.

"My God, what do you do after missing the deadline? We have been negotiating for two years as if it were a joke, a lark, a useless exercise, but we missed the designation deadline. My goodness, we are going to have to really see what these people want, and what we are going to do with them. We do not have them under our control any more. This is a pretty bad situation", the government said.

They then wanted to start to negotiate but on the main issues. One of the main issues that these men and women and the ship crews wanted to have addressed was pay equity. My goodness, it is almost 1990. It is not 1890. Pay equity should be a fact of life and a piece of history. It should not be something that has to be debated on the floor of the House of Commons.

I have said it in this place before—and I hope I do not have to say it too many more times before it becomes obsolete and an issue that does not have to be addressed—for goodness sake, because I live on the east coast and I do a job that is the same as a job being done perhaps in the riding of the minister of fisheries, is that any reason at all to tell me that my labour is not worth the same as the labour for that particular job on the west coast or any other part of Canada?

This government talks all the time about pay equity. "We are in favour of equal pay for work of equal value". That is hollow rhetoric. Last year, during the federal election campaign, over 3,000 dockyard workers and others on the east coast were begging for wage parity. They said: "Tell me, in this day and age, how you can possibly discriminate against me because I live on the east coast? I am doing the same job as those good employees on the west coast, but you pay me less". It is a fundamental issue. It is fundamental to fairness in this country.

We legislate the laws and we set the tone of what is acceptable and what is not acceptable. For five years this government has said: "Pay equity is something we have to put in place. We are against wage discrimination". We are against discrimination, but it is okay by their definition of discrimination to discriminate against people who work on the east coast of this country and to pit them against their fellow workers and their brothers from the west coast. That is what this government does. Its actions speak a lot louder than its rhetoric when it comes to pay equity.

The union said: "Fine. We get, on average, $21,000 a year to risk our lives out on the icy Atlantic. Sometimes we have to stay away from our families for three months at a time for $21,000 a year. But if you are on the west coast, that is okay. You get $1,800 more for the same job, for the same hardship". It does not make any sense. The union said: "We are going to stand firm this time. Once and for all we are getting rid of that 27 years of wage inequity, that discriminatory practice, because, damn it, we are just as good as any other worker in this country doing the same job".

Time after time in this House and in committee, we asked the minister opposite about pay equity, and we asked him about regional rates of pay, and what you get are weasel words. This strike should have been settled. The contract should have been settled three months after those negotiations began, but the government says: "These people are being unreasonable". Well, I think that rhetoric from the government opposite is absolutely scandalous and it is unacceptable.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): Let us look at these people, who risk their lives on the east coast and on the west coast to protect the Canadian fish stocks. They protect the stocks we have not given away to the foreign countries, and we have given most of them away. I am now even getting a rise out of the minister opposite. I guess he knows I am correct. They are out there doing fisheries patrols.

Is that a holiday? There are armed vessels on both coasts of this country trying to protect that valuable national resource. What do they want in return? They want fairness and recognition of their efforts by this government. They want to negotiate. God, we know that. They have tried for two years, but the government screwed up and did not get them designated. Then it had

to find other means to have its way with these individuals. So what is done? The government comes in.

Many times in this House since the strike began three weeks ago, questions have been raised about safety, because we were concerned. There were 1,700 fishing boats. Lobster season was opening on the east coast. We said in this House: "We are concerned about the strike. We are concerned that there is a safety issue". We were repeatedly told in this House that there was no safety issue regarding this strike. Two days ago the Minister of Transport stood in his place and said: "They should all go to the same briefing meeting in the morning, then they would not get themselves into so much trouble". As reported in *Hansard* at page 6505 in response to a question from my hon. colleague for Ottawa West, the Minister of Transport stated:

> There is nothing true in the allegations that there is a problem of safety on the St. Lawrence River.

The next day we hear of strike-breaking legislation coming into this place. What does the government use as a reason for this legislation? Safety. There is supposed to be a big problem.

• (1600)

I submit to you, Madam Speaker, that if the government did not see a problem with 1,700 fishing boats on the east coast, the only reason I can see that it finds a problem now is that a few of its friends along the St. Lawrence Seaway, big businesses, are tweaking their Tory friends and saying: "Get rid of this strike now. We don't care what you have to do". The government has itself backed into a corner. It does not want to settle with these workers. What it is going to do is legislate them back to work; use a sledge-hammer approach to collective bargaining. The government should be ashamed of itself.

Let's look at what these workers want. For two years they have been without a contract. They said right off the bat that they wanted this $1,800 wage gap eliminated. That is in keeping with the policy of this government, a policy that it refuses to put into effect. Instead of getting $19,000 for that terribly difficult, dangerous job, they were going to get $1,800 more for that terribly difficult, dangerous job. That doesn't change the working conditions.

The other thing that these workers wanted was to see some shift differentials put in. My goodness, they go off for three months at a time. Treasury Board had great difficulty with the semantics of all this. They said that the workers were not really on a shift. They work from six to six or six to six, but that is not really a shift, that is a watch and as a watch they did not have anything to deal with that and they could not be given a watch differential because it is not in the guide book. The workers said: "Fine, we will get you out of that pickle".

On Department of National Defence vessels, the civilian employees get sea duty. They do not get paid very well either, $170 to $270 a month while they are at sea. That is not very much to ask, that is reasonable. They said: "We want sea duty. We do not want $500 a month, we want $177 a month". The government said it could not give them that. The workers said: "When we are away from our spouses and our families, we think it is reasonable to ask in the agreement to be allowed to call home, ship-to-shore, at the expense of the employer, the Government of Canada and make a five-minute call". The government said it could not possibly do that. Perhaps these workers will get homesick, perhaps they will find out what a terrible job it is and what a terrible employer they really have and they will want to go back to shore.

These are the types of things that these workers are looking for and this government says that they are unreasonable. The minister opposite stands up, and he would have you believe that these people are the scourge of the earth, that they are trying to milk the federal treasury for every single penny they can get. He loves to get up and, with his own mathematics, combine certain parts of a benefit package and certain parts of a wage package and come up with: "They want 17 per cent". I have talked to the unions and I believe what they are telling me because they are honest hard-working individuals. Their position has been misrepresented constantly by this government as this debate has gone on.

What do we do at this point? The government was very close to a settlement. It bungled it on the designations. Its bad faith bargaining was in full public view for all to

see. We have another example of the lousy treatment that this federal government gives to members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada who do a job for each and every Canadian, and do a darn good job of it.

These workers wanted wage parity. The minister gets up in the House and, with a gleeful look on his face, in response to a question that I asked answered: "We have wage parity". We asked the minister to put it up front as a stand-alone issue. If you are going to say yes to wage parity, do not link it to any other outstanding issues in the contract.

What the government did basically was put wage parity up the other evening which, by the way, was supposed to be in a confidential meeting that the minister had with the union. He broke his confidence in the House the next day and then wonders why they have trouble listening and believing things that come out of this government. Then he smiles gleefully and says: "Well, we put it on the table. Wage parity is not an issue any more". It is an issue unless the government puts it up front and states that no matter what the resolution is on any of the other issues, it is going to give parity because it is right and it is the proper thing to do.

Now what they do is tie it up. They say: "We will give you wage parity", and tie it up in the straitjacket of other outstanding issues and push you in the direction of a long walk off a short pier. That is their idea of proper and fair collective bargaining. Well, it is not my idea and it is not the idea of most Canadians.

In conclusion, since my time is drawing to an end, but I could speak all day on this issue—

Mr. Crosby: Only if it makes sense.

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): My hon. friend opposite says to make sense. I heard a great deal of good sense yesterday in the Halifax—Dartmouth area when the members of the labour union went over to see you in your office and spoke to you long distance. You should read the press reviews on that one.

I obviously have their hackles up on the other side.

In conclusion, I would pose the following questions. Why is this government now concerned at this late date with public safety when we know that the unions and the workers have provided proper safety measures? We have not had any emergency that has not been responded to within 33 minutes by that responsible union and workers. I ask the question, is $21,000 an unfair salary—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I really must interrupt the hon. member. I have been trying for quite a while to get his attention.

Questions and comments. The hon. member for Montmorency—Orléans.

[*Translation*]

Mr. DeBlois: Madam Speaker, I would have two comments and a question.

Opposition members seem to be giving the public the impression that they are the only ones who talk to the unions. We understand them, we like them, but we are the bad guys—we are anti-union.

I think it is important to remind the public listening to us and my colleagues in the House that we have dialogued. I received people from the Coast Guard at my riding office in Quebec City. I talked with them for an hour. I appreciate the work they do and in that regard, I accept the description of their difficult job given by my colleague from Dartmouth, who almost tore his clothes. Yes, the people working on the boats have a difficult job. They staged a responsible strike and I am very glad, in a way, that the strike helped us better understand how hard their work is.

The second remark, Madam Speaker, is that we must get it right. I was a journalist in Quebec City for 20 years. I covered emergency legislation and usually, when the government in Quebec passed back-to-work laws, it imposed working conditions. I remember very well the former Social Affairs Minister, Mr. Forget, saying that if workers had to be legislated back, they should be given less than the last management offer on the table; otherwise the workers would always be tempted to go to Parliament thinking that they had nothing to lose and everything to gain since they could never get less than the last management offer. I find the bill before us very humane; it leaves it up to a third party to determine working conditions.

The question I would like to ask the hon. member for Dartmouth, who was indignant because we were slow in paying workers on the east and west coasts the same, is this: Why did the Liberal Government tolerate eastern workers earning less than western workers for so long?

This is your legacy! How can you explain your tolerating for so long what we are now getting ready to correct?

[*English*]

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): Madam Speaker, I am glad that the member entered into this very, very important debate. It is easy for members on the other side to reply to every problem or every question that is posed by saying that it was there when the Liberals were in power. The Conservatives are in power now, but if the Liberals were in power we would have been true to our word with the labour union movement on wage parity. If you do not believe me, look at the results from the last federal election, look at the places where those wage inequities were in place, and look at the stripe of the members that they elected. They were not on your side of the House very many times. Not very many times.

• (1610)

However, the member raises another very important issue. He talked about the fact that this is another strike and there is never quite enough to give and unions are always posturing. I pose a question generally. Is $21,000 a reasonable remuneration for the occupations that I have just described? How would individuals opposite feel if they worked in a plant and the people on the east side of the plant got paid one rate of pay and the people on the west side of the plant got paid a different rate of pay? It would do a lot for your morale, wouldn't it? It would do a lot to build your morale. Do you think that the federal government should destroy the collective bargaining process by introducing legislation like this when the two sides were lately, at least from what we hear from the front benches opposite, very close?

The outstanding issues are very small. They don't cost a lot of money. We hear that on the seaway the costs could be as much as $2 million a day while the strike goes on. In order to give them the $177 a month for sea duty, which I think is pretty reasonable, it would cost less than $6 million. The wage parity issue would cost less than $3 million to settle.

In conclusion, I decry this bill and I will do everything to stop it. My colleagues and I believe that it is time that this government gave our public servants the respect, recognition and remuneration they deserve and that this government should go back to the age-old principle of negotiating, not legislating collecting labour agreements with the Public Service of Canada.

Mr. Peterson: Madam Speaker, could the hon. member for Dartmouth give to this House even one good reason that he has heard as to why the government supports higher wages on one coast than on the other? Is there one good reason they have come up with?

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): There is no good reason that wage discrimination should be allowed to be maintained. When the hon. minister opposite, the President of the Treasury Board, was at committee, I asked him about his position on wage parity. When I asked him about wage equity, he said to me that he agreed with the principle. He thought it was something that was very important but that we had to be careful. I said: "Why?" He said: "Because the settlements in the public sector will affect the private sector." I said: "First of all, even if that were true, it's still not reason enough to discriminate against a worker based on where they live."

I rose earlier in this House today on a standing order and talked about a problem in my area of discrimination against the largest native black community in Canada in the Preston area. That is in my area. Unfortunately in the private sector young black men make 42 per cent less on average than their non-black counterparts. Is that reason enough then for the government to say that anybody who is black or in a minority group in that area should get paid less because that is what the private sector gives them? That is utter nonsense. If that situation applies in dealing with minority groups in the private sector, it should equally apply in the Public Service of this country.

If you want to look specifically at the strikers, at the seamen and women on the east coast of Canada, they are getting paid about 32 per cent less than their private sector counterparts.

In conclusion, there is no good reason and it will be political folly for this government to introduce this piece of legislation.

Mr. Crosby: Madam Speaker, first let me make a very clear answer to the question asked by my colleague which the member for Dartmouth refused to answer. The President of the Treasury Board, in this House of Commons and elsewhere, has given to the ships' crews in east coast Canada wage parity with the ships' crews on the west coast. All they have to do is sign a collective agreement and they have parity, something that the

Liberal government deprived them of for more than 20 years. That is the answer to that question.

Beyond that, to ensure some sanity in this debate, I wanted to give the member this instruction on the matter of when the government should enter into labour disputes to the extent of requiring back-to-work legislation. The test is this: "Unfortunately, however, there are times and situations when the spirit of compromise and the demonstration of good faith so necessary on the part of all concerned are found wanting. In such circumstances the federal government, as custodian of the economy and the protector of the public interest, must assume its responsibility." Those are the words of the Hon. Member for Papineau, the old riding of Saint-Michel, in this House on October 17, 1978. That is the test he provided. That is the test made by the Liberal Party. Will the member answer whether we are not following that test, his test?

Mr. MacDonald: I hope the Hon. Member for Halifax West still has the support of his researcher because he does not any longer have the support of his constituents.

The members opposite would like to pat themselves on the back. Let us just look at this, and again I am going to quote from one of their documents: "We have ships' crews with families that are living close to the poverty line. In fact, members with a spouse and two children make approximately $100 to $150 a month more than a similar family on social assistance." The hon. member opposite stands up, smiles, and pats himself on the back for legislating back-to-work and legislating probably a contract that will perpetuate that obscenity.

* * *

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: The hon. member for Kootenay West—Revelstoke—VIA Rail; the hon. member for Nepean—Arts and Culture; the hon. member for Prince Albert—Churchill River—The Environment.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT SERVICES RESUMPTION ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. de Cotret that Bill C-49, an act to provide for the resumption of certain government services, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): On a point of order, the Hon. Member for Ottawa West.

Mrs. Catterall: Madam Speaker, the normal order of speaking this afternoon was disrupted by consent of the House. In fact, the Minister of Veterans Affairs spoke and we reversed our speaking order so that the minister could speak in lieu of my colleague from Dartmouth. My colleague from Dartmouth then took the minister's place. I think that requires that the normal speaking order now return to the Official Opposition except by consent of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): It is the Chair's understanding that there was consent earlier for the minister to speak, not as a reversal of the normal order. The understanding was that the fact that the minister had put a motion in front of the House at one minute to one would not be considered as the fact that he had already spoken. Henceforth, he was to take the normal turn. This was the understanding at the time. There was unanimous consent, both from the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier for the Liberal Party and the Hon. Member for Vancouver East for the New Democratic Party.

Therefore, at this time I would recognize the Minister of Transport.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I appreciate your sense of fairness. I must say I regret having to rise in the House today on an urgent matter we have been asked to address.

Mr. Speaker, today is the 27th day of a strike by the bargaining unit for federal ships' crews, mainly crews of the ships of the Canadian Coast Guard. It is clear that this strike has a serious impact on many aspects of marine transport and threatens Canada's economy.

I would like to say a few words about the importance of this back-to-work legislation for maintaining marine transportation in Canada at a time when I believe we cannot afford to let it come to a stop.

• (1620)

Madam Speaker, the sectors most severely affected by the strike by federal ships' crews are the St. Lawrence Seaway, navigation on the St. Lawrence River downstream from Montreal, navigation to and from ports in Atlantic Canada including, of course, northeastern New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, and especially and above all, ship movements in all Canadian waters.

Madam Speaker, hon. members were advised of the fact that on December 1, because of concerns for navigation safety, I decided to stop navigation on the St. Lawrence River between Quebec City and Les Escoumins. On December 4, we assessed the situation further, and decided to allow ship movements and daytime navigation, provided there were two pilots on board.

Normally, coast guard ships maintain navigational aids on all shipping routes, doing so before and as ice conditions develop. Summer buoys must be replaced by special winter buoys, which are submerged by drifting ice. This year, because of the strike, 400 buoys are now out of service. The losses and damages involved represent millions of dollars. The fact is that resulting tonnage restrictions on the St. Lawrence River will probably have to be maintained until late spring, until all the heavy buoy anchors can be located and removed from shipping channels.

[*English*]

The St. Lawrence Seaway system is the world's foremost inland waterway and the foundation of the Canadian Inland Marine Transportation system. The provision of essential services, such as aids to navigation in ice-breaking, are key to the safety and effectiveness of the ocean link to and from the heartland of North America.

Faced with problems of delays in transportation, foreign confidence in Canada diminishes over time and buyers of our exports, particularly in the case of grain, will seek alternate, more reliable transportation systems or, worse yet, other suppliers entirely.

During 1988 the St. Lawrence Seaway carried over 20 million tonnes of bulk cargo such as iron ore and coal to and from ports in the Great Lakes system. Over 15 million tonnes of grain also were moved through the Seaway, and a further 4.5 million tonnes of general cargo were moved by this great waterway. The economic significance of such figures are enormous.

The seaway's yearly cargo throughput is in the order of 40 million tonnes. Sixty per cent of the seaway's traffic is shipped to or from overseas ports, chiefly in Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

I would like to say a few words about the effect that the recent record cold weather is having on the operation of the St. Lawrence Seaway. Operating conditions on the seaway are deteriorating as continued record cold weather is causing rapid build-up of ice through the system.

[*Translation*]

The canal on the South Shore, from Montreal to Lake Saint-Louis, which includes the Saint-Lambert and Côte-Sainte-Catherine locks, is completely covered with ice, which is getting steadily thicker as the cold weather continues. The canal is open to one-way traffic only, because of the thickness of the ice. Without icebreakers, navigation has become more difficult, and it may be necessary to close the section between Montreal and Lake Ontario earlier than usual.

[*English*]

As of midnight December 6, there were 51 ocean-going vessels in the Great Lakes system west of the St. Lambert Lock. Of these, 33 are still above the Welland Canal. There are an additional eight Canadian inland vessels per day requiring service. The average operating cost of these vessels varies from $5,000 to $25,000 per day and more, dependent upon the type of vessel.

Many of the vessels face long delays. These delays will be longer if ice-breaker support is not available. Some ocean vessels may even be trapped in the system for the winter if ice-breaker assistance is not provided.

Should a number of the 51 ocean-going vessels that are currently in the system be trapped, then the losses incurred will be huge. Early closure will also have a

major impact on the viability of the Canadian inland fleet as they will be unable to meet all their commitments.

With the outlook for below normal temperatures to continue for the remainder of December, the announced clearance date of December 19 may not be achievable, and the dependability and reliability of the seaway as a transportation route will be jeopardized.

It is therefore critical that coast guard services be restored as soon as possible so that the seaway may be closed in an orderly fashion and all vessels can complete their transits.

In addition to the seaway, the St. Lawrence River ports have substantial impact on the local, regional and national economy. Traffic at Ports Canada facilities located on the St. Lawrence River generate over 16,500 jobs and $750 million in total income.

[*Translation*]

The 1988 daily average container traffic in the Port of Montreal was 15,000 tons, Madam Speaker, each ton worth $25 in revenue. The impact of the strike is estimated to be 50 per cent more per ton for containers transported by land. This figure is based on the estimated cost of shipping them by rail. All told, this could translate into daily losses amounting to $1.2 million.

On top of that the Montreal, Trois-Rivières and Quebec City grain elevators are losing orders. Grain sales have been slow this fall and now that the shipping season on the Great Lakes and in the St. Lawrence Seaway can come to an abrupt end practically overnight because of the extreme weather conditions, chances of catching up are very slim indeed.

Madam Speaker, the Canadian Wheat Board estimates that in excess of one million tons of export grains must be shipped from the St. Lawrence ports between now and January 1990. So far Trois-Rivières has lost three grain and one forest products shipments which had to be rerouted through another port. Ice jams on Lake Saint-Pierre are causing bottlenecks in the ports of Trois-Rivières and Quebec City. As a rule icebreakers could easily restore traffic to normal.

Madam Speaker, if shipping does not resume the City of Sept-Îles stands to lose 500,000 metric tons of cargo, mostly iron ore, shipped through the Great Lakes during the current shipping season.

Quite possibly Chicoutimi will have to do without the 50,000 metric tons of petroleum products that were to be shipped there. Madam Speaker, other vulnerable sectors include petroleum products, aluminum, titanium, lumber, grain and iron ore.

With respect to the petroleun industry, for example, the Lévis Ultramar refinery produces over 40 per cent of Quebec's total output. To maintain its operations the refinery must get a shipment of unprocessed petroleum every five days, and each shipment is estimated to be worth something like $11 million. Most of its products are usually loaded aboard ships bound for maritime terminals in Quebec and the Atlantic provinces.

• (1630)

[*English*]

Now, Madam Speaker, let us look at the problem of ships currently delayed and time lost. Today there are in excess of 70 ships experiencing delays in the St. Lawrence River below Montreal. In addition, there are 51 ocean-going vessels still to exit the St. Lawrence Seaway before its announced clearance date of December 19. This gives a total in excess of 120 ships affected or potentially affected if this strike is not immediately resolved.

At an estimated daily cost per ship of $5,000 to $25,000 per day or more, the losses in ship time alone are presently about $1 million per day and this figure could escalate to millions per day if all the ships are not able to exit the seaway.

Earlier we were talking about Atlantic Canada. Atlantic Canada is feeling the brunt of the strike. For example, the port of Dalhousie in New Brunswick moved over 856,000 tonnes of commodities in 1988, all of it in support of Canada's international trade.

In the Miramichi region which includes ports of Newcastle, Chatham and Millbank, these facilities handled over 240,000 tonnes of commodities in 1988. Exports to international markets accounted for over 64 per cent of this traffic with an estimated value of these exports exceeding $121 million.

Major users of these ports include the New Brunswick Power Corporation, Stone Consolidated, Repap Enterprises, Acadia Forest Products, Northwood Pulp and Timber and the major oil companies, all of which depend upon support from Coast Guard icebreakers. Should ice conditions prohibit vessel arrivals for Repap Enterprise at Newcastle, the mill will find itself in a very difficult situation, as it depends on the regular supply of clay slurry to keep the mill in production. Any long-term disruption in the arrival of Repap vessels will likely result in mill shutdowns affecting approximately 700 to 800 mill employees.

I think that the impact of not having icebreakers for public port operation in northeastern New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island area could be devastating, particularly in the economic sense, vis-a-vis the lost wages for farmers and shippers involved in the potato industry and future losses in export due to the unreliable supply.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, I think I have shown the dramatic impact of the present situation on the operation of the St. Lawrence Seaway, which is essential to the movement of grain from the Prairies. I mentioned the serious repercussions on the St. Lawrence, which is a sort of transportation pipeline to our industrial heartland. I also drew attention to the negative impact for Canadians in other regions of the country. Financial losses are increasing daily. This is really a national problem which must be solved with great urgency.

Madam Speaker, I would like to present the following motion to the House:

[*English*]

That the House continue to sit beyond the ordinary hour of daily adjournment for the purpose of continuing second reading consideration of Bill C-49.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Would all members opposed to the motion please rise.

And more than 15 members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Since fifteen or more members have risen, the motion is deemed to have been withdrawn, pursuant to Standing Order 26(2).

Motion withdrawn.

[*English*]

Mr. Tobin: Madam Speaker, I just want to put one question to the Minister of Transport.

The government and the minister want Canadians to believe that Canadians generally and, in particular, certain sectors would be at a disadvantage because of the delay in the passage of this legislation. The blunt reality is that the government has had this issue for 22 months.

It should be noted in this House that when this kind of legislation has come before the House, as the member for Ottawa West has pointed out repeatedly over the last number of days, while it is true that opposition parties have voted against it, very seldom has there been a decision by the Opposition not to facilitate in every way possible the passage of the legislation; that is, the requirement for votes at every stage to the point where the government has been forced to use closure.

Fundamentally, the difference this time is that in our hearts and when we consult our conscience the Opposition knows that there has not been an honest attempt at collective bargaining on the government side. It simply has not been there for nearly two years. That is not the job of the Minister of Transport, it is the job of the President of the Treasury Board.

It is ironic, seeing that this government is led by the Prime Minister who made his reputation as a dynamic labour lawyer, that the legislation provides for two conciliation boards but, in both cases, the chairmen were picked by the government with no consultation with the unions involved.

There is a fundamental issue here. It is possible that some people will be inconvenienced and will be hurt, but it has to be said and it has to be clear that that is not the fault of health services workers who want equal pay for work of equal value. That is not the fault of people who work on ships at sea for 28 days at a time serving their nation, the second largest marine nation in the world. It is not the fault of those employees. It is the fault of a government that never intended to negotiate honestly,

never intended to resolve this issue equitably and which now wants to pretend that these workers have to bear the burden of the inconvenience that may be out there for Canadians so it can use a hammer to solve this dispute. That has to be said clearly.

The other issue I want to make clear is one I want the minister to answer. The minister has talked about ships in the St. Lawrence Seaway and ships in the Great Lakes. We all understand that. We are all aware of the reality of the Canadian climate. But I want him to make clear that the reality is that the vast majority, if not all—and I have just had this confirmed—of Canadian vessels involved in hauling Canadian goods, whether it be wheat, grain or whatever, are ice-hardened vessels. They are quite capable, all of them, in the time remaining in the season given the likely timing of the government's bill, of moving out of that system.

What the minister is really doing today is making a plea—and it is understandable from his portfolio's point of view—that the foreign vessels not ice-hardened, that are not built for Canadian conditions and Canadian winters, get a chance to get out. Is that not what is really happening when we are being told by the Minister of Transport or the government that Canadian farmers or Canadian producers may be hurt? That is a fallacy because Canadian boats and Canadian traffic because of ice-hardened capabilities can move out of that St. Lawrence Seaway system.

If the government wants the strike resolved it can do it in a matter of hours. Bargain honestly and bargain fairly. Would the minister not agree?

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): Madam Speaker, I think the member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte would try to find any kind of excuse not to support the bill. It is up to him, but I would like to repeat what I said.

• (1640)

He said it is fallacious. I believe it is also fallacious to try to explain that three week's from the closure of the St. Lawrence Seaway we have 121 ships in the system with no possibility of determining exactly what the icing conditions will be. We have no possibility of knowing what the weather conditions will be within the next two or three weeks.

I face, as the Minister of Transport, the fact that a few of those ships could be stalled in the system all winter and what that represents in terms of consequences. I think everybody in this House has to keep in mind that we have two or three weeks. As the Minister of Transport I just have to ask the House to give me the possibility of using the ice-breakers in a way that we can, for example, free the ice-jam that we have under the bridge of Trois Rivière at the present time.

I have heard in this House so many times people talking about the environment. I said we have 121 ships in the system. When those ships are cruising or sitting in the water, there is the danger that that could create an environmental disaster. And now we have an icey St. Lawrence River. We have problems of icing in Summerside, Prince Edward Island, in the St. John River in New Brunswick, and it could be worse and worse tomorrow and the day after. And I am asking if that is a fallacious argument? I just ask the House to consider the fact which is in front of me. We have the reality. We do not have the time. We do not have weeks and weeks and weeks. We have days. The day after we had a disaster those same members would say that the minister did not take his responsibility, that he did not try to free the St. Lawrence River.

I do what I have to do. I tell Canadians that it is very serious when the Opposition does not understand. The President of Treasury Board explained this morning how 95 per cent of those people have already accepted working conditions but the demand is for 17.4 per cent when we have given 4 per cent to the others. Between that reality and the economic reality of Canada, with the ice conditions in the St. Lawrence Seaway and the weather conditions we could face, my choice is very quick. I need the legislation to keep jobs for Canadians in that sector and to keep the economy of this country healthy.

Mr. Brewin: Madam Speaker, I have a couple of points I would like to put to the minister. First, the government has repeated time and time again the overly simplistic suggestion that the union here is asking for 17 per cent when in fact it is asking for 17 per cent over 42 months. The two sides are not too far apart on money. There is a possibility of getting a settlement. The government did not have to wait until the dead of winter, it had two years to negotiate this. It could have got something settled.

The workers here have been out on strike for three and a half weeks. By the time this legislation is through, if the government persists in using closure to get it

through, it will still be the end of next week before it is through. They have been out on strike for four and a half weeks. The government will be sending back to work employees who have been out on strike for an extended period of time. It is going to be doing so without giving them a single point of win for their effort. It is going to therefore end up with some very bitter, unhappy employees.

The government has said over and over again in this House that it is ready to concede pay equity, that it is ready to concede regional equity. I urge the government to consider including in this back-to-work bill, if it persists with this legislation, an agreement and understanding that the conciliation boards are to proceed from that principle, that the government acknowledges that the settlement must include pay equity and must include regional equity in this country.

Third, underlying this bill there is a very serious issue of principle and public policy. This country, through various governments, is committed to free collective bargaining. We stand in this House and in other places and applaud the Poles when they go out on the streets and win free collective bargaining. Free collective bargaining is an important principle and it is important public policy. There is no excuse possible, by the government simply raising a few individual cases, to force all of these workers to give up this fundamental democratic right. I urge the government to reconsider this iniquitous bill.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): A short answer from the Minister.

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): Madam Speaker, yes, very briefly.

[*English*]

I do not have any time to answer the question. The member said that we will face very bitter, unhappy people. But I am looking after 26 million very unhappy Canadians. I agree with the principles that the member put forward.

But there is another principle in terms of the free collective bargaining. When we jeopardize the economy and thousands of Canadian jobs, the government has to take responsibility. That is what we do. My friend is from Victoria and we are different in terms of the way we manage things. They do not face the same ultimatums we have here. We know that the ice is getting thicker and thicker and we have to face that reality. We do not have two or three weeks. We have days. That is why I ask my friend to support the bill, to give us the possibility of bringing people to the table and find an agreement. That is what we want.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Resuming debate. The hon. member from Halifax.

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Madam Speaker, I am desolate that the hon. minister is leaving. I wish he might wait to hear one comment. Is he aware that, indeed, two Russian ships have cleared the Seaway today, because of their ice-hardened abilities, just like the Canadian ships that he claims are tied up and making the populous unhappy and uncomfortable?

Indeed, the Canadian ships have the ice-hardened capacity as well and will manage to get out of the Seaway in these conditions this week or next week. So the time that he considers so crucial to the economy of this country is, perhaps, not as crucial as the hon. minister has led us to believe. The Russians did it. I would imagine that Canadian ships and Canadian seamen can do the same thing.

But that is typical of this government. Across this country people are confused, dumbfounded and bewildered. They are puzzled at the treatment they get. They got promises from the government during the election campaign of 1988 that are broken one by one by one, ten by ten by ten, fifty by fifty by fifty—promises to keep VIA Rail, promises not to tamper with UI and promises of national day care. And what do we get? Instead of VIA Rail, instead of a national dream, we receive a national nightmare. Instead of a just and equitable UI program, we receive a mangled and bloodied program that helps few. Instead of a national day care system, the government was kind enough to offer us a new 9 per cent goods and services tax. And what are Canadians supposed to believe from these people?

Today's events with ships' crews and hospital service workers are just another case in point of how this government has perfected the art of speaking out of both sides of its mouth.

Here we have a situation whereby the government has and is demonstrating absolutely no regard for civil liberties and individual rights. And surprising as it is, this noble government has turned its back on the great

crucible of human rights. This is the government which has spoken out so often against the human rights abuses in other nations and which condemned the Government of China for its actions last June. This is the government which less than a year ago applauded its leader when he said our Constitution is not worth the paper it is written on because the notwithstanding clause does not fully protect individual rights.

This government, so clearly committed to human rights, was found to have discriminated against hospital service staff. The Human Rights Tribunal ruled that this human rights conscious government had to re-evaluate all hospital service worker positions and revise their classification. Isn't it surprising that this government would profess to be committed to one thing and then act in a completely different manner? But this is the sad truth. Even after the Human Rights Commission told the government that it was wrong, that it was violating fundamental individual rights, the government went on to frustrate and impede other efforts of ships crews and hospital service workers to attain pay equity.

• (1650)

In 1988, the Treasury Board missed the deadline for submitting to the Public Service Staff Relations Board lists of personnel to be designated essential during the round of bargaining after contracts ended on December 31, 1987. Nine departments failed to meet the deadline for submitting lists of their own essential personnel.

Mr. Crosbie: How many?

Ms. Clancy: Nine. Nine, John. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine.

Twice since, however, the Federal Court has held that this mistake could not be overlooked, that the government had acted erroneously. Your government. The Minister from St. John's government.

What does this say about Canada's government? I guess it doesn't say a whole lot. In fact, I often wonder how much difficulty the hon. members on the other side of the House have looking at themselves in the mirror every morning, some more than others probably.

The issue before us is the striking ships crews and the striking hospital service workers. Let us wipe the slate clean. Let's forget the broken promises, the ineptitude, the lack of commitment and the eternal word twisting. What we have before us is an opportunity for the government to put its money where its mouth is.

Here we have a government which claims so sanctimoniously to be committed to human rights. Let us see if it is prepared to back up its words with action. The hon. Minister of Transport who scuttled out of here a few minutes ago said that he does not want to hold up the ships.

Some Hon. Members: Order!

Ms. Clancy: Is there anything wrong with "scuttle"? It is a word in Nova Scotia that means move quickly. You probably don't know that in your part of the country.

Anyway, the hon. minister who left here a few minutes ago talked about the fact that we should not hold up the ships. We already mentioned to the hon. minister about the Russian ships that cleared the Seaway today and the fact that Canadian ships have the ability to clear the Seaway for the rest of this week and next week as well.

We are with the minister. We want the ships to move. What is the answer? The answer is to settle the strike, give the workers what they deserve. I guess that is too simplistic for the government. In fact, I am issuing a challenge to this government. As difficult as it will be and as much as it will place pressure on this government, I am challenging this government to be consistent. I am challenging this government to honour its word and to respect democratic individual rights.

I am very aware that I am asking this government to do something that it finds very difficult. Five years of habit is intensely hard to break but let's see if we can inject some integrity back into political words. It would be of benefit to all of us.

The government claims to be committed to democratic principle and individual rights. Then let it withdraw its motion for back to work legislation. The right to strike is a fundamental, democratic right. It is a form of peaceful dissent which must not be tampered with through government force or government coercion. In fact, the right to strike is such a fundamental right that many other rights are directly hinged to it.

Why is this government going through this charade with the PSAC employees? Again, the hon. Minister of Transport mentioned that the strike had been going on for 27 days. These ships crews workers on the east coast have gone through 27 years of wage disparity—27 years! Where is the fairness? Where is the justice in that? I see that none of the members on the other side of the House can even look up. In other words, they are certainly ashamed, and they should be.

In other words, no one here on this side of the House disagrees with the concept of pay equity. The government knows that legally, ethically and morally it has no leg to stand on. The bottom line is that pay inequity is a concept only accepted by dinosaurs, dodo birds and Tories. In other words, no one here in this country with the exception of this government accepts notions of pay inequity as an acceptable standard.

In the Atlantic provinces such employment opportunities, as provided by the Bedford Institute of Oceanography and search and rescue among others, constitute an integral part of the economic and societal life of my city and my province. For 27 years persons within such professions have had to suffer pay inequities with their counterparts in the rest of the country.

Further, to attempt to redress the 27 years of inequality, they have sought the commencement of sea pay, a concept which may be foreign to some central Canadians. It is obviously foreign to the government. But to those who make their living on the high seas, to those who go down to the sea in ships, it is a concept which is absolutely just.

What is most ironic is that this government seems to be holding up negotiations on the issue of sea pay because it will cost some $2 million annually. We heard the minister speaking previously about the amount of money that it is costing us to hold up the ships in the Great Lakes. We already know, by the way, that most of the ships could get moving.

This is the same government that is paralyzing negotiations with ships crews at a cost to taxpayers of $2 million a day. This government is either short on sense, God forbid, or long on money, which it certainly would not claim to be, because it would be clear that ending this injustice would pay for itself in three short days.

In Atlantic Canada we have learned what we have to put up with to keep a special way of life. Canadians across the country always look at the easterners as people who will make do with little. Maybe we can put up with a lot and make do with a little, but one value which has remained overwhelmingly consistent is that an honest day's work deserves an honest day's pay. It does not cost any less for easterners to feed their families, house their families, or clothe their families. But the government does not see it this way. For some unexplained reason this government seems to think that it is just to underpay Atlantic Canadians.

This is just another example of the recurrent contradictions inherent in this government, for certain cabinet ministers are not forced to accept wage differentials according to geography, and neither are MPs. Why, then, Madam Speaker, should ships' crews accept wage differentials?

Different standards are unacceptable in a country that alleges to believe in justice and equality. Forcing workers back to work and forcing workers to accept standards which are entirely inconsistent with the values of this country will create moral problems and an innate distrust of government for years to come.

I believe that we must also pay tribute to those in search and rescue who have never failed throughout this strike to respond to emergencies. In every case, the response time has remained under the statutory limits of 30 minutes. It is not a bad record for strikers.

Here I must note that in Kingston, Ontario, today, this government locked out those workers who were keeping themselves on alert for just such an emergency situation. It is great to know that people care. The right to strike must be respected. The right of the workers must be respected. The fact that workers in the east, particularly in the Atlantic provinces, deserve the same treatment as others, should not even be a subject for question.

The need to address 27 years of inequity should not be ignored by a democratic government. In Canada as we move into the 1990s, the concepts of equality should be written in stone. They should not be open to this kind of question. Sadly, however, very little in the way of truth and justice appears to be written in stone for this government.

In closing, let us make no mistake that Haligonians and Atlantic Canadians, ships crews in the east, hospital workers in the east are not pleading. We are not

beseeching and we are not begging. We are demanding justice and we are demanding it today.

Madam Speaker, I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "that" and substituting the following therefor:

Bill C-49, an Act to provide for the resumption of certain government services be not now read a second time but that it be read a second time this day six months' hence.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): It is five o'clock. I have put the motion to the House.

At this time, I must advise the House that I have received a written notice from the hon. member for Essex—Windsor that he is unable to move his motion during the hour of Private Members' Business on Friday, December 8, 1989.

[*Translation*]

Since it was not possible to switch positions on the order of precedence, in accordance with Standing Order 94, I order the clerks to move this item to the bottom of the precidence list.

[*English*]

The hour for Private Members' Business will thus be cancelled and pursuant to Standing Order 94, the House will continue with the business before it prior to that hour.

It being five o'clock p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS—MOTIONS

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The house resumed from Tuesday, October 3, consideration of the motion of Mr. Wenman:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider introducing legislation to fully protect the Canadian environment through the institution of mandatory environmental impact assessment procedures which would allow for assessments, prior to the construction of installations, public or private, of projects which may prove to be potentially damaging to the environment.

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Madam Speaker, first of all I would like to take this opportunity to address a few words to the mover of the motion, the hon. member for Fraser Valley West. I would like to bring to the attention of the members of the House that this member had the foresight to introduce a private member's bill almost a decade ago which was entitled Bill C-458. The objective of that bill was to legislate a federal environmental assessment process. His proposed environmental impact assessment act was the first initiative to make environmental assessment mandatory for all federal proposals.

Many of the concepts contained in his bill were very advanced. For example, his definition of the term "undertaking" would have expanded the scope of environmental assessment to include policies as well as projects. This broader scope for environmental assessment has only gained a wider audience in the last couple of years.

As we all know, the hon. member's motion has come at a very opportune time. He has given us a chance to consider the whole issue of environmental assessment on the very eve of the government's introduction of its own bill to reform the federal environmental assessment process. The act, and its regulations, will contain many of the features the hon. member foresaw as being necessary back in January 1979.

All members of this House and the public at large recognize that environmental issues can no longer be ignored. Twenty years ago, few of us would have predicted that the environment would become the critical issue of the latter part of the 1980s and the 1990s, as indeed it is now and will be, I think, into the next century.

Acceptance of sound environmental management is an issue which cuts across ideological lines, national boundaries and generation gaps. All anyone need do is watch the evening news. One is likely, on any given night, to see a story involving some element of environmental degradation.

On occasion, we hear reference to the attack on the earth's protective ozone layer, or perhaps there is a story on the dangers of global warming, or there is the continuing saga, which we hope will soon be addressed, of the impact of acid rain on Canada and other parts of North America. There is the question of chemicals and to what extent they are governing our day-to-day lives. There is the fact that a thousand new-made substances are appearing annually. There is the question of the six million hectares of land that become desert in each and

every year. There is the issue of the world's exploding population and the question of how it will support itself in the future.

For the first time in our history, human activities are undermining the stability of the ecosystem on a global scale. The impact is worldwide. No one anywhere can or will be able to escape.

The impact is economic. It threatens our very way of life; it threatens our ability to sustain ourselves. The impacts are intergenerational. We are very, very conscious of the fact that the futures of our children and our grandchildren are very, very much at stake.

Does this mean, however, that there can be no growth due to the dangers which exist? The answer is, I believe, and I think this is a view shared by many members of this House, is that that is not the case.

In 1987, after four years of deliberation, the Brundtland commission reported and provided us with a guideline which has been adopted more and more throughout the world. That guideline's term, of course, is sustainable development. In using that term, the commission meant, "meeting the needs of present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

In other words, the Brundtland commission was talking about the fact that we could no longer afford to live off the earth's capital. We could not longer afford to destroy and deplete our resources. We must anticipate, and by anticipating prevent environmental degradation. We must ensure that environmental considerations are a part of the decision-making in the first instance rather than an afterthought as has unfortunately been the case for so many decades.

This government is committed to the concept of sustainable development. We recognize environmental assessment is a critical tool in achieving that sustainable development. We are committed to providing the Canadian people with a comprehensive environmental assessment process which will be applied to all federal activities and which will ensure that environmental considerations are at the very heart of federal government decision-making.

The environmental assessment act which will soon be before this House and its regulations will give the federal environmental assessment process a statutory base which, in my opinion, it desperately needs. It will mean that environmental assessment will be mandatory for all activities within the decision-making authority of federal institutions. It will more clearly define the roles and responsibilities of all federal departments and agencies. It will begin to develop a systematic meshing of federal environmental assessment procedures with environmental procedures of other federal agencies and jurisdictions. It will also ensure, and I think this is of utmost importance, that Canadian activities abroad are environmentally sound.

In closing, I would like to thank the hon. member for Fraser Valley West for proposing this motion which has given all members of this House a chance to consider and to speak on the very important issue of the establishment of an environmental assessment process that is predictable, fair, open and accountable.

I wish, however, to propose a simple but in my opinion a necessary amendment to this important motion that will Valley West when he spoke to this House when introducing the motion. At that time he emphasized the fact that the federal government can only bind itself in the areas of federal jurisdiction.

I am proposing that his observation as expressed then be incorporated explicitly into the motion. Consequently, I move, seconded by the member for Selkirk:

> That the motion be amended by adding immediately after the word "projects" the following:
>
> "falling within federal jurisdiction".

I look forward to supporting both the amendment and the motion as amended.

Mr. David Bjornson (Selkirk): Madam Speaker, it is with great interest and concern that I rise today in the House to speak to Motion No. 458, calling for environmental impact assessments for all major development within federal jurisdiction. I strongly support this motion which has been introduced by my colleague from Fraser Valley West.

As a member of Parliament from Manitoba, this motion is of great interest to me because of recent environmental issues within my province. It is of great importance because it calls for the environmental assessment of all projects, both public and private. At the

present time, environmental assessment regulations consist of environmental assessments and review process guidelines which only federal projects are required to follow.

The need for speedy action was reinforced on April 10, 1989, when the Federal Court halted all activity on the Rafferty–Alameda dam project because the process had not been followed. As a result of this decision, there is now a question in the minds of many about the correct administrative procedure for the environmental assessment of a federal proposal. In order to understand the need for the reform of the federal assessment and review process, it is important to look briefly at its history.

In June 1987, cabinet directed the environment minister to release a green paper to stimulate discussion on possible improvements, to undertake public consultations and to make recommendations for reform. From November 1987 to March 1988, public consultations on improving the EARP were held in each province and territory.

On October 20, 1988, the environment minister announced that the federal environmental assessment and review process would be legislated and strengthened.

• (1710)

Every federal undertaking and every undertaking on federal lands will be subjected to a thorough environmental impact study. This was announced following year–long nation–wide consultations with environmental and other public interest groups, industry, academics, provincial and territorial governments.

Although they are excellent and much needed measures, they do not go far enough. A case in point which affected Manitoba was Saskatchewan's Rafferty–Alameda dam project.

Prior to April 1989, the uncertain EARP guidelines contributed to a situation with the Rafferty–Alameda dam project. From 1984 to 1988, planning for the project proceeded according to provincial, not federal, guidelines. The Federal Court suspended work because it concluded that all federal environmental matters had not been adequately addressed by the provincial assessment process.

There is a need for a federal environmental assessment act. It should clearly state who is responsible for what and how the federal and provincial governments can work together.

After the Federal Court's decision, public meetings were held to review the results of a project evaluation prepared early in the year by Environment Canada. An independent consultant, Vern Millard, chaired the meetings. As a result of Mr. Millard's report, the environment minister announced that the project may proceed but, only—and I say but only—if strict environmental conditions were obeyed.

In reconsidering the application of the Saskatchewan Water Corporation to construct the dams, the federal government adopted the position that Manitoba's water uses should be determined and therefore there should be mitigation for adverse environmental impacts. The minister said that while the dams will help reduce an annual average of $640,000 in flood damage in Manitoba, the Manitoba government has expressed concerns that groundwater pumping may be required to augment water supplies in the project reservoirs. Minimum water flows received by Manitoba will continue to be governed by existing international agreements administered by the International Joint Commission.

On the water quality issue, the minister said that Manitoba, together with North Dakota, will have a direct say in the establishment of a proposed multi–jurisdictional water quality monitoring committee. In January 1988, an agreement was reached by Canadian, American, provincial and state government officials that requires parties to negotiate water quality objectives for the Souris River water as it exits Saskatchewan, flows into North Dakota and later re–enters Canada in Manitoba. These quality objectives, to be established within 19 months, well before the reservoirs are filled, will establish numerical values for certain parameters in order to protect present and foreseeable water uses in the Souris River water basin.

The objectives can be reached through such measures as adjustment of release rates, mixing water from Alameda and Rafferty reservoirs, and using the high–level rather than low–level outlets. The compliance will be strictly monitored. Also, Manitoba will have the oppor-

tunity to participate fully in the establishment of water quality objectives and monitoring programs.

As a representative from Manitoba, I applaud the private member's motion which calls for the reform of the federal environmental assessment review process. It is imperative, as the motion states, that a compulsory environmental impact assessment legislation be instituted to fully protect the Canadian environment through the institution of a mandatory environmental impact assessment procedures which would allow for assessments prior to the construction of installations, public or private of projects which may prove to be potentially damaging to the environment.

At the present time, the citizens of Winnipeg are facing an environmental issue which has a potential effect on their drinking water. A proposed gold mine and other recreational developments at Shoal Lake in Ontario, a primary source of drinking water for the city of Winnipeg, have created fear that these activities may have an adverse effect on the city's drinking water.

Under the present environmental assessment and review process, the processed gold mine, being primarily an issue between two provinces, may not have to undergo a mandatory federal government environmental assessment review process.

However, there have been negotiations between Manitoba, Ontario and Ottawa to ensure that this situation be dealt with properly. This resulted in a statement by the federal Minister of the Environment in June that a full environmental assessment of the proposed Shoal Lake gold mine will be conducted before any licence is issued. I think it is important to note that these negotiations were voluntary on the part of the provinces.

I urge the government to establish more clearly defined ways to mesh the procedure of the EARP guidelines with the procedures of other agencies and jurisdictions so that all participants in the reform process will know the rules in advance. Then the federal departments and provincial governments, industry and environmental groups will know both their rights and their responsibilities. The goal of this motion is to clarify the current uncertainty among all levels of government so that in future, duplications can be minimized. Both time and taxpayers money will be saved.

In conclusion, the key element in any environmental assessment process is the opportunity for governmental and public participation early in the planning of a major development. We will improve the management of Manitoba's environment and Canada's environment by bringing forward legislation which requires an environmental assessment of all federal policies and projects. Finally, we will enhance the government's strength and credibility when all sectors of society know that they may actively participate in the assessment of proposals that may adversely affect their environment.

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I am indeed pleased to speak in support of this motion introduced by the hon. member for Fraser Valley West and seconded by the hon. member for Davenport, providing that the government should consider introducing legislation to fully protect the Canadian environment through the institution of mandatory environment impact assessment procedures which would allow for assessments prior to the installations, public or private, of projects which may prove to be potentially damaging to the environment.

Before addressing the motion specifically, I would like to speak on a broader level about the need to protect the environment. The state of the environment, especially the rate at which it changes, is of fundamental importance to a nation's long–term well–being. Canadians have benefited greatly from Canada's vast natural resources. Forests, fisheries, agriculture, fur–bearing animals and minerals have been the backbone of Canada's economic development.

But the desire for continuous improvements in the economic standard of living has not, until recently, been accompanied by a sufficient awareness of some serious adverse environmental effects of economic development. As prominent environmentalist, David Suzuki, points out, economic growth has become an end in itself, "a mindless goal that is sought by every country in the world and the very measure of progress". We must reverse this insane idea that growth is of vital necessity if we really want to preserve something for future generations, to meet their needs, the essence of sustainable development.

It is this irrational and self-destructive use of economic growth as the overriding criterion of national well-being that is the number one obstacle which prevents us from being able to successfully address our environmental problems today. But there are other obstacles.

One is a societal mindset that remains trapped in sectoral and disciplinary boundaries. For example, myopic economists still leave environmental concerns to ecologists, and energy producers develop new energy sources for others to clean up.

Another obstacle which prevents us from being able to develop a coherent and effective strategic plan to protect our environment is the institutional rigidity of our political system. Decisions are made too often for short-term political gain rather than for long-term environmental benefit.

Finally, we are trying to clean up and protect the environment with *ad hoc*, linear methods that are ineffective given the cumulative, synergistic nature of the problem. We deal with the effects rather than causes, with symptomatic treatment rather than definitive cures or prevention.

• (1720)

Because environmental impact assessment procedures are a preventive tool, they are an essential element in an effective environmental strategy. This is why I support this motion.

Canada is a democratic federation operating in a mixed economy. Hence, management and control of resources, their uses and their by-products, is dispersed between the different levels of government and the private sector. One of the federal government's responsibilities in this area is to establish national standards for adoption and enforcement by the provincial governments.

Environmental impact assessment has existed at the federal level since the 1970s. The environment assessment and review process has been revised since, but it is still not adequate.

Instead of specific legislation, we have an administrative policy which the government, any government, can change at will. There are no safeguards or opportunities for real public scrutiny. Its legal status remains uncertain and less clear than if it were in the form of a statute passed by this Parliament. Decisions can be ignored and there exists no recourse mechanism to prevent this. Jurisdictional disorder and dispute between the federal and provincial levels of government continue to persist.

In light of these problems with the environmental assessment and review process and given the importance of the environment, the government must introduce legislation to fully protect our environment and this includes instituting mandatory environmental impact assessment procedures. Compulsory environmental impact assessments will insure that all levels of government will be informed of all factors which affect a project or a product and will clarify the current jurisdictional dispute among different levels of government and will minimize duplication and save time and effort.

Future legislation on environmental impact assessments must cast a wide net and capture all undertakings that have any federal aspect or element. Exemptions for projects that have a very minor federal component or where provisions exist to avoid duplication of assessment can then be built into this statute.

Also, studies should be conducted which examine the effect on the biophysical environment, not only of projects or products, but also of policies and programs. Also, assessments must review cultural, social and economic impacts of the projects and policies as well.

I would like to give one example of recent events which occurred as a result of nebulous nature of the current environmental review process. The federal government issued a licence for the Rafferty-Alameda Dam project in Saskatchewan without following its own procedure for assessing the plan which includes two major dams and reservoirs on the Souris River. To speed construction, federal authorities relied on the assessments of the Saskatchewan government.

The Canadian Wildlife Federation challenged the federal government's decision to issue a licence without a proper assessment of the potential impact on wildlife and water in the Souris River. The Federal Court of Canada quashed the licence and ordered a federal environment impact review.

The government then took another shortcut and held quick public hearings instead of a full scale review. The preliminary evaluation indicated potential worsening of

water quality and quantity as the river enters Manitoba, with negative impact on certain plants and birds in this province. The report noted that there was a lack of information about these issues and called for an assessment of the impact on water quality and monitoring plans for birds and wildlife.

The Manitoba provincial government wanted a full environmental impact review, but the moderator of the hearings on the preliminary reports said that previous studies were enough and a full federal environmental assessment was not necessary. The federal environment minister agreed, and a new licence was issued, accompanied by 22 conditions, such that Saskatchewan must replace habitat and monitor water quality.

The federal government's failure to have a full assessment before issuing the licence shows that this government is ready and willing to abandon its commitment to the environment whenever it is politically or economically expedient for it to do so. This is scandalous. This is why we need legislation making environmental assessments compulsory. The confusion over the Rafferty–Alameda dam project was a case of a bad process leading to bad policy in programs.

Clearly, there is a need for more consistent and straightforward federal government legislation in this area. The Minister of the Environment has noted that he shares the view that there is a need for a statutory requirement to conduct an environmental assessment of all proposals falling within the area of federal responsibility.

Land, water and air are matters not confined within provincial or even federal boundaries. They are international. We have an obligation to preserve our lands, our wilderness, our water and the air we breathe. Canadians must develop a new mindset, a new attitude. It is no longer a question of who is right, the demands of short–term profits and political gains, or the future of our planet. It is now time to act.

I hope the government will put its words into deeds and support this motion. Allow me, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of constituents of Winnipeg North, and on behalf of all Canadians, to conclude with a quotation from the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development:

> Most of today's decision makers will be dead before the planet suffers the full consequences of acid rain, global warming, ozone depletion, widespread desertification and species loss. Most of today's young voters will be alive.

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound—Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, as a Canadian with a strong interest in environmental matters, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise today to express my views on Motion No. 485 as amended, which was presented to this House by my esteemed colleague from Fraser Valley West.

This motion calls for legislation to fully protect the Canadian environment through the institution of mandatory environmental impact assessment procedures. Before commenting further on the substance of this motion, I think it is appropriate that I commend my colleague for Fraser Valley West for his long–time commitment to the matter at hand.

His interest began, I believe, back in 1979 when he presented a private members' bill in this House. He is to be congratulated for his patience and diligence on this issue. In a time of instant environmentalists, it is always a pleasure to see an individual who has demonstrated an interest in the environment long before it became the fashionable thing to do.

Returning to the matter before us, the purpose of Motion No. 485, as amended, is to establish a statutory process to assess the environmental impact of development before the development occurs rather than after the damage begins.

For many years, economic and engineering studies have accompanied any major new proposal, and with the increasing importance of environmental issues, an environmental review is now becoming part of the process. Unfortunately, the existing process of the federal environmental assessment and review process, or EARP, as it is known in its short form, is flawed. Current EARP guidelines are uncertain because they are basically an administrative policy and as such can be changed by future governments through an order in council.

As well, the *ad hoc* nature of the current regime makes its legal status somewhat uncertain. This uncertainty led to the recent problems with the Rafferty dam project which has been referred to earlier in debate. A statutory process as called for in the motion before us would eliminate the problems of the current system. The environment minister is fully aware of this fact and has made public his intention to introduce legislation to

reform the federal EARP. I look forward to this legislation and sincerely hope that it will adequately address the problem I have described.

• (1730)

While on the topic of the proposed legislation, I would like to make a few comments on a story that appeared in the December 1, 1989 edition of *The Ottawa Citizen*. This article, which was based on leaked documents, made the claim that the environment minister, and I quote:

> —appeared to be narrowing the scope of new environmental assessment legislation so that fewer projects will come under review. While this may or may not be true, it is important to understand that the cabinet has not yet begun consideration of the bill and therefore it is quite premature and inappropriate to comment on the substance of the legislation. When the legislation is tabled in this House there will be ample time given to all members to debate its content.
>
> In the meantime members with an interest in this legislation have the opportunity to make their own views known through debate on the motion before us.

As my colleague from Fraser Valley West stated in opening the debate on this motion, "the government will examine the content of this debate and choose from the ideas of members of this House. The final draft of this legislation has not been prepared and therefore this is the perfect opportunity to bring forward positive suggestions".

A goal of the motion before us is to clarify the current disorder that exists in EARP. It would minimize duplication and would save a great deal of time and effort.

I have had the honour of serving this House for 17 years, and I can assure Your Honour that it is always a pleasure to see proposals that would eliminate bureaucratic red tape and efficiency. For this reason alone the motion before us is a very positive one.

At this point I would like to explain why I personally support the need for a statutory process of environmental assessment. As you all know, I have dedicated a great deal of my time and energy to the fight against acid rain. Most recently I had the honour of serving as the chairman of the special committee on acid rain in the last Parliament.

One of the great difficulties of this fight was that we were engaged in after the fact prevention. If a system of before the fact prevention had been in place in the past, we could have possibly avoided a great deal of the acid rain problem. For this reason I support the implementation of a statutory environmental assessment process. Such a process offers the kind of preventive measure we vitally need in this country to avoid future environmental problems.

Now I would like to turn to a matter which has created much discussion and concern in Canada and yes, indeed, around the world, this being the issue of sustainable development. Ever since the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development which is most often referred to as the Brundtland commission, there has been an enormous amount of rhetoric on this issue. However the problem is that the rhetoric has far outdistanced any substantive action on this very important matter.

I must admit that this government is not guiltless in this regard. I am certain that while a great many Canadians have heard discussion about sustainable development, a large proportion are unsure of what it really is; perhaps even some in this House. For this reason I think it is important to read into the record a quote from the Brundtland commission report:

> Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The report stated that there was:

> —the possibility for a new era of economic growth, one that must be based on policies that sustain and expand the environmental resource base.

I sincerely hope that this is true. However this hope for the future is based on the condition that we now take decisive political action that would enable us to begin managing our resources in a manner which ensures both sustainable human progress and, more important, human survival.

This condition illustrates the importance of debate on the motion before us. Motion 485 provides members on all sides of this House with the opportunity to play a role in bringing about the decisive political action referred to by the Brundtland commission.

By standing up in this House and voting in favour of this motion, we will be sending a clear message to the people of Canada, and indeed the world, that we are

committed to taking the actions necessary to make sustainable development a reality. While some may say that it is merely a symbolic vote in light of the fact that the environment minister has already stated his intention to present legislation before this House, we as politicians are fully aware of the importance of such symbolic measures.

When legislation as requested in this motion is presented to this House, certainly I will gladly stand in my place and discuss its substance. In the meantime, I look forward to the opportunity to lend my support to Motion No. 485 as amended. I ask that all members join me in seeing that this motion is passed.

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Madam Speaker, I too am pleased to rise in support of this motion and in particular the amendment that was made by the hon. member. I have some comments I would like to make given the introduction of this motion. Some of the members have talked about rhetoric. Of course we have heard a great deal of that from the government in terms of the environment and environmental assessment in particular.

In question today is a motion that if passed will certainly give direction to the government to legislate an environmental assessment review process. It would be made mandatory and would allow the review of projects under federal jurisdiction; in a sense going through those projects to see that they are environmentally sound, socially sound and economically sound.

While I support the motion there are some areas in it that I think could be strengthened. We will certainly see, if and when the minister introduces the legislation, if it is included. I am referring in particular to questions about the independence of an environmental assessment review process, about the kind of criteria that an EARP, a review process would have to consider, especially when we have to take into question ecosystems that go beyond one particular river or one particular stream.

The case of the massive expansion of pulp mills in northern Alberta is a perfect example of impact going beyond one particular area and having tremendous negative impact across northern Alberta and indeed into the territories.

As well, I am concerned about the need to ensure and in fact to guarantee that there is funding to intervener groups, native groups, environmental groups, trade unionists and chambers of commerce, so that they have an opportunity to participate and prepare the necessary studies. When all groups have such an opportunity, we know and we can be assured that we will get a better project and that industry or government departments initiating projects will know clearly what are those guidelines and how to proceed.

All too often government departments and industry think that inviting the neighbours over for some coffee and doughnuts is an adequate environmental assessment review. I reject that. I think the reason we have adequate assessment procedures is so that all questions can be considered fairly and adequately and so that the right input can be provided to the various government departments which will be dealing with the particular project.

• (1740)

Frankly I was particularly concerned by the comments from the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka. I appreciate his support for the motion, but we should take into account the time that this government has had, this born again government now concerned about the environment, to consider environmental assessment. We now hear that a final draft of the environmental assessment legislation has yet to be prepared. Cabinet has not even considered it.

The evidence is clear in our forestry committee. When we asked the minister of forests what will the impact be of this environment minister's new legislation on assessment and perhaps on pulp mills in Alberta, he remained silent.

Now we know the reason. It is that this government has not even yet considered draft legislation to present to the House for environment assessment. Members opposite talk about rhetoric. That is all we have been getting. We have not been getting the kind of action we require in the House to deal with the environmental assessment we need.

A perfect example of the need for a legislated environmental assessment process now—and I challenge the government and the minister to introduce that legislation before the Christmas break so that we can look at

it—is in fact the farce perpetrated on Canada by the Minister of the Environment on the Rafferty Dam project.

There were news reports the other day on this most important project indicating that when the minister was making the decision on allowing the project finally to go ahead there was no letter, no records, no Governor in Council decision.

What did they do? Did they have coffee up in the Parliamentary Restaurant and make a decision to let the dam go ahead?

We have been getting the same kinds of decisions on the environment from this Minister, and it is not good enough. There is a clear an example in northern Alberta where we have that joke of a government in Edmonton, that joke of an environment minister, that joke of a forest minister. The forest minister in Alberta who is raping and pillaging the forests of Alberta writes and says that Alberta has the highest forestry standards in the country. I think he should be our *Saturday Night Live* because that is where those kind of comments should be for the joke line we get out of it.

What do we get from the federal government? What do we get? We get deals, back room deals with the environment minister in Alberta, to try and make sure that they could weave through some kind of environmental assessment review process. There is the participation of the federal minister and no participation whatsoever from the forestry department in Alberta.

Do you think the Minister of the Environment even thought about that when he sat down with the minister of the environment from Alberta? Probably not. Are the officials of the minister of forest in this House appearing at those hearings? No.

Yet, what roles does this House and this government have in Alberta? Madam Speaker, you will know that we have debated many times in this House Forest Resource Development Agreements. As you would also know there is a Canada–Alberta Forest Resource Development Agreement, funds from which have been used to try to develop ongoing industry in Alberta now. There is a particular role there for more direct involvement from this federal government. We have not seen it. We should certainly try to see it in the future.

The amendment proposed which we will be supporting suggests that it would be in only federally regulated areas. We will support that. The government has made the effort to to tax the heck out of us on the GST. It has made the effort to try to get provinces involved in that tax grab. Certainly this government can make the same or better effort when it comes to environmental assessment legislation. It has to call on the provincial environment ministers across this country to work together to come up with a joint environmental assessment review process so that we do not have the joke that is going on in Alberta right now. I would like to conclude with one particular proposal. It has been enunciated once before by the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. In fact, this legislation is not even in draft form yet and is not yet at the Cabinet level. Maybe the minister is listening right now. He might consider one particular idea, that of an environmental gazette.

We have, as you know, Madam Speaker, the *Canada Gazette*, an official publication of the Government of Canada. We have the *Business Opportunities* bulletin where businesses can see the kind of government tenders and what have you that they can bid on. We have the *Regulatory Agenda* issued annually so that people in various areas have an indication of where the Government of Canada is going to make some regulatory changes.

We have in this House the Order Paper that gives us notice of what kind of business we are going to be dealing with. I suggest to you, Madam Speaker, that we need as part of this environmental assessment review process an environmental gazette that will review those projects that an EARP process will have to review, whether it is putting a bridge over a creek and the problems that could be caused by silt and run–off, there was a problem like that in my riding, or whether it is going to be a project such as the massive pulp mill projects that we now have in northern Alberta. This gazette would give us clear and advance notice of these projects, outlining outlying which departments are involved and what kind of information and documents are available so that we all at least have an opportunity to see what kind of work is being done.

I hope that legislative drafters take this idea into consideration as the legislation does makes its way toward cabinet.

In conclusion, it is clear to all members of this House how important the question of the environment has become. Any good corporate citizen will ensure that their projects are submitted to the most extensive review necessary and possible. It is in that way that those captains of industry or the guy who owns the little trucking firm knows and understands the rules. That is what a legislative assessment review process will do.

I urge the government, in light of the possibility that this motion will pass, to move faster than it is moving now. It scares me that this bill is sitting in the department somewhere. Let us get on with it and introduce the legislation now so we can have some adequate environmental assessment review process in Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion, as amended?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I see that most hon. members who are scheduled to participate in the adjournment debate are present.

Would it be agreeable to the House that the chair would call it six o'clock?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38(1) deemed to have been moved.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Madam Speaker, on October 6 of this year I posed a question to the Minister of Transport with particular reference to the impending closures since the government's VIA Rail announcements.

• (1750)

It announced the impending closure of The Canadian line of VIA Rail, particularly between Kamloops, British Columbia, and Calgary, Alberta.

If you look at the government's own statistics on the usage of that railway, at least those that we in the opposition have access to, it clearly shows that The Canadian line, although it is not broken down in which portions of the line, at least that information has not been made readily available to us, in virtually all statistical breakdowns has a higher rate of cost recovery of passenger usage and with all other yardsticks is a higher performer and a better economic performer with a higher degree of use than virtually any other segment of the VIA Rail system, system excluding those lines within the Golden Horseshoe and the Montreal–Ottawa–Toronto corridor.

In spite of this the government saw fit to classify for special designation the VIA Rail line from Jasper through to Prince George to Prince Rupert, even though on all of the various categories of passenger and economic performance it is a worse performer than The Canadian line that runs through southern Alberta and southern British Columbia.

We do not want to deny the citizens of the north three–day–a–week service or basic essential service in terms of passenger rail. If the government's argument is economic as it suggests that it is, we think it ought to have paid a little more attention to the actual economic yardsticks which government and VIA Rail statistics show to be the case. The southern line, The Canadian line, is less of a drain on the budget and on the economy than the northern line which has been kept in operation on a three–day–a–week basis while there is to be no service other than the Rocky Mountaineer during the two or three key tourist summer months.

Often people in government think, whether it is this government or another government, that simply because an area is in the north the communities there must be remote. In this case, especially on The Canadian line between the cities of Kamloops and Calgary, there are no airports between those two points. Avalanches and

road closures cut automobile and bus traffic more often along that corridor than in any other area of Canada.

In terms of remoteness, you have to travel 200 kilometres or more to get to an airport from the city of Revelstoke, for instance, and from the village of Golden. With regard to accessibility to bus transportation, those communities in the north are even more remote. Therefore we asked the Minister of Transport to send representatives to two meetings that were held, one in Golden in November and another earlier on December 4 in Revelstoke.

Because of transportation problems, the government representatives were not able to get to the first meeting. Hopefully the government learned something about remoteness in that exercise. It tried and failed and it is not even the middle of winter yet.

I understand that the representatives did get there on December 4, earlier this week. I trust that the information that was marshalled by a number of communities and businesses with a vital interest not only in the economic spin-off of passenger rail service to that area, which is becoming increasingly dependent upon tourism, will cause the government to recognize in those mountain passes the kind of difficulty there is without alternative methods of transportation.

Since the time that the government made its decision, of course, the transport committee of the House made its recommendation and asked for a moratorium on the decisions of the government. I would submit that the communities of Golden, Revelstoke, Field and others in that Kamloops-Calgary corridor are perfect examples of why we need such a moratorium, at least in specific cases, and hopefully on a broader scale.

I am sure there are other areas of the country where the decision also needs review. Once we remove the passenger rail system from the trackage which is heavily utilized by CP, or in some cases CN freight services, it is going to be very difficult to again get access to those lines once they have worked out other schedules.

I know the parliamentary secretary will appreciate this because he travelled with me when the MacDonald tunnel opened last summer. At a time when we have a 15 kilometre tunnel which speeds up and allows for increased passage of freight with much greater efficiency at a much lower cost, and frees a second line for passenger or non-freight use, the government has decided to eliminate the passenger rail system through one of the most attractive areas of Canada in terms of tourism, not only in summer when the Rocky Mountaineer will provide minimal service, but during winter.

The government has its own statistics. I know from personal experience, and I suspect the parliamentary secretary and the minister have heard as well, that that rail line is over-utilized in much of the summer and close-to-summer months.

My colleague from Kootenay East and I spent some time travelling the rails there this past autumn far outside the regular tourist season. We had to sleep in the dome car, where you are not supposed to be overnight, because the train was full. People apply months in advance to get on those trains and are told that is full and they cannot get space. It is a heavily utilized line. It has one of the best cost recoveries of any section of the entire system, excluding the Golden Horseshoe.

With the arguments it has been given by businesses and communities in that area, I ask the government to at least proclaim a moratorium on that and other similar areas and allow a review to take place before the door is shut forever.

Mr. Ross Belsher (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the hon. member opposite, the member for Kootenay West—Revelstoke, who has asked us about VIA service as it relates to truly isolated communities. I know the communities of which he speaks and have travelled through them on many occasions when I have been traversing on the Trans-Canada Highway.

The government's decision about a national affordable, sustainable system of VIA services strikes a balance between the transportation needs of Canada and the government's fiscal realities. The hon. member opposite makes out as if with every decision that is made there is great finality and that it is the end of the world. That is not the case in this situation.

Nonetheless, he does raise a very valuable point about the fact that he would like to see these communities considered under the same aspects as to the remote areas of the country.

VIA will continue to provide service to truly isolated communities that have no alternative means of transportation. The minister also indicated that he will be reviewing the transportation needs of these truly isolated communities along the remote routes to determine whether more cost-effective means of access could be introduced.

Most of the communities in question are located along the eight remote routes which VIA continues to operate. The remainder will be serviced through the Winnipeg-Capreol portion of the restructured western transcontinental service. The truly isolated communities in each case are identified as those points where VIA now makes scheduled stops which do not have any regular commercial air services and do not have all-weather highway access to the national transportation system.

The hon. member for Kootenay West—Revelstoke has put forward the concept that the communities of Revelstoke, Golden and Field should also be taken into consideration as isolated communities because they have no air service and because their highway connections are periodically interrupted during severe winter conditions. All three of these communities are located on the Trans-Canada Highway, as I have mentioned earlier. I can assure the hon. member that Canada has many communities which would welcome a road access as good as that enjoyed by the three communities that he has just mentioned, even with the inconvenience of severe winter conditions.

• (1800)

ARTS AND CULTURE

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Madam Speaker, my rising the Minister of Culture and Communications on the management practices of the National Arts Centre.

The minister's response to me, as reported in *Hansard* at page 5474, stated that the NAC was an "Ottawa issue", was and is completely unacceptable to me. The NAC is a national institution created by Parliament and maintained by Parliament.

A few months back, I requested the minister to hold a public enquiry into the management practices of the NAC. The reason I did this was precipitated by a series of events or skirmishes, call them what you wish. There were labour problems, firings, some still before the Labour Board; a malaise unprecedented before in the institution's 20-year history; a shifting of funds from NAC programming into the untested field of high definition television; the music director's non-renewal of contract, and an orchestra that was out on strike. The NAC has not had an increase in its budget for seven years. This concerned me greatly. I question this government's commitment to culture or the arts in Canada. As another example I can cite the $140 million cut to the CBC.

Federal funding of the NAC has not kept pace with inflation. The chairman of that board is quoted in the local press as saying; "The NAC is in a perilous position financially". Yet, when I reviewed the minutes of the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture during the budget review, the chairman did not appear to defend the centre and relay this critical information on to the communications and culture committee. At the same committee hearing, the Director General was unable to produce budget figures when asked to do so by the committee.

If there is insufficient funding of the NAC, and I do believe that there is, the board chairman and the Director General should be making Parliament aware of this insufficiency.

To quote Maureen Forrester: "To fail to do so is a breach of the board's moral responsibility".

The NAC of late has suffered a drastic erosion of trust on all sides. The orchestra strike has ended, but let us not hide our heads in the sand and assume that all problems have been resolved.

The Minister of Communications has responded by letter to my request for a public inquiry. His response was that the management of the NAC is within the purview of the board and so Parliament should not intervene. However, does the minister not realize that the responsibility of the board falls under the purview of this Parliament and this government should be making definite enquiries?

As parliamentarians, we have a responsibility to Canadians to ensure that this national institution is given the care, the scrutiny and in-depth analysis that Canadians have been asking for. If this organization is financially starved, then we as legislators have a responsibility to address this issue. The Minister of Communications said:

"Money is no substitute for good public policy". So, where is the good public policy if there is no money?

I ask that the minister and the government pledge both financial and policy support for the National Arts Centre and do this for all Canadians. This is not an Ottawa institution, it is a national institution.

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to respond to some of the concerns raised by the hon. member from Nepean with respect to the National Arts centre.

• (1805)

I know the hon. member joins with me in celebrating the end of the strike by the Arts Centre Orchestra. The collective agreement which has been ratified by both the orchestra players and the management ensures that the orchestra will continue to be a mainstay of cultural programming at the Centre.

This three-year agreement will bring the salaries of the orchestra in line with those paid to members of the Toronto and the Montreal symphonies. The size of the orchestra has also been confirmed and new lines of communication have been established between the orchestra and management.

I think this marks the beginning of a very artistically productive period for the orchestra and augurs well for the more harmonious relationship between the orchestra and management. I would like at this time to congratulate the Minister of Labour and his officials who played a very key role in resolving the dispute to the satisfaction of both parties.

As you know, the Government of Canada has been very supportive of the National Arts Centre since it first opened its doors in 1969. In this the twentieth anniversary of the Arts Centre, the Board of Trustees and its staff published a booklet entitled *The Third Decade and Beyond* which examines the policy direction and the programming options which the Centre could consider in the next decade. It is most encouraging to see this kind of planning taking place and I congratulate those connected with the Centre on their enthusiasm and foresight.

This booklet, *The Third Decade and Beyond* will ensure that the Centre will continue to enhance its reputation as one of Canada's premier cultural institutions and will, above all, contribute to the state of arts across Canada as a catalyst for co-production and as a showcase and collaborator for performance from Canadian companies which are the pride of many Canadian cities which all Canadians should be able to enjoy.

Of course, quality of this calibre is not inexpensive and the Government of Canada has recognized this. Last year, the federal government contributed $18 million to the total budget of $34 million allocated for the operation of the National Arts Centre.

The National Arts Centre is one of Canada's most distinguished cultural institutions. I am confident that adequate funding from federal, provincial and municipal levels of government combined with the all important, aggressive private sector fund-raising program will ensure that the National Arts Centre will continue to enjoy the resources necessary to bring the highest level of performing arts excellence to the people of Canada.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Madam Speaker, the issue that I am raising today is one which I first raised in Question Period on November 9, and has to do with the spill of radioactive mine waste at the Collins Bay uranium mine run by Cameco at Wollaston Lake, Saskatchewan.

This, I believe, had the potential, and still does, to be one of the major environmental stories of the year but thus far has not had the kind of publicity because it unfortunately happened when the Berlin Wall was coming down and while the premiers' conference was on. I walked out of Question Period that day to find one camera and two reporters in the lobby of the House which is most unusual. I think that is one of the reasons why Canadians, in general, don't know as much about this issue as they will and as they should.

I might add that in Saskatchewan it has been a major issue. There all the media have covered it. Government officials and others are taking it very seriously. That is not to say it is not being taken seriously here.

I would like to run through some of the chronology of what has happened since November 9 on this story. On November 11, I flew there, toured the mine site, the site of the spill with the chief, town officials, and the local MLA. We had, I think, a very informative trip. Certainly we were shown everything we wanted to see. But what we saw was appalling. As a farmer, I am no

technical expert, but I would not let a farm dug-out or septic tank system run the way they let that run.

The alarm system was referred to by AECB as being out of action for 15 hours during the spill. In fact, it had been disconnected since 1985. I found out since then that AECB officials have inspected that site at least 25 or 30 times and never noted the fact that this very critical alarm system was not working. They have also approved the same design using the same system for new pits right in Collins Bay and this system was approved. The same regulators are looking at the Cigar Lake mine very close by.

• (1810)

On November 14 the Indian people of northern Saskatchewan accompanied by myself and the MLA, with senior officials of the Department of Indian Affairs, Health and Welfare Canada, Environment Canada, Atomic Energy Control Board and the Saskatchewan Minister of the Environment and his officials had a meeting. It was a very productive meeting. But again there was new information that we received. Namely, two things: One, if they had been mining in the Rabbit Lake pit at the time that the spill occurred the toxic levels would have been five times as high as they were now. We would have had a very serious environmental catastrophe if the spill had occurred while they were mining. Fortunately, there was no mining going on at the time.

We also found that what was discharged was 440,000 gallons of untreated mine waste. In fact, it contained a level of radium 226 at 5 to 8 becquerels. That is very technical language but the discharge limit is one becquerel. So what was discharged into that bay, 440,000 gallons worth, is in fact serious even in and of itself because there are spawning areas for both whitefish and jackfish in the area.

On November 15 the Prince Albert District Chiefs and the Wollaston Lake Band held a press conference in Prince Albert calling for a formal public, independent, comprehensive, inquiry into the spill. On November 15 there was a press conference held here in Ottawa where representatives of the Canadian Labour Congress, Indigenous Survival International, Mennonite Central Committee, Greenpeace and Cultural Survival Canada joined in supporting the call for an inquiry. Having examined the evidence, they joined the call for an inquiry.

On November 24 Chief Ed Benoanie formally presented his call for a public inquiry to the Minister of Energy. He also had a conversation with the Minister of the Environment and outlined his case to them why it is critical not only from the standpoint of what happened specifically with the spill and the environmental consequences and so on, but the whole interaction and the inter-relationship between the Indian people of the north and this industry and other industries that operate in their lands.

This afternoon I attended my first Atomic Energy Control Board meeting. Attending there as well were representatives from the community of Port Hope because a Cameco application for increasing their discharge limits was on the table. I heard there that an incident occurred in 1983 at Port Hope where there was a fire in the facility and that many people evacuated the town. It was a disaster nearly averted again. It came to light at that time that there was no emergency procedure in place at Port Hope for evacuating the town and there was no equipment in the town to deal with the potential crisis. What appalled me and makes me quite sceptical about these regulators is that it does not exist today either. There is no emergency plan in Port Hope. They are still working on one six years later. There is very little reason for confidence in the regulators.

I would like to again stress that there needs to be a comprehensive inquiry. In an article in the *Saskatoon Star Phoenix* on November 24 it stated that staff levels were too low to prevent spills from the Atomic Energy Control Board.

We cannot have the regulators investigating themselves. I know that their investigations about Cameco's operations are under way and charges might be laid. But somebody has to look at these regulators. This is a regulatory meltdown and it has to be looked at in an independent way. It has to be comprehensive and include everything that they regulate, as well as the interaction between the native people of the north and this industry. It also has to be public because in this era of *glasnost* at a time when there is tremendous concern about our environment and the long-term consequences of what we do, the public will not be satisfied if this is not

a fully public inquiry where everybody knows what is going on.

My specific question today in that regard is the following. When we met with the minister he said he would make a judgment on whether there should be an inquiry or not once he had the results of his internal investigation. I was wondering if the parliamentary secretary would be in a position today to tell us when that internal inquiry might be done so we could hear from the minister if in fact we will get our public inquiry.

• (1815)

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, on November 7, 1989 at 12.45 p.m. a mine water spill was discovered near the Collins Bay mine located at Rabbit Lake, Saskatchewan.

This open pit mine, which is owned and operated by Cameco, has been shut down for approximately three months due, in part, to the depressed nature of the uranium market. This temporary mine closure led to the lay-off of 96 mine workers earlier this year. In order to prevent the pit from flooding, water which naturally seeps into the pit is routinely pumped along a pipeline from the mine site to the mill, which is several kilometres away. A valve housing the pipeline cracked and allowed 2,000 cubic metres of mine water to spill out into an overflow catchment, then into Collins Creek, and finally into Wollaston Lake.

Because the mine had been shut down, the spill water was essentially rain water which had seeped into the pit. Extensive sampling of water in Collins Creek has shown that the radium, nickel and arsenic levels are extremely low and meet Saskatchewan surface water quality objectives. At the outflow of Collins Bay into Wollaston Lake, the level of these contaminants is below detection levels. Hence, the present data clearly indicates that the spill did not endanger the drinking water or the fisheries that exist in Wollaston Lake.

The minister has indicated that he wants answers as to why the spill occurred, and wants the whole question fully aired and fully investigated. He has also indicated that he will be following the AECB investigation with considerable interest and wishes to be kept fully informed of new developments as they occur.

The Atomic Energy Control Board, which is the independent federal regulatory agency responsible for health, safety and environmental issues related to the nuclear industry, is continuing its investigation into this incident. The spill was discovered from an aircraft chartered by AECB during a routine inspection of the site and also observed independently by Chief Benoanie of the Hatchet Lake Band. The AECB inspector investigated the spill immediately upon landing and remained on the site to complete a full investigation. The results of the ongoing investigation have been submitted to the board.

While the preliminary stages of the investigation are under way, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources wrote on November 22 to Chief Benoanie of the Hatchet Lake Band at Wollaston Lake and assured him that the spill had created little environmental damage and that he would be kept fully informed of any new developments.

On November 24, the minister met with Chief Benoanie and the hon. member from Prince Albert—Churchill to discuss the issue. He assured both of them that the AECB will keep all interested parties informed about developments as they occur.

As you are aware, Madam Speaker, yesterday, December 6, the Atomic Energy Control Board recommended to the Attorney General of Canada that they consider laying charges against Cameco regarding alleged violations of the Atomic Energy Control Act. This new phase of the investigation will involve the prosecuting counsel for the Attorney General of Canada's office. The office has the responsibility to make the final decision on the specific charge to be laid against the company. The first meeting to view the legal implications of the case will be held later this month.

Today the Saskatchewan government announced that it is taking a separate but similar action. It has referred the investigation to the Saskatchewan Justice to determine if sufficient evidence exists to lay charges under the Saskatchewan Environmental Management and Protection Act.

We expect that the investigation and the question of legal charges will be cleared up some time early in the new year. It is at that time that we will have the necessary information to make decisions about appropriate follow-up actions to this incident.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow, pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 6.19 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, December 8, 1989

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

HUMAN RIGHTS

Hon. Gerry Weiner (Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Citizenship)): Mr. Speaker, it gives me very great honour to note on behalf of all members of this House that Sunday marks the forty-first anniversary of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

When the universal declaration was adopted without a dissenting voice by the young United Nations organization on December 10, 1948, it immediately established itself as the fundamental expression of the highest hopes and ideals of the human spirit. It remains so to this day.

For most of these 41 years, however, the anniversary of the declaration has served more as a reminder of how far human action has fallen short of its principles than of their attainment. If this year is different, it is because today we have reason to believe and hope that the balance is, at long last, beginning to change.

In recent weeks we have witnessed extraordinary events. In Brazil and in Uruguay there were held the first free elections in years. In Namibia and in South Africa developments which, while they have far yet to go, cannot be ignored. India, the world's largest democracy, went to the polls and again reaffirmed the triumph of freely-elected representative government.

[*Translation*]

What can we say, Mr. Speaker, about the events in eastern Europe?

It would be pointless to try to describe in a few words the images and feelings which come to us every day from Warsaw, Budapest, Sophia, Berlin, Prague and other cities and which have so much immediate personal significance for so many Canadians.

[*English*]

What will not fail, what is undeniable, is the need for freedom and the need for dignity, the need for those equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family which lie at the heart of the universal declaration itself. They have proven stronger and more enduring than either the instruments of repression or the blandishments of states and institutions which have so long denied these rights.

No less important is the vision and compassion with which this great journey is beginning. In Leipzig, on November 9, the same night that the Berlin wall finally opened, the crowds answered the call of New Forum by the tens of thousands as they had on previous nights. They assembled not only to renew the call for change, they also met to observe and remember the events of 41 years earlier, November 9, 1938—Kristalnacht, Crystal Night—and what happens when a society forgets that human rights are inseparable, that they must belong to all or eventually they will belong to none.

• (1010)

[*Translation*]

Disrespect and contempt for human rights can only lead to acts of barbarism, as the Declaration itself reminds us. It is very encouraging for the future that the new societies in eastern Europe are arising from a recognition of this.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, none of us can forget that full respect for human rights remains one of the major challenges of civilization.

[*English*]

Millions of people in the world live under regimes which continue to deny their citizens the rights and freedoms most Canadians take for granted.

Countless countries around the world still practice torture. Thousands die annually at the hands of death squads. Thousands more simply disappear. And if this is a year which we will remember by the end of the Berlin wall, it is also a year we will remember by what happened in Tiananmen Square.

It is so important therefore that we observe December 10, Human Rights Day, not only for the progress that has been achieved this remarkable year, but also for the distance we must yet travel.

[*Translation*]

I hope that as Canadians, we will use that day to think seriously about these basic principles of freedom and justice and to ask ourselves what each of us can do to promote them.

[*English*]

Many Canadians have made and continue to make exemplary and inspiring contributions to the fight for human rights around the world. But I would ask that we think about the work yet to be done to secure those rights here in our own country as well.

[*Translation*]

Our Constitution, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, our laws and democratic institutions all show a deep national commitment to the principles of equality and justice.

Nevertheless, prejudice and discrimination still exist in many parts of our society. Whether they are based on colour, race, religion, language or any other difference between Canadians, they are an affront to the dignity and freedom of every one of us.

[*English*]

With this so important anniversary clearly in mind, I therefore call upon Canadians to share in accepting the responsibilities of citizenship as readily as we accept its privileges, and that we join together to eliminate discrimination and prejudice which continue to deny equal rights to many in our society.

Canada has long stood as a symbol of freedom and liberty to many of the world's peoples. By working to ensure the full participation of all Canadians in the life of our fortunate country, we will continue to do honour to that tradition and to that obligation. No less, we will confirm the inherent dignity, the equal and inalienable rights which must be the common inheritance of every Canadian, as instead they must be of all mankind.

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I too am honoured on behalf of members of the Official Opposition to recognize the occasion of the forty-first anniversary of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. This declaration entitles everyone to equal treatment without distinction based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Canada, of course, fully endorses this and has, in fact, used this declaration as a basis for our own Charter of Rights and Freedoms, as brought in by this party in the early 1980s.

It is unfortunate though that Canada has not played a more substantive role in promoting these goals internationally. We have the ability and the international credibility among the world community to encourage human rights developments, but Canada's approach has been inconsistent. Wherever we go to attend meetings, Canada is the first country to say, as the Prime Minister leaves, that we are in favour of human rights and that we will raise human rights issues.

When we went to the Commonwealth, the government said it was going to raise human rights concerns. When it came back, it said nothing. When this government joined the Organization of American States, it said that one of its priorities was human rights, but it came back and said nothing.

We could be playing a major role in the struggle in El Salvador. If we are going to be using the Organization of American States properly, this is an opportunity for us to state what the protection of human rights really means in a troubled country. We have been silent on that issue. We have not used the Organization of American States. We have not used our own goodwill in a troubled part of the world. I use this as an example only because it is the most current example of the problems that we face in trying to persuade the government to use Canada's goodwill in international forums to promote the human rights that we value so dearly.

Why have we not raised our objections to this and other issues? What about the disturbing increase in human rights violations in Guatemala or in East Timor? What do we hear these days from our government about China, or about the events in Ethiopia? The government waits far too long and allows Canada's great record to fall behind as events unfold.

The 1987 report of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade entitled *For Whose Benefit?* states:

> Canada's performance on international human rights to date has been criticized as episodic and primarily reactive.

This government has obviously chosen not to pay attention to this observation. I would like to ask why we are not more consistently outspoken against human rights abuses, when members of this House, including members of all parties, feel very strongly about this.

This human rights declaration is not just a statement. By being a signatory, Canada has accepted to demonstrate a commitment to human rights around the world and at home.

We do not want to try to impose our beliefs, our values and our institutions on other countries, but Canada has an obligation to assist other nations in recognising the value of a free and democratic society where individual rights and freedoms are fully respected and protected.

Clearly, that is what people want; and, clearly, it is not what we are hearing enough about from this government. We are witnessing this almost daily with the dramatic changes taking place in the eastern bloc. As we watch changes take place both within the Soviet Union and in eastern European countries the silence of our government on human rights issues has been one that most Canadians cannot understand or accept. Canada can and should be confident in stating our views to other nations when it comes to human rights abuses.

I would also like to say that this party joined with the other two parties of the House in forming a new subcommittee of the Human Rights Committee on international human rights. As participants on this committee we plan to set out a research agenda and bring in witnesses from the various interest groups around this country who want to hear Canada speak out more consistently on human rights. Through the work of this subcommittee we hope that the government will begin to understand the tradition that this House has held in areas of human rights and begin to speak out on our behalf. We look forward to working with other members of the House to present this case to the government.

Unfortunately, our own government and this country cannot claim total innocence in the violation of human rights. Our own Canadian Human Rights Commission clearly pointed out our negligence when dealing with people facing poverty, homelessness, undernourishment, child and spouse abuse, racial discrimination and, of course, the tragic situation facing our native people.

As a member of Parliament from Manitoba, I can tell you that issue is uppermost in the minds of people from my province, as the aboriginal commission on the state of the justice community in dealing with native rights has come to an end. We await the report. We do hope the government will respond as quickly as possible.

• (1020)

It is also incomprehensible as to why this government has not acted more rapidly in developing a children's bill of rights within this country, and why Canada has not yet signed the UN declaration against torture, and why Canada has chosen not to ensure automatic refugee status to those escaping repressive regimes.

This Universal Declaration of Human Rights has tried to provide a guideline for all nations to respect the rights of all persons. We truly support the objective of this declaration. But to support it is not enough. It is only through the actions of our government that we can ensure equal treatment for all people.

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to have been delegated by my party on behalf of my leader to join with hon. members on all sides in the observation of the forty-first anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

It is particularly noteworthy that I should do so when my party has given substance to the dream that men and women equally should aspire to equal political participation. In Canada, on this day, we are encouraged to express the broader hope foreseen in the UN declaration and that in this country every citizen, regardless of colour, race, language, religion and disability will some

day see a similar confirmation of full citizenship and participation in all walks of Canadian life.

Beyond our borders there are other signs that provide hope of progress toward the achievement of the ideal supported with such unanimous idealism 41 years ago. Television screens have provided dramatic images of the changes in East Germany, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria which mirror the near-revolutionary impact of *glasnost* and *perestroika* in the Soviet Union itself.

Yes, we are encouraged by elections in Brazil, Uruguay, India and Namibia and by mildly encouraging signs in southern Africa. Surely, the tenuous basis of our optimism was severely tested by the bloody massacre in Tiananmen Square.

As we look elsewhere can we say that religious conflict and intolerance, torture by governments and the disappearance of dissidents, genocidal nationalistic conflicts, denials of basic human rights and justice, exploitation of the poor and suppression of democracy have in any fundamental way diminished?

Are we gaining a greater recognition as we in the developed nations continue to foul the earth and greedily consume most of its resources and impose escalating debt on the Third World, that we ourselves are negating all hope that three-quarters of the world's population will indeed ever be able to live lives in environments that can sustain them or where humans rights and freedom have any real value or relevance?

For Canadians, do we see a strengthening or diminishing by our government of Canada's traditions in defence of freedom and the pursuit of peace? In NATO are we the leaders for disarmament or are we the mere echoes for our U.S. allies? In Central America are we voices for a different way? Have we lost our resolve in southern Africa?

Here at home where the events of yesterday dramatize the inhumanity of human kind, have we made real progress in terms of the kind of understanding between the sexes that we had hoped to achieve and which was symbolized by my leader's victory?

Is it possible to argue that Canada acts in a way consistent with the dream enunciated in the universal declaration when we have 1.1 million children living in poverty, when more and more Canadians go to food banks in order to eat, when so many are without homes in which to live, and when there is increasing disparity between rich and poor? One asks whether one can say that we are making progress even in our own country for producing those conditions which are necessary to achieve the ideals of the universal declaration.

In that context, it would be useful for our government to recognize whether, in fact, it is now acting in terms of those higher ideals, or whether this new pursuit of the ends of greed really are or ever can be consistent with the universal declaration. Can we have a nation in which there are people who hunger for jobs and hunger for food and at the same time expect there to be inter-racial understanding? Can we have a nation in which the imperatives are those of wealth and still have the hope that our aboriginal peoples will have control over their own lives? Is it possible to engender conflict among people worried about their future and truly seek to have understanding among those of different cultures and who live in different regions of the country?

Here at home we have enough to be concerned about, but unless we are able to transfer our ideals in terms of understanding and accepting the differences within our own borders and having as our highest imperative that to ensure all people have equal opportunity, economically and elsewhere within our own borders, one has to ask whether there is any hope for us to provide leadership in ensuring that those ideals that we talk about today will in fact be the basis for our future on this earth.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT SERVICES RESUMPTION ACT

MOTION THAT DEBATE BE NOT FURTHER ADJOURNED

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I move:

> That debate on the motion for second reading and reference to a legislative committee of Bill C-49 and on any amendments proposed thereto shall not be further adjourned.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

The House divided on the motion which was agreed to on the following division:

(*Division No. 139*)

YEAS

Members

Anderson	Andre
Attewell	Beatty
Belsher	Bertrand
Bird	Bjornson
Blackburn (Jonquière)	Bosley
Bouchard (Roberval)	Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Bourgault	Boyer
Brightwell	Browes
Cadieux	Cardiff
Casey	Chadwick
Champagne (Champlain)	Clark (Yellowhead)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)	Cole
Collins	Cooper
Corbeil	Corbett
Côté	Couture
Crosbie (St. John's West)	Crosby (Halifax West)
DeBlois	de Cotret
Della Noce	Dobbie
Epp	Feltham
Ferland	Fretz
Friesen	Gérin
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	Greene
Guilbault	Gustafson
Halliday	Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hawkes	Horning
Hudon	Hughes
Jacques	Jelinek
Johnson	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langlois	Larrivée
Layton	Lewis
Lopez	MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacDougall (Timiskaming)	MacKay
Malone	Marin
Martin (Lincoln)	Mazankowski
McCreath	McDermid
McDougall (St. Paul's)	McLean
Merrithew	Monteith
Moore	Nicholson
Oberle	O'Kurley
Paproski	Plamondon
Plourde	Pronovost
Reid	Reimer
Richardson	Robitaille
Roy-Arcelin	St-Julien
Schneider	Sobeski
Soetens	Sparrow
Stevenson	Tardif
Thacker	Thompson
Thorkelson	Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van de Walle	Vankoughnet
Venne	Vien
Weiner	Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)	Winegard
Worthy—107	

NAYS

Members

Allmand	Angus
Baker	Barrett
Bellemare	Berger
Black	Boudria
Brewin	Butland
Catterall	Clancy
Dionne	Duhamel
Ferguson	Fisher
Funk	Gaffney
Gardiner	Gray (Windsor West)
Harb	Harvard
Harvey (Edmonton East)	Jordan
Kaplan	Karpoff
Keyes	Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Kristiansen	Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)	Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)	MacWilliam
Maheu	Manley
McCurdy	Mifflin
Milliken	Mills
Mitchell	Murphy
Parker	Peterson
Riis	Robinson
Rocheleau	Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Stewart	Vanclief
Volpe	Walker
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—53	

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

The hon. member for Québec-Est on a point of order.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Québec-Est): Mr. Speaker, since I have been appointed Chairman of the Legislative Committee on Bill C-49 and considering the attendant responsibilities, I abstained from voting.

[*English*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Parkdale—High Park on a point of order.

Mr. Flis: Mr. Speaker, I did not vote because I walked in after the vote began, but I abhor any closure motions in a democratic government.

S. O. 31

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

GUN CONTROL

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, the horrible tragedy which took place on Wednesday in Montreal confirms that it is still too easy to acquire powerful and lethal firearms. If we are genuinely serious in wanting to stop this sort of crime, then we must take definite steps to better control the availability of these deadly weapons. Each time we tighten our gun-control laws there is a reduction in gun-related crime.

In the circumstances, I want to recommend the following that, one, there should be a mandatory two-week waiting period before any firearms' acquisition certificate is issued. Two, the FAC should be required to purchase ammunition as well as weapons. Three, we should require any applicant for an FAC to obtain the signature of two guarantors from the community who would support the application. Four, the FAC should be renewable every two years rather than every five years; and five, the government should designate the STRUM semi-automatic rifle as a restricted weapon.

Stricter gun laws are not the entire answer but they will help reduce this type of crime.

* * *

• (1110)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. J.W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are becoming increasingly aware of the needs of our environment for cleaner and safer ways to produce energy both here at home and around the world. Canadians are also becoming increasingly aware that nuclear energy and technology is an essential element in any policy to meet the world's future energy requirements, particularly Canada's nuclear power technology which ranks as the best in the world, both in terms of design and proven performance.

Therefore, I want to commend our government on the support which has been provided to Canadian nuclear energy development and to encourage further continued investment which will be required to advance our nuclear technology, particularly toward the construction of the prototype CANDU III reactor, hopefully to be located in New Brunswick.

The Candu III concept appears to offer new design horizons in performance, cost and safety, for clean nuclear power generation on a scale to help solve the growing world need for electricity in an environmentally effective way.

I am convinced that the time is rapidly approaching when Canadian world leadership in nuclear energy technology will prove to be a critical and compelling factor in helping to solve the earth's intensifying environmental dilemma, particularly with regard to atmospheric pollution and global warming. We must continue to provide that leadership.

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, housing in Canada is in a crisis, particularly in Metropolitan Toronto, where rental vacancy rates are only .5 per cent. Yet, this government now refuses to pay its share of the cost of the Toronto Seniors Central Housing Registry which helps seniors find what little affordable housing there is available.

In June, 1987, the registry was officially opened by the Ontario government and by David Crombie, representing the federal government, who gave a commitment for joint funding.

In October, 1988, at the height of the federal election, CMHC conferred upon the registry a national housing award for innovation in seniors housing. However, once the election was over it reneged on its promise to provide funding. The registry is now on the verge of closure.

I call upon this government and the Minister of Housing to meet with Metropolitan Toronto representatives, including Councillor Roger Hollander to resolve the funding impasse. This needed service for seniors cannot be arbitrarily abandoned by a heartless government.

[*Translation*]

ISOLATED COMMUNITY STATUS

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, Mayor Jacques Bérubé, speaking on behalf of the people of Chapais, has written to the Minister of Finance of Canada, urging him to let the town keep its status of isolated post. The loss of these tax benefits will inevitably and tragically contribute to the exodus of workers to the south.

Chapais has no government services as such. Its residents must travel long distances by car to obtain special services or specialized care which are mostly available in Chicoutimi, 378 kilometres away or Quebec City, 524 kilometres away.

The Quebec government has set the southernmost boundary of Quebec's northern region at the 49th parallel.

Mr. Speaker, life in the north is harsh, isolated and expensive. We have very little compared to the south, and we are producers rather than consumers.

* * *

[*English*]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence): Mr. Speaker, in commemorating human rights day our government earlier in the day indicated a desire to match deeds with our words on the subject of human rights.

The new Government of India with a new Prime Minister disposed to respecting religious freedoms in the Punjab and elsewhere in the Indian subcontinent gives us such an opportunity. V. P. Singh, the Prime Minister of the world's largest democracy, has taken steps to heal political wounds emanating from religious persecutions.

Thousands have died since the attack on the Golden Temple in 1984. Police brutality evidenced by the so-called encounter killings, systematic rape of defenceless women in the Punjab, political persecutions, arrests, and torture in jails must come to an end. Our government should exert moral pressure to enhance V. P. Singh's initiatives and also provide tangible evidence of support by establishing a permanent diplomatic presence in the Punjab.

* * *

CANADIAN POLISH CONGRESS

Mr. Pat Sobeski (Cambridge): Mr. Speaker, the Council of Canadian Polish Congress is holding important deliberations in Ottawa today and this weekend.

The council consists of division presidents and presidents of central organizations and has an important voice in the affairs of the Canadian Polish Congress.

Poles have thrived in Canada and we have contributed our own distinctive colour to the multicultural quilt of Canadian society. The 400,000 Canadians of Polish origin have also kept a special place in their hearts for Poland, as all Canadians witnessed during Mr. Walesa's recent visit to Canada.

It is my deepest hope that as eastern Europe is alive with joy and hope and great expectations, we recognize Poland as a key part of that bright new future.

May the friendship between Canada and Poland continue to develop and promote opportunities for Canadian business to channel our expertise and assist Poland on its courageous course toward a market-oriented economy.

Again, congratulations to the Canadian Polish Congress.

* * *

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, at least one in ten is beaten by the man she lives with; one woman in four is sexually assaulted or abused; a woman is raped in Canada every 17 minutes. For women, violence and the threat of violence is an everyday occurrence. Both as children and as adults women are sexually abused and assaulted in their homes and in their communities. They are the victims of crime in the streets. They are subject to harassment in their places of work. They are degraded through violent pornography that perpetuates lies about women.

The horrifying massacre of 14 young women in Montreal was an extreme manifestation of violence against women. I know that we all grieve together. Members of this House must concern themselves seriously with the sexist and violent attitudes in our society, with the

structures that enable everyday violence and such extreme violence to occur.

As Members of Parliament we have a responsibility to change our society so that women may be full and equal participants.

* * *

FORESTRY

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, it was with great pleasure that I learned the government of Canada has concluded negotiations with the province of New Brunswick and is now in a position to sign a new federal-provincial forestry agreement.

The forestry sector is the largest single industry in New Brunswick employing over 38,000 people both directly and indirectly. It accounts for 47 per cent of the province's total exports. This $91 million agreement will provide the essential funding to ensure and enhance the future management of this vital resource.

The Minister of Forestry has remained steadfast in his strong commitment to forestry in New Brunswick throughout this long and involved negotiation process. I know I speak for all my colleagues, particularly the Member for Fundy—Royal and the Member for Fredericton—York—Sunbury who happens to chair the forestry subcommittee when I say how pleased I am to see that this agreement has finally been concluded.

* * *

VIETNAM

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, today in the Centre Block of the House of Commons over 100 people from the Vietnamese Canadian community are meeting to form the original chapter in Canada of the International Committee for a Free Vietnam.

Canada now has more than 120,000 people from Vietnam who have emigrated as a result of the difficulties in that country. This international committee has members not only from the Vietnamese community but also from all parties in the House of Commons and the Senate. This Parliament is showing its support of the struggle they have with the government in Vietnam.

There are several things we think the government can do on behalf of the Vietnamese people. It can help pressure the Vietnamese government for new respect for freedom of religion for the people; new respect for the cultural traditions and the fundamental rights and freedoms of the Vietnamese people. We should request the immediate release of all political prisoners, all public servants and military personnel of the former regime and all religious ministers presently detained in re-education camps. It can help allow religious and charitable organizations to carry out relief activities directly within Vietnam in the areas of health and food assistance. It can help develop respect within that country for freedom of information for both domestic and foreign news media.

I also call upon the government to work more diligently in helping families with family reunification problems throughout the refugee camps in Asia.

* * *

• (1120)

[*Translation*]

FIREARMS CONTROL

Mr. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, no one could remain unmoved by the tragic events in Montreal. Fourteen young women, in the flower of their youth, killed by a maniac with a semi-automatic weapon.

Why are weapons of this kind allowed in Canada? Why do we let people own such dangerous and destructive weapons? For recreational purposes? That doesn't make sense. Protecting the public and public safety should be our prime concern. A mother doesn't let her children play with knives. She knows something might happen. She acts preventively.

I therefore urge my fellow members and my government to take action to ban the possession of such weapons in Canada.

* * *

[*English*]

PEARSON AIRPORT

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, residents adjacent to Pearson Airport are going to be

abused once again. News reports suggest that the sonic boom created by the Concorde jet is about to contribute to the noise and emission pollution adjacent to Pearson Airport on a weekly basis.

Residents of the area have already been complaining of the lack of citizen participation in the environmental assessment of the runway extension program. They should have their own representative on the Environmental Assessment panel to ensure that the concerns of area residents are addressed properly. They should also have the right to a full environmental impact study on the introduction of any new, large-scale aircraft into Pearson Airport. Specifically, there should be a full environmental impact study conducted on the proposed Concorde service before permission to use Pearson is granted by the Government of Canada.

We, on this side of the House, call on the government to initiate such a study now.

* * *

POLISH CANADIAN CONGRESS

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): *Gan Dobre*, Mr. Speaker! I have the privilege of welcoming to Ottawa and especially to this place members of the many Polish Canadian organizations that make up the Polish Canadian Congress, the official body representing the interests of Polish Canadians here and abroad.

They are in Ottawa today for their annual general meeting at which they will discuss, among many other things, their future co-operation with the Canada-Poland Business Council which has recently been incorporated to facilitate Canadian and Polish economic co-operation. A good working relationship between the two working groups will speed up the economic recovery of eastern Europe.

While the recent changes to the political environment in Poland and the Eastern Bloc have astonished, even amazed the world, there is simply no time to waste, no time for us to stand back, watch and wait.

I encourage this government, all organizations, and all individuals who can contribute in any way to begin now. We must ensure that these economically fragile countries survive the sudden change from totalitarianism to democracy and take their rightful place among first world nations.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Geoff Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, the strike, which has closed the St. Lawrence Seaway, again reminds western Canadians where the NDP really stands.

The NDP does not hesitate to support the demands of big labour while prairie farmers are struggling to get by. The NDP members stand in this place pretending to support prairie agriculture while, at the very same time, they filibuster and delay much needed back to work legislation.

Some one million tonnes of grain bound for export is being held up thereby tarnishing Canada's reputation abroad and hurting our producers here at home. Where is the outcry of indignation from Saskatchewan NDP members? There is none and there will be none. Their silence exposes the hypocrisy of the NDP who pay lip-service to prairie farmers while dancing to the tune of their real masters, the big eastern labour bosses.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TRAGEDY IN MONTREAL

Mr. David Berger (Saint-Henri—Westmount): Mr. Speaker, I was incredulous and astonished when I heard the news of the carnage at the École Polytechnique. I am deeply saddened by this senseless act.

Mr. Speaker, it is hard to imagine that anyone whould commit such a crime. It is hard not to lose one's faith in mankind. This outrage should make all Canadians stop and think about the kind of society we have today. We are too easily inclined to tolerate various forms of violence in our society.

The families of these young women need to know that we support them in their grief, because these families will now have to live with the loss of a daughter, a sister, a granddaughter, a niece or a friend.

We can only hope that the personal faith of the persons who have been affected by these events, the support of their friends and relatives and the solidarity shown by millions of Canadians will give them some comfort at this time of suffering, and in the months and years to come.

I want to join all members of this House in extending my condolences to all those who mourn their loss today.

* * *

NATIONAL HIGHWAY SAFETY WEEK

Mr. Jean-Guy Guilbault (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask all Canadians to help improve highway safety, especially during national highway safety week.

The week's theme is: "Courtesy is——". We should realize how important attitudes are when driving, since they have a direct impact on the safety of road users, including ourselves and our passengers.

Eighty-five per cent of highway accidents are due to human error, speeding, neglecting to yield and reckless driving.

If drivers were courteous and acted responsibly, most collisions could probably be avoided.

I invite you all to support the efforts of the Canada Safety Council during national highway safety week.

You can help make our highways safer.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, we are all in mourning after the tragedy in Montreal but Canadian women bear a double burden, the burden of sorrow and the burden of terror.

Wednesday night's catastrophe was just the extreme of the continuum of violence against women that Canadians face every day.

Will the Prime Minister respond to the overwhelming atmosphere in this country and agree to the appointment of a joint House and Senate committee to seek solutions to the all-pervasive problem of violence against women in Canada?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, all of us are searching our hearts for a way in which we can deal with the tragedy that has befallen the young women this week, and particularly their families.

In terms of what our government's role must be, it must continue to be to try to reduce violence within our society through a number of ways. First, as the hon. member knows, a year ago we introduced the largest addition of funding for family violence which is a very fundamental factor in many of these cases. Over the coming months there will be more options developed in terms of how we deal with this issue with which we are all trying to come to grips.

Let me say as well that it is much broader than this, and I want to use an example. This morning on *Canada AM* some of the journalists covering this very tragic event did so with great sensitivity. They then went on to review a movie which was supposed to be a comedy which deals with the violence between husbands and wives. It is so pervasive to try and accept that this is a normal part of our society, and our government intends to play its role in dealing with this issue.

Ms. Clancy: Mr. Speaker, intending to play a role is fine but concrete action would be better.

[*Translation*]

My question is again directed to the Prime Minister.

Yesterday, a number of representatives of various women's groups got in touch with me, from various parts of Canada, to talk about the events in Montreal.

Does the Prime Minister intend to consult with these groups immediately, in order to take advantage of their expertise and help wipe out violence against women?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I went to the University of Montreal, at the École Polytechnique, where I met a number of students, both men and women, as well as members of the board, to offer the sincere condolences of all members of this House.

I also spoke to some of the women students about the nature of the problem just raised by the hon. member.

Today's questions concern one of the most serious problems in our society. We are using any number of means to try to wipe out violence, while in many other ways we are encouraging violence. Increasingly, this violence is directed against family members but especially against women, in a society that calls itself civilized.

This is a matter of grave concern for me personally and for the members of this government, and also, I am sure, for all hon. members.

We will act on all the suggestions that have been made, and I want to thank the hon. member for her comments. We intend, as a government and as a people, to deal with a situation that is having such a disastrous effect on the status of women and on social justice in this country.

• (1130)

[*English*]

Ms. Clancy: Mr. Speaker, I hope that soon we will hear the concrete plans of this government to act in this area.

Given that the most recent budget saw drastic cuts to the Secretary of State women's program, will the Prime Minister give an undertaking today to restore funding at the very least to those programs that deal with violence against women and accepted a 15 per cent cut.

Mrs. McDougall: Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons there were some changes in the women's program was so that it could be directed particularly at groups with special needs, such as doubly disadvantaged women, the disabled who are more subject to violence than some other groups, to immigrant and visible minority women's groups. In this way the focus is on those where the needs are greatest. Among those issues that will be taken into account by the Secretary of State are those that deal with violence.

* * *

GUN CONTROL

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): My question is for the Minister of Justice. People say that tough gun control legislation does not deter the professional criminal. The Montreal tragedy reminds us of the undeniable fact of crime in Canada and that most murders by firearms are not committed by professional criminals. Since we brought forward tough gun control legislation in 1978, firearm related crime has declined. I want therefore to ask the minister if he is prepared now to bring forward even tougher gun control legislation?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, we have been consulting for some time with the interest groups, the police officers' associations throughout the summer. My officials have been dealing with the interest groups on both sides of this issue in an effort to bring forward a package of amendments which will eliminate the further importation into Canada of automatic weapons, that is, weapons that are designed and manufactured and assembled to fire in the automatic mode.

Second, there is a package of what might be called housekeeping amendments. I can assure my hon. friend that within those amendments there are provisions to both eliminate administrative irritants and toughen gun control legislation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Kaplan: Just to get back to specifics, I would like to ask whether the Minister is prepared to impose a compulsory waiting period when an application is made for a firearms acquisition certificate, and whether he is prepared to require that each application include third-party character references.

[*English*]

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I think there is in fact a delay time between the application for the firearms acquisitions—

Mr. Kaplan: Same day service.

Mr. Lewis: A delay in order to allow the officials to review the application and to do the checks that they want. However, my friend makes an interesting point. We are interested in improving legislation.

This law has been in place for 10 years and I think, by and large, it is working. But it can always be improved. That is the attitude we are taking. I think that this is the kind of thing that can be explored in debate. When we get to committee with the bill it is something that can be looked at there.

* * *

PETRO-CANADA

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. It deals with published reports which indicate the government is prepared to now sell Petro-Canada completely.

Petro-Canada is a crucial public instrument to work for energy security, to work for environmentally safe energy development. The Prime Minister himself said in

1985: "It is Conservative policy to maintain Petro-Canada."

Will the Prime Minister keep his promise to maintain Petro-Canada, or is this yet one more broken promise to the Canadian people?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Privatization and Regulatory Affairs)): Mr. Speaker, there has been no decision on Petro-Canada yet. If a decision is made by Cabinet it will be announced in the usual manner.

Mr. Langdon: Mr. Speaker, the minister has outlined to the Toronto *Star* a complete plan for the privatization of Petro-Canada.

Of course, as we have learned in this House, this is simply a kite being flown but I suspect it is in fact a plan being set out.

[*Translation*]

I have a question for the Minister of State responsible for privatization. The minister says that Canadian control in the oil sector is growing rapidly. Doesn't he know that his own government's statistics indicate Canadian control is now 3 to 5 per cent less than it was in 1985, when it was 43 per cent? Why is the minister prepared to reduce Canadian control even further in the oil industry?

[*English*]

Mr. McDermid: Mr. Speaker, the minister is not, in fact, reducing Canadian control of the oil industry.

Mr. Langdon: Mr. Speaker, in the past we have heard from this government that it did not plan to sell Air Canada. We heard that it planned to support VIA Rail. Now we hear it saying, "Of course, there is no plan to sell Petro-Canada," when in fact, the minister has outlined details to the newspaper saying that these are the ways in which it will be done. Clearly a kite is being flown in this case.

I ask the Prime Minister, why won't the Conservatives take no for an answer? Why won't they realize that the "no" which was given to the previous Conservative government is a no which deserves to be maintained for the future of this country and for the future of all of us in this country?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am very interested in reports of the speech that the hon. gentleman made to his convention. I didn't see it but it was reported to me. He spoke very glowingly of the dramatic and dynamic changes taken within the economies of eastern Europe.

One of the principal actions that they are taking in eastern Europe is the privatization of all kinds of industries to get the state off their back.

* * *

• (1140)

[*Translation*]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): My question is directed to the Prime Minister. We all know that a senseless killing occurred this week. A particularly disturbing aspect of this tragedy is that the killer singled out women as his victims. This fact has heiglitned the growing fear women have of going out at night.

I would like to know when—and no pretty speeches please!—the government intends to do something about the increase in violent acts against 52 per cent of our population.

[*English*]

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, because this has been such an active file for us over the last three years we have taken some action and will be continuing more.

There is $40 million going toward the building of shelters, toward education, toward developing more options. This is a problem for all of society and not just for government, and this government has taken the lead in helping to protect women.

You may recall as well that in our last session we did introduce a bill having to do with pornography which I think is another contributing factor and the kind of thing on which we want to continue to take action.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maheu: Mr. Speaker, we were all deeply moved by the tragedy in Montreal. I would like the Prime Minister to answer the following question.

Our urban centres are fast becoming centres of aggression and violence against individuals, and especially against women. My question is as follows: Will the government start taking the problem of urban violence seriously and acknowledge that this problem has grown beyond the ability of municipal and provincial authorities

to control it, and will it agree to get actively involved? The money may be there, but how much has been spent?

[*English*]

Mrs. McDougall: Mr. Speaker, our actions to date have been very specific. There has never been a program that has pulled together all the kinds of initiatives that have been pulled together by this government. I think that has demonstrated the commitment of the Prime Minister and of this government. It is not a case of starting at the beginning. We are in the process of some very important initiatives that have to do with dealing with violence in our society, particularly in urban areas, and those initiatives will continue.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. Yesterday, the Prime Minister announced that our economy was in serious trouble. Today, we have seen a further increase in our unemployment rate. More than one million Canadians are out of work. According to some experts like Nesbitt Thompson, Montreal Trust, the Conference Board of Canada and even the Alberta Treasury, we are now either in a recession or on the brink of one. What new measures does the government have in mind to deal with this new situation?

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I think that the hon. member is misinterpreting what the Right Hon. Prime Minister said yesterday. He did acknowledge that we have a high level of interest rates, but that is in response to an economy that has been operating at a very high capacity, beyond its capacity to produce without inflationary pressures and we are seeing inflationary pressures. They are very clear.

I think it is important to realize that an economy cannot keep operating at those high levels the same way as an individual cannot run four-minute miles around a marathon course. What we are trying to do is manage some easing in the rate of growth in the economy so that we can get a reduction in interest rates. We all agree that lower interest rates are going to be helpful to this economy, but they can only happen when we are assured that the level of inflation has subsided.

Mr. Peterson: Mr. Speaker, the minister did not answer the question. He is giving the same answers that he has given to this House since 1984, because he obviously does not realize that we face a new economic situation in Canada. It is not a question of our economy running a marathon. This government with its high interest rates and its high dollar is putting the brakes to an economy that is already stalled. These policies are driving jobs out of Canada. In the month of November alone, Canada lost 45,000 high paying jobs in the goods producing and manufacturing sectors.

When is the minister going to get off this high interest rates- high dollar policy? When is he going to recognize Canada's new economic realities?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is quite aware of the job creation capacity of this economy and the success that we have had in the period since we came into office in 1984. That has continued through and is still there this year.

Mr. Peterson: Forty-five thousand jobs lost in manufacturing alone. That is in the last month.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): The hon. member can use selective statistics to prove any case that he wants. The bottom line is that we have had a very successful economy over the course of the last five years and we are determined to keep that going over the years into the future. But there are signals of problems on the inflation front with which we must deal.

The hon. member shakes his head, because he forgets that in 1976 we had an inflation rate of 5.5 per cent that the government of the day swept under the carpet, ignored and within four or five years, we had inflation running at 13 percent and the high interest rates that were needed at that time to deal with that inflation problem.

Surely we have to understand how we can avoid those problems now and avoid the disaster that we ran into in 1981-1982. This is exactly what we are trying to do as a government.

Oral Questions

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, over three years ago the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police unanimously passed a resolution noting that there is presently a world-wide surplus of automatic and semi-automatic weapons, primarily designed for purposes of warfare, now finding their way into the Canadian marketplace.

Over three years ago, the then Conservative Minister of Justice promised to act soon to bring forward legislation to deal with this serious problem.

I want to ask the Minister of Justice today, as all Canadians are asking, how much longer must we wait before this Conservative government finally acts, not to ban all semi-automatic weapons as the Liberal Party has proposed, but to ensure that we finally have in this country, much tougher, more effective gun control legislation? Specifically, will the minister agree to table a bill on this important subject before the House rises at Christmas?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier in the House, we have been consulting with the chiefs of police organization, the firearms protection officers from Canada, the Wildlife Federation, the Shooters Association, in an effort to come up with not only tougher firearms control legislation but firearms control legislation that works better for both the user and the enforcement officers.

I am not going to say yes, I am going to rush it in today, because it is not exactly where I want it in terms of being finalized. But I can say to my hon. friend, that it is very close to being finalized. When it is properly there, we will bring it into the House.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, we have been waiting three years for this legislation. It is long overdue.

I have an ad for a Mini-14 rifle which speaks of the rifle as one that: "speaks with real authority", and it talks about the possibility of having a 30-shot clip with the rifle, a 30-shot clip, Mr. Speaker.

• (1150)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask the Minister of Justice a supplementary question. Would he be prepared to table amendments here in the House to restrict the number of bullets that semi-automatic weapons can contain? Would the Minister be prepared, for example, to introduce a waiting period between the time a weapon is acquired and the time a permit is issued to the new owner? Would the Minister be prepared, for example, to finally proclaim the Criminal Code provisions which require firearms courses but have never been proclaimed since 1978?

When will this Conservative government finally act by bringing in new stricter weapons control legislation?

[*English*]

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, this is not something we started yesterday. It is something that was started in March, on my initiative, on the automatic weapon banning and looking at the FAC certificate fees and a series of amendments.

This law has been around for 10 years. Obviously any law that has been around for 10 years can be improved. We all realize that. We are moving to take out the irritants and to increase protection for the public.

My friend makes a good suggestion, a suggestion that I think is well worth looking at in committee where members from all sides can bring in experts, many of whom have been before my officials already, where we can try to improve it further. I welcome his participation.

* * *

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. The minister is aware that approximately 100 Canadian leaders of Vietnam origin are here today and, in fact, most of them are in the gallery, from as far west as Vancouver to Quebec City, for the founding of the international branch of the International Committee for a Free Vietnam.

The minister will know, too, that untold numbers of priests, religious leaders, teachers, poets, trade union leaders, former businessmen, public servants, and soldiers are in custody in so-called re-education camps in Vietnam.

Will he tell the House what his government is currently doing on the eve of International Human Rights Day to push for greater human rights within Vietnam? Perhaps he would, in addressing that point and also recognizing the question of International Human Rights Day tomorrow, advise members of the House what he knows about the recent initiative in the Middle East with respect to the peace process?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, let me on behalf of other members of the House express our great satisfaction to the presence in the gallery of Canadian leaders of origin in Vietnam. Many of us have had the privilege of working with them now for more than a decade since actions were taken by a government I then had the honour to lead with respect to the boat people.

There is movement and change in Indo-China, but not as fast as in other parts of the world. We are urging that change move forward quickly with specific reference to the question of human rights abuses in Vietnam. We draw them to the attention of authorities in Vietnam regularly. The ambassador based in Bangkok is in that country regularly, and on each visit raises those issues.

I dispatched a special task force to the region earlier this spring. Those questions were raised then. Last year there were concerns about the fate of two Bhuddist monks. A Canadian intervention, among others, helped I believe to preserve the lives of those two individuals and we naturally will continue in that spirit.

With respect to the second question, Canada is very encouraged by the acceptance of U.S.A. Secretary Baker's five points by both Egypt and Israel. That is a most welcome and significant step toward eventual negotiation among the partners directly involved. That itself is a necessary step for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement. On behalf of the Government of Canada I would encourage all the parties to show maximum flexibility so that prospects for dialogue would not be encumbered by assumptions or by preconditions.

FISHERIES

Mr. George S. Baker (Gander—Grand Falls): Mr. Speaker, the government knows that any fish plant closures on the east coast of Canada, that could be announced as early as today, are only the tip of the iceberg because this government has yet to announce its quota cuts. It is going to announce them in about two weeks for eastern Canada and that is going to affect the fishing industry.

This is the only government in the world that permits foreign boats to fish within its 200-mile zone.

I want to ask the government if it will rescind an agreement made recently for NAFO managed fish stocks and cancel the U.S.S.R. cod quota in 3NO, half of which is inside of our 200-mile zone? Will it cancel their massive red fish quota, 10,000 tonnes in 3L which is within the northern cod stock area? Will the government cancel all those foreign allocations?

The government may think this is the spirit of *glasnost* but Canadian fishermen think this government deserves a punch in the nose.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, he must have been up all night practising that one.

With respect to the question of quotas, the hon. gentleman gave it all away in this question when he said NAFO managed stocks. That is the North Atlantic Fisheries Organization, which manages the stocks in 3NO. I know that only the hon. gentleman and I know what 3NO is. It is a zone off the east coast of Canada which NAFO manages, not Canada.

With respect to quotas within the 200-mile limit, the only quotas that foreign countries receive are stocks surplus to Canada's needs, which under the Law of the Sea agreement we have to offer to other countries if our own fishermen and businessmen will not use them, as I explained yesterday in connection with the silver hake.

Many other countries also permit foreign countries to fish within their 200-mile zones. All over the globe foreign countries are fishing in the 200-mile zones of coastal states as they are permitted to do under the Law

of the Sea or other agreements all over the world. If that were not the case we would not have foreign fishing fleets at all. The hon. gentleman is completely wet as usual.

Mr. Baker: Mr. Speaker, did you ever think we would see the day when our fish companies would be going to the Soviet Union, as they did two weeks ago, hat in hand, asking the Soviet Union, as the last resort, for fish to be brought to Canadian fish plants so that we could keep our fish plants open.

I want to ask the Government of Canada, which is a 20 per cent shareholder of National Sea Products Limited, to confirm that neither the Government of Canada nor the governments of Nova Scotia or Newfoundland can lift a finger and give any assistance at all to these fish companies about to fold, all because of the free trade agreement?

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker, a week ago—

Mr. Duhamel: You think it's funny, do you?

Mr. Crosbie: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. gentleman, does he want to bawl out a bit louder or am I allowed to answer?

A week ago the hon. member blamed the decision by Abitibi Price to shut down a 63-year old paper machine at Grand Falls on the free trade agreement. Today he is blaming these other results on the free trade agreement. He has got free trade agreement-itis.

The hon. member mentioned *glasnost*. If he is not careful he is going to have a "perestroke"!

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands–Canso): How do you follow that, Mr. Speaker?

My question is for the Prime Minister. Last night a news report aired throughout Atlantic Canada predicted imminent plant closings which could mean a loss of as many as 2,500 jobs in fishing communities in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland.

What steps will the Prime Minister and his government announce today to protect the jobs of those fish processing workers?

• (1200)

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, we all know that we have a very serious situation off the east coast of Canada with reference to the total allowable catches and the situation with the northern cod.

Last February, I think it was, our marine biologists who advise the government stunned us by advising that the total allowable catch for northern cod, which they had recommended could be 295,000 tonnes in 1988, should be reduced to 125,000 tonnes in 1989.

We could not accept that advice because it would have devastated the whole offshore eastern Canada fishing industry, so we set the TAC at 235,000 tonnes and appointed Mr. Leslie Harris and a distinguished group to review this whole situation.

Undoubtedly it appears that the total allowable catch which will be decided upon by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the government by the end of December or early January will have to be reduced again. In light of that, the offshore companies have to make decisions which I think they are going to announce some time in the next short-term future.

When they do that we will announce our response. Our response will be based on helping the people involved who may lose their jobs, the fishermen or trawlermen involved. We will be ready to announce programs to help look after the people involved. It is tragic, but we cannot do anything about the total allowable catch. However we will act to respond to the results.

Mr. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, the residents of these fishing communities have been on the edge for weeks. They know there is a crisis.

Why does the government refuse to take this crisis seriously? Why will the minister not take immediate steps to prevent the closure of these plants?

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker, why does the hon. gentleman not get together with his colleagues? There is a fisheries critic for Nova Scotia in the opposition. There is one for P.E.I., there is one for New Brunswick, and there is one for the fisheries generally. Why don't they get their act together?

Only two days ago the member for South West Nova was up demanding that we transfer to inshore fishermen quotas from the offshore. It is the offshore fishermen and fish plants that are going to be affected which the hon. gentleman is now up protesting about.

Why does he not speak to the member for South West Nova and decide what it is they want to do? Is it the offshore fishermen they want to protect or the inshore fishermen or none of them? Perhaps they are just trying to score political points.

Mr. Robert E. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

On July 5, two fishing vessels were seized by the U.S. coast guard in Canadian waters south of the Alaska boundary allegedly for fishing in U.S. waters, but they have not been charged for fishing in U.S. waters. The Canadian fishermen using sophisticated Loran equipment and witnesses assure that the ships were operating south of the A–B line in Canadian waters.

It was only when the Department of External Affairs advised those fishermen to surrender that they surrendered to the U.S. authorities and were taken to Ketchikan, Alaska, and only when they were offered assistance by the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

Those fishermen have been asking for assistance for the last six months. They go to a hearing in Alaska on December 19. They have deposits at risk, boats at risk, and their homes at risk. They do not have the money to hire lawyers. When is the Secretary of State for External Affairs going to provide the assistance that he promised and that the surrender of those boats was based upon?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member describes part of the situation as he knows. He is correct in saying that the matter comes before authorities in Alaska on December 19. We are looking to see what kind of help the Government of Canada might be able to provide in the circumstances. I can assure him that I am actively following the case personally myself.

Mr. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. In the last several years Canadian fishermen have been harassed in that area by the U.S. coast guard on a number of occasions by having U.S. coast guard ships run at them at high speeds and circle them at high speeds. The wash has damaged their equipment and their boats and put crews at risk.

Will the Secretary of State for External Affairs call upon the Minister of National Defence and the minister responsible for the coast guard to make sure that Canadian fishermen fishing in Canadian waters are protected from acts of violence and piracy by the U.S. coast guard?

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, in a sense that would be a very easy question to answer if the issue were only acts of violence and piracy. Of course the answer is very straightforward and of course we protect Canadian fishermen against that kind of difficulty.

As the hon. member knows, the situation is considerably more complex there because of a difficult boundary dispute. As the hon. member also knows, the resolution of that dispute one way or the other has very significant implications for the Canadian fishery.

I know that in a calmer atmosphere than in Question Period in the House of Commons, the hon. member would want us to take account of all of the aspects of this very difficult problem between Canada and the United States, one that impacts directly upon people engaged in the fishing industry on both sides of the line. We are trying to approach it in that constructive way, and we will continue to do that.

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AGRICULTURE

Mr. Geoff Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, my question for the Minister of Agriculture pertains to the seaway strike which is harming Canada's grain exports.

Yesterday, an NDP member asked: "Does every province in this wonderful country of ours have to take control of agriculture because this government cannot be trusted to protect the interests of the Canadian farm community?"

Which side of the NDP policy coin will the minister choose to follow? Will it be heads, the side which at three o'clock yesterday purported to make a plea for the farm community, or will it be tails, the side which at exactly the same time is delaying and filibustering back to work legislation which would reopen the seaway and enable the movement of Canadian grain exports to continue?

Will it be heads or tails, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure whether it will be heads or tails, but I can assure the hon. member that it will be in the public interest and particularly the interest of the farmers. That is the position that this government will take, as it always has in the past.

I find it passing strange with over 1,334,000 tonnes of grain ready for movement through the seaway system in store in Thunder Bay and, as the Minister of Transport pointed out yesterday, there are 51 ocean going vessels in the Great Lakes system west of the St. Lambert lock and of these 33 are still above the Welland Canal. There are an additional eight Canadian inland vessels per day, and the average operating cost of these vessels varies from $5,000 to $25,000 per day in demurrage costs.

I urge the NDP and the Liberals to put the public interest ahead of their own partisan interests and get on with the job of passing this legislation in the interest of the farmers.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FEDERAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BANK

Mr. Gilles Rocheleau (Hull—Aylmer): Mr. Speaker, I have learned that *Les Boiseries de l'Outaouais*, which is located in my riding and, remember, was given by the Prime Minister barely a year ago as an example of a company that could meet the challenges of free trade, went bankrupt recently, putting many out of work. This company had asked the Federal Business Development Bank for financial assistance to help it continue its activities, but was refused.

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for regional development at all costs. Are the loans given recently by the Federal Business Development Bank for companies featuring nude dancers rather than companies like *Les Boiseries de l'Outaouais*, for which the Prime Minister called me a hypocrite last year—

I would like to know whether the Minister can tell me if the Federal Business Development Bank again made a mistake.

[*English*]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, in terms of the question of making loans to nightclubs and whatnot which feature nude dancers, the policy is very clear. I have stated it repeatedly in the House to repeated questions. I do not know what that has to do with the particular company the hon. member talked about.

As the hon. member knows we live in a dynamic economy. There are new firms being created and some firms going out of existence. Every year, according to Statistics Canada, four million people change jobs in this country.

• (1210)

If the hon. member wants to bring the details of the company in question to me, I will ask the FBDB about the nature of its dealings with it to see in fact if it has been treated fairly, which I am quite confident it has.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rocheleau: Mr. Speaker, could the Minister or the Prime Minister explain to me how come, for companies like *Les Boiseries de l'Outaouais* providing skilled jobs, the loan was refused, while the present policies of this same government give more support to companies that could surely be self-sufficient?

[*English*]

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, I am told by the FBDB that approximately 20 per cent of the businesses that contact it actually apply for a loan and about 80 per cent to 85 per cent of those which apply in fact receive a loan.

The hon. member is asking me why the company in question is part of the 15 per cent which did not receive a loan. Give me the details; I will look into it and reply to him.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We will close Question Period with one question from the member for Winnipeg—St. James and one question from a member of the New Democratic Party.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg St. James): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment.

As he well knows Alberta Pacific has proposed a major pulp mill for northern Alberta. People living in that area, as well as environmentalists, are scared stiff by that project because of the damage it would cause to the environment of northern Alberta, Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories, as well as the harm it would bring to the way of life of natives living in that region.

The minister also knows that other similar projects have been proposed for that region of Canada over the last couple of years.

Will the minister commit the government today, right now, to a full and comprehensive federal environmental impact assessment of that major pulp mill in northern Alberta?

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the member raises this question today.

This government is very proud to have concluded the first agreement with a province through which the federal government is allowed to participate in a joint evaluation of the environmental impact of such a project.

This was done in Alberta last July and that is why we now have a very important ongoing review process to assess the impact of the Alberta Pacific pulp mill. This government will do the same thing each time there are federal areas of responsibility affected by a project.

Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Yesterday we learned that both Canadian and Saskatchewan regulatory agencies have recommended to their Attorneys General that charges be laid against Camico as a result of the spill of 440,000 gallons of contaminated mine water into Wallis-ton Lake on November 7.

In light of the fact that AECB inspected the site at least 25 or 30 times since the alarm system which would have prevented the spill was disconnected, and since I also learned yesterday that six years after a serious incident occurred at Camico's Port Hope facility AECB

still allows that facility to operate without an emergency community response system being in place, I would ask the minister: When are we going to start investigating the role of the regulators themselves in all this? Surely they have blown the right to investigate themselves.

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, in respect of the Rabbit Lake spill the hon. member knows that the investigation by AECB is continuing. AECB is looking at the recommendations respecting the review that has taken place. These are being examined in respect of alleged violations.

It is the responsibility of the prosecuting counsel for the Attorney General's office to make a final decision in respect to any other actions that might be taken. Until those actions have been taken and made public I cannot give any further information.

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POINT OF ORDER

SOCIAL PROGRAMS—COMMENTS OF MINISTER IN QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, in Question Period yesterday the Minister of State for Privatization and Regulatory Affairs read from a document and quoted words that were attributed to Mrs. Woodsworth of the One Voice Seniors Network and also to the National Council on Welfare.

I had occasion to inquire from One Voice whether it was aware that a transcript was being taken of its remarks in its pre-budget meeting with the Minister of Finance. It acknowledged that although note takers were present, it was not aware of nor had it received a copy of a transcript such as the document the minister seemed to be reading from appeared to be.

I have asked the Clerk as well whether the document was tabled by the minister voluntarily. I therefore would like to ask that the minister table the document from which he was reading in yesterday's Question Period.

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Privatization and Regulatory Affairs)): Mr. Speaker, I was not quoting from a document yesterday. I was quoting from one-page notes that I had in front of me. I do not know what the hon. member is talking about.

Notes were taken at meetings, advice was given. I relayed the advice that was given to the minister to the House yesterday. There is no document concerned. It was a consultation.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. I want the minister to be aware that when he quoted in the House yesterday he was quoting verbatim comments made in pre-budget discussions with various individuals.

I guess at that time a lot of us felt concern that the assumption presumably would be that many of these pre-budget discussions were not public meetings and presumably the contents of those meetings would be kept in the strictest of confidence.

The minister yesterday decided to breach that and read from notes or a document of some kind, as he said, the precise words of a certain individual. I think that is the point the hon. member is making. This is a very serious breach of confidentiality.

Mr. Manley: Mr. Speaker, I find the minister's comments surprising. This is what he said yesterday at page 6615 of *Hansard*:

> It is very plain exactly what Mrs. Woodsworth, who was representing hat group, said. She said it, and I will read it to you again. I will do so slowly:

That is what he said, and then he read some words. Clearly he had some document from which he was reading. He said he was reading from it. I think it is only clear that he should table that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair has heard the comments of the hon. member for Ottawa South, the hon. member for Kamloops and the hon. minister. The Chair must take the minister's word.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

AIR TRANSPORT

TABLING OF DRYDEN REPORT

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table the the interim report of the commission of inquiry into the Air Ontario crash at Dryden, Ontario.

ORDER IN COUNCIL

TABLING AND REFERENCE OF APPOINTMENTS

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, a number of Order in Council appointments which were made by the government.

Pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 110(1) these are deemed referred to the appropriate standing committees, a list of which is attached.

* * *

STRIKING COMMITTEE

PRESENTATION OF 25TH REPORT

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the twenty-fifth report of the striking committee.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

* * *

PETITIONS

CANADA POST CORPORATION

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition pursuant to Standing Order 36 of the House of Commons. This petition is signed by 374 residents of the community of Vars, Ontario in my riding.

These people are objecting to the fact that Canada Post announced in October that it intended to shut down the post office in Vars, Ontario.

The petitioners have all asked that the Government of Canada and Canada Post rescind this decision and keep the post office at Vars open.

I whole-heartedly support this petition.

• (1220)

[*Translation*]

OPPOSITION TO TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATION ON FISCAL INDEMNIFICATION OF ISOLATED AND NORTHERN AREAS

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, today it is my privilege to table, in accordance with Standing Order 36, a petition that rejects the recommendations of the Task Force on Tax Benefits for Northern and Isolated Areas. Your petitioners, who represent the isolated communities of Joutel and Matagami, are concerned that the report's recommendations will cause many workers to leave these isolated communities. They

believe that the Government of Canada has refused to adjust its policies to the needs of their daily lives. Life in the North is hard because of the isolation and the high cost of living.

People in Joutel and Matagami have very few possessions, compared to people further south. They are producers rather than consumers.

[*English*]

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition on behalf of my constituents in accordance with Standing Order 36, objecting to the senseless and heartless proposed 9 per cent GST as it will relate to ordinary citizens carrying on with their ordinary lives.

I am pleased to present this petition on behalf of my constituents.

MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present this petition pursuant to Standing Order 36 as the co-chair of the national task force on municipal infrastructure. These petitioners are all from the province of Alberta.

The petitioners are asking the Government of Canada to recognize that the current infrastructure crisis is now a national problem requiring the combined efforts of federal, provincial and municipal governments.

They ask the government to support the efforts of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to have all levels of government working together on infrastructure to ensure a sound economy, a healthy environment and public health and safety for Canadians.

EGG MARKETING

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I have several petitions to table today. First is one from the egg producers of Middlesex County who are asking the government to reject any proposals involving tariffication, any increased minimum import provisions or any increased access to an already well balanced Canadian market.

Middlesex County egg producers humbly pray that Parliament take action in this regard.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I also have a petition from the people of Lambton County who call upon Parliament to enact legislation which will effectively protect the life of the pre-born child.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I also have a whole series of petitions from people throughout southwestern Ontario who are objecting to the proposed goods and services tax being brought forward by this government.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to present a petition on behalf of a number of people from western Canada who point out their concerns regarding the goods and services tax and mainly the fact that it is an unfair form of taxation because of its lack of regard for the taxpayers' ability to pay.

The petitioners are simply calling on the government to cease with this proposal which will tax diapers and coffins, taxing Canadians from the cradle to the grave.

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, I rise under the provisions of Standing Order 36. I have a petition that is signed by 51 of my constituents from Baie Verte, Brownsdale, Sibley's Cove, New Melbourne and Clarke's Beach.

These constituents are very concerned about what they consider to be the most unpopular government initiative in their lifetimes, that is the goods and services tax.

Their concern is that they are overtaxed. They are overburdened. Changes in the unemployment insurance system, Bill C-21, is going to affect them. They are concerned about all the cut-backs that we have witnessed in the last budget in Atlantic Canada, and they are asking Parliament to reject the goods and services tax.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Robert E. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present. One is a petition signed by 38 people from Espanola and McKerrow, Ontario and another by a group from Victoria and Brentwood Bay,

British Columbia, calling on the government to upgrade Canada's present national railway network, to upgrade VIA Rail with new equipment and to give VIA Rail a sufficient budget to maintain its national mandate for passenger service.

I have a second petition signed by residents of such points on the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway as Chemainus, Victoria, Ladysmith, Nanaimo, Nanoose Bay, Parksville, Qualicum Beach and points north.

They are calling upon the government. The undersigned strongly recommend that the decision to cut passenger rail service in Canada be reconsidered immediately. In their opinion the statistics used to support these cuts are distorted and erroneous. In many cases it has been the deliberate policy of both the railway and the government over a long period to discourage the use of passenger services by means of inconvenient scheduling and disgracefully maintained facilities.

They are particularly concerned that the service on Vancouver Island by the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway be maintained and upgraded. Even with the present ridiculous schedule, the line is heavily used by both residents and tourists and passengers are being turned away. The potential exists for a profitable operation of this island railway.

It is addressed to the Hon. Prime Minister so I will have to deliver it to him directly.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have petitions on three different topics to present to the House.

First, I have a petition which is part of a larger petition from my riding of Northumberland, signed by constituents from all areas of my riding, from all walks of life. They represent people who are very concerned about the proposed goods and services tax.

They ask that the government withdraw from any consideration of the proposed goods and services tax.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, second, I have a petition signed by hundreds of people from my riding, again from all areas of the riding, who petition the members of this House to formulate and legislate a law to protect life from conception, a law which seeks to save the lives of both mother and child.

BILL 178

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, third, I have a petition signed by people from my constituency who believe that Bill 178 in the province of Quebec discriminates against the minority English language interests in that province. They call upon this government to do what it can to speak out against Bill 178 and withdraw it.

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to present a petition pursuant to Standing Order 36, submitted by people from Melville, Gerald, Cupar, Raymore and Perdue in the province of Saskatchewan who decry the government having taken oats out of the control of the Canadian Wheat Board.

They point out that orderly marketing is such an integral part of the agricultural industry in Canada it is essential that products such as oats be under a marketing board. They are asking that oats once again be put back under the control of the Wheat Board through the Wheat Board Act.

ROUGE RIVER VALLEY

Mrs. Pauline Browes (Scarborough Centre): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to present to the House of Commons today a petition from a number of constituents of Scarborough Centre and also from other parts of Scarborough. This is in relation to the Rouge Valley.

The Rouge Valley is 5,000 hectares of wilderness area in metro Toronto. It has a herd of white tail deer in metro Toronto, if you can believe that, Mr. Speaker. It is true. White tail deer are roaming in the wild and we want to keep it that way.

The Save the Rouge Valley Organization is a group of thousands of volunteers whose representatives were in Ottawa this week, Jim Robb, Glen de Baeremaeker, Ron Moeser, and met with about 50 members of Parliament from all sides of the House to explain to them the importance of saving the Rouge Valley because of its tremendous wildlife wilderness setting. We want to keep it that way.

The royal commissioner for the future of the Toronto waterfront recognizes that this valley needs to be saved. The Ontario Government owns about 80 per cent of this land.

The petitioners are calling upon the Government of Canada to work with the Government of Ontario to make the Rouge River Valley system a provincial park or a Canadian heritage park.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Shall all questions be allowed to stand?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1230)

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT SERVICES RESUMPTION ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed from Thursday, December 7, consideration of the motion of Mr. de Cotret that Bill C–49, an act to provide for the resumption of certain government services, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee; and the amendment of Ms. Clancy (p. 6637)

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker,. I rise to oppose second reading of Bill C–49. As I see it, the bill is flawed in principle and will be disastrous in terms of public policy. The background to this bill is that we have had not only a bungled set of negotiations but now we have a bungled bill.

I start by acknowledging the difficulty and complexity of bargaining in the federal Public Service. This is a big country. There are very significant and difficult problems, for Treasury Board, the union and the employees in trying to reach a good, sound and effective collective agreement. The bargaining comes as part of the process of general bargaining in this very large Public Service.

We have particular anomalies that need to be dealt with. To fine–tune the system to deal with these anomalies is difficult.

Having acknowledged that, I want to say that this whole dispute seems to be a series of mis–cues, mistakes and errors on the part of Treasury Board in how it has handled this. We have the initial problem of the long delay in even reaching serious stages of collective bargaining and we do not have a collective agreement yet.

We have the problem of bungling the issue of essential services. There have been a number of opportunities throughout this dispute to reach a collective agreement. The employees were effectively forced out on strike in order to negotiate demands, some of which were already agreed to by the government.

We have the government publicly distorting the claims of the union in the dispute. After three and a half weeks—it will be four and a half weeks by the time this legislation is driven through the House by the government—after a difficult strike leading to risks to the general public and a series of problems which the government now trots out in justification of this legislation, we have a bill that is going to force the workers back to work, bitter, unhappy and divided and which does not come close to resolving the issues in a proper and fair way.

Back to work legislation is always difficult. Let us go back to first principles. We live in what we like to think is a free society. One of the principles in a free society is the concept of free collective bargaining. That is simply the freedom to work under conditions and terms that one has voluntarily agreed to with one's employer, rather than work under terms imposed by law. The freedom of collective bargaining is the freedom to reach that agreement together with one's fellow employees, joining to provide a stronger voice at the bargaining table for reaching the terms and conditions.

That is a right which has been fought for politically over the years. It has been fought for industrially over the years and has been at least on the surface well established in Canada. Canada has agreed internationally to this. It is a term of covenant of the International Labour Organization.

We have seen the enthusiasm with which all Canadians have greeted the struggle in eastern Europe to achieve collective bargaining. In fact, it strikes us on this side of the House that there is a tinge of hypocrisy on the government's enthusiasm for free collective bargaining

in eastern Europe and its decision to impose this kind of legislation in this dispute.

Underlying the principle of freedom in this area is the common good sense of the policy of free collective bargaining. If people voluntarily reach an agreement on their terms and conditions, they will find that the regime in which they work is happier. People will be more productive, their lives will be fuller and we will have a better society. We should be tinkering with that freedom only with the greatest delicacy and care. Legislation to force workers to work under terms and conditions imposed should be done so only with the greatest care and delicacy.

What do we have here? First, I am informed that we have a dispute which covers three issues. These are the issues of wages, regional equity and pay equity as between men and women in sectors of the Public Service.

I come from Victoria, British Columbia. I know I speak for the members for Saanich—Gulf Islands and Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca who share with me the pleasant task of representing the greater Victoria area in this House.

There are many employees from this area who are involved in this strike and who are pushing hard for justice in their collective agreement. They have sacrificed in the last three and a half weeks to make the point that they want, need and deserve justice at the bargaining table.

One of the very vivid issues in our area is the fact that the ships' crews who work for the federal government have significant pay differences from those who have similar jobs in other sections of the federal service and the provincial public service, for example the B.C. ferries. If we want to keep the employees who have given many years of service to the coast guard and to other areas involved in this strike, we must come up with a solution that recognizes those disparities. Equally, we must address, in trying to solve the issues of this dispute, the issues of regional unfairness and pay equity.

We come now to a bill which forces the employees back to work. First, the government trots out a series of individual problems such as the freeze-up in the St. Lawrence, the Ste. Anne's Hospital in the province of Quebec, other cases that would call upon the public to say: "Yes, this strike must be over". I say to that two things: First, if there are special cases in which the public interest in having services resume is so dominant, then let the bill be confined to those specific cases. Let us not have legislation which sweeps into the back to work order those whose work in that way cannot be described as essential to the public interest, although we all agree that the work done by all of these workers is vital to the public interest. What is equally vital to the public interest however is the principle of free collective bargaining and of the practical importance of reaching an agreement that the employees are happy with and willing to accept. That is the first point.

The second point is if the government wants a back to work order that will work and encourage productivity in the workplace, it is essential that the employees understand that they have won from this strike. They have won a number of important principles.

The government has stood in the House during this debate and acknowledged that it is prepared to agree to regional pay equity and it is prepared to agree to pay equity between genders in the Public Service, particularly on the hospital side. But the government has refused to include those provisions within the terms of this legislation.

If there is a back to work order emerging from this legislation, the government should make it absolutely clear within the terms of the legislation that the conciliation boards must proceed to a decision which is based on those two principles. We should have a term in this legislation which directs the conciliation board to take into account the gap between jobs in the Public Service in this component and comparable jobs in the public and private sectors.

• (1240)

This is a difficult bill. The government should not have proceeded with it in the first place. It is one that we are going to oppose with every fibre we can in this House at second reading, acceptance in principle. It is a bill that we are going to oppose on a clause-by-clause basis. We call on the government to listen to the position taken by its employees.

The government has in this collective bargaining dispute a weapon which is not available to other employers. It is bad enough for a government to bring in back to work legislation which has the broad axe of this legislation, but the government has a double responsibility in this case because the government is the employer. The government is using its legislative strength to hammer its will upon the employees in this case. That is wrong, that is unconscionable. That is being opposed by the New Democratic Party in this House and we are proud to stand on the side of the employees in this strike.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Charles A. Langlois (Manicouagan): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak to Bill C-49 and to support the motion presented this morning by the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons. Mr. Speaker, the strike by Canadian Coast Guard employees is now in its 27th day, at a time of the year when weather conditions are extremely harsh, especially this year because of the early onset of winter. Traffic on the Great Lakes, the Seaway and the St. Lawrence River must be made safe for crews, for the men and women working on ships going up and down the St. Lawrence River, and it must also be safe for our ferries and for crews and passengers on the ferries that ply between the two shores of the St. Lawrence every day of the week. We also must ensure that cargo transported by ships on the St. Lawrence is handled safely.

As I said ealier, navigation on the St. Lawrence is usually difficult at this time of the year, but it is even more so this year because the weather has rapidly deteriorated and the onset of winter is much earlier than usual. Conditions have become even worse because of the work stoppage by employees of Canada's Coast Guard.

I would like to mention very quickly the services provided by ferries on the St. Lawrence River. From Montreal to Matane, ferries ply daily between the two shores of the St. Lawrence. These ferries are used by many passengers, by travellers and trucks carrying shipments of food and other essential products to communities on both shores of the St. Lawrence, and these ferries must operate under the best and safest possible conditions.

I would also like to mention the Magdalen Islands which depend on shipping for their essential needs such as food, fuel and other items residents need on a daily basis. There again, both cargo and passengers must be transported safely. The crews on the ship that links the Magdalen Islands to the mainland must also work under safe conditions.

Can we run the risk of having serious accidents on the St. Lawrence during the strike, accidents that will endanger the lives of crews and passengers and may cause all kinds of spills in the St. Lawrence?

Dangers occur regularly. At all times of the year, every possible safety precaution must be taken regularly, the more so at this time of year when it is absolutely essential that all Coast Guard services be provided for the sake of the safety of the users, the cargoes and the people working there.

Mr. Speaker, the users are entitled to safe conditions, employees have a right to safe conditions and that is why it is important to act as soon as possible.

I would like to take a few minutes of the House's time to talk about the extremely negative impact of this work stoppage by the Coast Guard employees on the economy of the main cities in my riding.

Mr. Speaker, the economy of the region of Havre St-Pierre, Sept-Iles, Port-Cartier and Baie-Comeau in the riding of Charlevoix depends on shipping and marine traffic. From Havre St-Pierre, Mr. Speaker, we regularly send shipments of titanium ore to Sorel. From Sept-Iles, Pointe-Noire and Port-Cartier, large amounts of iron ore are loaded onto ships that go up the St. Lawrence and take the Seaway to Great Lakes ports to deliver their cargo. On the return trip, these ships bring grain from the Great Lakes ports to the ports of Sorel, Trois-Rivières, Quebec City, Baie-Comeau and Port-Cartier on the St. Lawrence.

Mr. Speaker, the present work stoppage by Coast Guard employees is costing the economy of the North Shore, Quebec and Canada millions of dollars.

From information I have this morning, I know that the Quebec-Cartier mining company of Port-Cartier is in danger of losing tens of millions of dollars because ships are waiting at Port-Cartier to go up the St. Lawrence with their cargo of iron ore for Great Lakes ports in the United States and Canada.

In addition, ships carrying raw materials to the Quebec-Cartier mining company plants are also being held up and this poses a particular problem, Mr. Speaker, in the sense that if the materials which are use to make ore pellets do not get to Port-Cartier the stocks will be depleted and, in the short run, this might force lay-offs in the industry.

A company operates grain elevators in Port-Cartier. We had managed to open up a large market in Europe and especially in Russia. But now two ships are anchored off Port-Cartier waiting to take on grain shipments which are stranded on the Great Lakes because they cannot get through the seaway and sail safely down the St. Lawrence River.

Here again the situation is harmful to the company and its employees, and that as well may lead to more lay-offs in the near future.

Sept-Îles' Iron Ore mining company is another such case. Ships are waiting to leave for the Great Lakes with their iron ore cargo. We have a similar scenario with respect to Pointe-Noire's Wabush Mines. Hundreds of employees will soon be without a job because their work depends on free-flowing maritime traffic on the St. Lawrence River and through the seaway. The local economy is reeling, Mr. Speaker, and here again what we need is immediate government intervention to order Coast Guard staff back to work.

I should like to comment briefly on the work stoppage in DND hospitals.

Mr. Speaker, on several occasions I visited a friend of mine who spent a number of years in Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue's veterans hospital. You have to visit one of these hospitals to realize to what extent the people who are there as patients for extended care need the full support of the staff and employees who work there.

Last night I drove by the DND hospital, the veterans hospital in Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue, and I noticed there was a picket line manned by employees on strike. Of course, I immediately pictured in my mind the residents and patients of that hospital who need care. I do not think, Mr. Speaker, that we can tolerate this precarious situation much longer and the government must intervene as soon as possible.

• (1250)

Therefore, we must act immediately. We must pass Bill C-49. We must order Coast Guard and National Defence hospital employees to go back to work and allow the bargaining process to continue. Negotiations have been pursued assiduously and continuously. The President of the Treasury Board (Mr. de Cotret) has made reasonable offers in line with agreements reached with other bargaining units. I feel, Mr. Speaker, that the bargaining process must be resumed as soon as possible and that Coast Guard and hospital employees must go back to work for the greater safety of the Canadian public.

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, I see it as my duty to speak to Bill C-49 and say that I disagree with the federal government's proposal.

This bill forces two groups of employees in the Public Service to return to work immediately. The two groups in question are ships' crews and hospital service employees.

The latter group represents 2,600 employees, including nurses, orderlies, therapists and support staff, including cooks, stockroom workers, cleaners and laundry workers.

I may add that most of the employees are women. The Federal Court of Appeal said last September that a strike by these employees would be legal.

The President of the Treasury Board said that the strikers were a threat to the safety of Canadians and that he was prepared to negotiate an agreement at any time.

According to the Minister, 95 per cent of collective bargaining agreements in the Public Service were negotiated without strikes. A fair and reasonable offer was made to both groups— 4.1 per cent—according to the President of the Treasury Board. He wants a quick solution.

The penalties, said the Minister, would be from $500 to $1,000 per day per striker. Mr. Speaker, many of these strikers earn less than $20,000 annually. Can you imagine what a fine of $1,000 a day does to someone who earns $20,000 annually? From $10,000 to $50,000 per day in fines for the union president, and from $50,000 to

$100,000 per day for the union. A fair and reasonable offer! Four point one!

The government is in a hurry. It wants to pass legislation that will bring the most vulnerable and weakest employees in the Public Service to their knees.

The ships' crews have been on strike for three weeks. Hospital services employees have been on strike for one week. These employees have been working without a collective agreement for two years.

What was the government doing all that time? It was playing hardball. It was using all kinds of delaying tactics so that finally, at the last minute, it could swoop down and crush the unions.

The ship's crews earn an average of $20,000 annually, Mr. Speaker. They risk their lives to save lives. They say this group made unreasonable demands. Is it unreasonable for a seaman on the Atlantic Coast to claim the same salary as his counterpart on the Pacific Coast? Those on the Pacific Coast didn't think it was unreasonable, since they not only accepted parity, they were even prepared to take less to help their counterparts on the Atlantic Coast to earn the same salary they do. The ships' crews are asking to be treated the same way as naval seamen in National Defence. They work for the same employer. They are asking for a sea duty allowance.

I would like to quote from a *Canadian press News Wire* report datelined October 16, 1989 Ottawa.

[*English*]

MPs paid tribute Monday to four men believed to have drowned off the Newfoundland coast during the weekend.

Three Canadian Coast Guard members and a diver they were attempting to rescue were presumed dead after they were swept away by heavy seas Sunday just north of St. John's.

It brings to four the number of coast guard personnel lost while making rescue this year.

Transport Minister Benoit Bouchard called the losses a tragedy.

Bouchard said the coast guard members will be remembered as heroes, both personally and as representatives of the thousands of Canadians who endanger their lives to save others.

Their daily bravery is testimony to the finest and noblest aspects of the human character.

Search and rescue is a dangerous and sometimes deadly occupation, yet these men and women risk their lives on an ongoing basis in order to save others from injury and death.

I add to that: They get $12 an hour. What they are asking for is a 6 per cent raise which amounts to 72 cents per hour.

[*Translation*]

The President of the Treasury Board (Mr. de Cotret) stated yesterday morning the commercial shipping stoppage on the Great Lakes was costing $2 million a day. He stated earlier the legislation was put forward in the interest of the safety and security of Canadians. I would like to know what is meant exactly by safety and security of Canadians, when we know that crew members on the picket lines are still responding to emergencies, within the same response time as they did before the strike.

The Minister of Transport (Mr. Bouchard) stated the other day in this House that safety was not a factor. Federal ships' crews are getting 28 per cent less on average than those in the private sector. Hospital services employees are among the lowest paid workers in Canada. Their pay scale starts at $16,000 or $18,000 a year. Their yearly wages average $20,000. Those wages are at a the poverty-line level. Most of those employees, as we all know, are women and it is my guess that most of them have families. It has come to my attention that those employees are paid as much as 40 per cent less than those doing exactly the same work for the same employer in the Public Service. I am citing one of those places as being 240 Sparks street. I ask the Minister how come a male employee earns 40 per cent more than a female employee doing the same work? Where is the sense of equality?

I would have another quote, Mr. Speaker. I have here—

[*English*]

It is a press release of November 29, 1989:

Hospital Workers Offer to Provide Essential Services

Ottawa—Public Service Alliance of Canada members in the Hospital Services (HS) group are in a legal strike position as of today.

That is November 29:

And, according to PSAC Vice-President, Jim MacEwen, the union has contacted the government departments affected with an offer to provide essential services. "We have not as yet received the response as to whether or not they are willing to agree with the conditions and level of service outlined in our offer", says MacEwen.

"We didn't seek this strike but we have an employer who stonewalled us during two years of negotiations, has refused to comply with a finding of the Canadian Human Rights Commission with respect to pay equity and has so exasperated the patience and goodwill of our members that they see no alternative but to take this type of action.

"We never go on strike happily but in this instance, it is even more difficult because of the people involved. They include the elderly and former combatants. The relationship our members have with these people can only be described as a loving and caring one. We are very unhappy that the employer is forcing us to take action that will, in all honesty, cause these people some distress.

McEwen says it is the union's concern for these people that led to the 'essential services offer'. It is true that a vulnerable segment of our community is going to be affected by this strike but it is also a vulnerable segment of our society that has to take strike action—a predominantly female group making the lowest wages in the federal public service.

• (1300)

[*Translation*]

I am asking the President of the Treasury Board: Does he have no sense of justice in terms of equal pay in the Public Service? How come women are not entitled to the same rights as their male counterparts in the eyes of this Tory Government? One hundred per cent of hospital services' employees, janitors, maintenance and cleaning staff, do not endanger public safety when they strike. For what reason did the President of the Treasury Board not establish earlier who should be designated as performing an essential service? Those people have been without a collective agreement for two years. Your employees have been waiting for two years for equal pay.

Mr. Charles DeBlois (Montmorency—Orléans): Mr. Speaker, I am not particularly enthusiastic as I rise to speak in this debate which will end with the House of Commons adoption of special legislation to put a stop to the legal strike of a number of Coast Guard employees who work on ships and others who staff veterans hospitals. I am all the more sincere when I say that, Mr. Speaker, because in my riding office I had the pleasure to greet a delegation of men and women who work aboard ships.

In the Quebec City region we have 210 people who work on ships to provide safety and maintenance services. More often than not they work under trying conditions. One thing I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, is that my meeting with these workers proved to be a very enriching personal experience. I must admit I had no idea how hard these people work, often in difficult conditions, far from their families and at the employer's call on a few hours' notice. In that respect I would suggest that their strike has made the public at large more aware of the low-profile yet very effective work done by these employees. I take this opportunity to pay homage to these people who, for the first time in 21 years, exercised their right to go on strike.

Even so, Mr. Speaker, regardless of the admiration and respect one may have towards Coast Guard workers, their right to strike is not absolute. We have to keep in mind that there are many rights in life, and we know full well that health and safety rights are also extremely important.

After 27 striking days, at a time when many people, including the workers themselves, are beginning to wonder about safety conditions on the St. Lawrence River—and I am thinking of the Quebec City region where an oil carrier supplies the Ultramar refinery which provides petroleum products to a large market in the province—we cannot ignore the right to safety, the right to a standard of living. Mr. Speaker, I am taken aback by the somewhat irresponsible approach of my colleagues opposite. We would be first to bear the blame if, after some time when these people have publicly aired their reasonable and legitimate grievances— I have in mind pay parity between east and west coast workers, a normal demand. We are going to correct this unfairness which the Liberal governements before us accepted. The President of the Treasury Board (Mr. de Cotret) promised that as soon as the contract is signed, Coast Guard employees on the east and west coasts would be paid the same. This was not done by the Liberal governements, but we are doing it the first time the collective agreement is being renegotiated. I and my colleagues on this side of the House are proud of it.

Even though we defend workers' rights, which I do with conviction, we must agree that we have reached an impasse. The workers are now asking for a salary increase of about 49 per cent over 36 months. Labour does not challenge these figures. Furthermore, the President of the Treasury Board exceeded the limits he set for 95 per cent (of the Public Service) and which were accepted in bargaining with the Public Service Alliance. I would say he made an exception to correct the pay inequity by offering 24.5 per cent over 46 months. We do not have to be experts to realize that we face a big gap between the management offers and union demands. That is why at some point we must draw the line. The cold weather is now upon us and large amount of grain and ore are blocked in the river, on the Great Lakes or in

Canada's waterways. If we do nothing, again, we would be irresponsible.

In this regard, Mr. Speaker, let me draw upon my past experience. This will surely mean something to you as a former journalist. For about ten years, I was parliamentary correspondent for the TVA television network at the Quebec legislature. On four occasions, I covered negotiations with public and parapublic sector employees—some 300,000 people. On a few occasions, the Government of Quebec, whether it was Liberal or Parti Québécois, had the Quebec National Assembly pass special legislation. So I think I have some experience, a certain expertise with respect to special legislation.

[*English*]

Mr. Fisher: They don't use scabs!

[*Translation*]

Mr. DeBlois: I think it is fair to say, and certainly this will be of interest to my friend from the New Democratic Party that in the area of special legislation there are pieces of legislation that are much harsher than this one. The bill now before us, Mr. Speaker, is not shotgun legislation because it does not set the terms and conditions of the contract.

In Quebec city, I remember very well the former Minister of Social Affairs, Mr. Claude Forget, whom many of us here know, and who indeed formely chaired the Commission on Unemployment Insurance. I should say to my NDP friend that Mr. Forget had a principle with which I do not agree, and that principle was that where government employees forced the government or the National Assembly or Parliament to legislate, they should be penalized. And Mr. Forget's contention was that special legislation should give them less benefits than provided for in the government's last offer. Here is how that logic goes: If Parliament stepped in too often, Parliament would be trivialized. Parliament should step in as seldom as possible in labour conflicts. And therefore it could be argued that where government employees knew that they could always use Parliament, they could be tempted to use Parliament repeatedly and never accept government offers knowing that they had nothing to lose because Parliament would legislate anyway. But if they knew that Parliament would give them less generous terms than those last offered, then they would think twice before forcing the government to legislate. Mr. Speaker, this is not the approach used here. Bill C-49 is no shotgun legislation, it does not set the terms and conditions of the contract. It does not say: You are forcing Parliament to legislate, then you will get less than the last government offer. This was done in some parliaments. I covered that.

• (1310)

I was there, Mr. Speaker. But that is not what is happening here. The government has not slammed the door on negotiations. The President of the Treasury Board even admitted that the conciliation board, which will include a representative of the union, might well give more—-I will be careful, Mr. Speaker, but the conciliation board, which has 90 days to hear both parties, might decide to give more than the final offers made by the President of the Treasury Board.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot tolerate our colleagues opposite telling us that we are crushing the workers and that we are anti-union. When I go back to my riding this weekend, I will have no hesitation in telling my constituents the following: "Listen, there are a number of rights involved. You are right to demand better working conditions. I agree, your salaries are not very high. You are perfectly right. We are making strides towards employment equity, but at the same time, we have to consider safety conditions on the river and pollution, and there is also a considerable economic factor."

Mr. Speaker, there are ship owners, and they are not criminals, who operate ships and pay $50,000 and $25,000 a day in docking fees and who are being penalized. We also have to consider possible claims for damages and, at the present time, there are a number of buoys on the St. Lawrence River, since that is the area I know best, which are out of service.

I don't want to get to involved, but I would also like to say that patients also have rights. I am thinking of Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Hospital, the veterans institution, and I think that between the right to health and safety and the legitimate right of workers to strike, we must get our priorities straight, Mr. Speaker, and when there is a conflict between the two, I have no hesitation in saying that patients come first.

The elderly patients who are listening at Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue, some of whom may not be getting all the services they would normally get, can count on my support.

Once again, I know this is a heart rending situation because those Coast Guard workers are my friends, but in an emergency situation, when a third party is responsible for determining working conditions, we must act responsibly, Mr. Speaker.

Again, I deeply regret that our friends opposite give in to partisanship, which reminds me that the Hon. Member for York-East said recently that the role of the Opposition is to oppose to any bill introduced by the Government and that according to British tradition, the Opposition must oppose! —Somehow I regret that! I would expect that Hon. members on the other side would be sensitive not only to the workers rights but also to the quality of life, the environment and finally, Mr. Speaker, I would say the economy of the country.

It is easy to talk about the jobs that are lost. Some jobs, Mr. Speaker, are actually linked to sea-going shipping and if they are lost, our friends from the NDP will be the first to blame the Free Trade Agreement. Free Trade has nothing to do with that, Mr. Speaker.

There comes a time in life when one has to make difficult decisions and I am not ashamed to say that what I am doing here is not against labour but in the national interest, Mr. Speaker. And I think that national interest requires right now that we—

[*English*]

Mr. Fisher: Whose side are you on?

[*Translation*]

Mr. DeBlois: —but, Mr. Speaker, my friend from the NDP— I cannot believe it! You actually care about the common good?

Mr. Speaker, I will conclude with this. Firstly, I think that the common good we have been elected to look after in this House must prevail over individual and business interests. Once again, I believe that, by asking, with this bill, a third party to clear the ground and make a decision for all practical purposes, this government is respecting the rights of these workers while recognizing that, given the emergency, by agreeing to go back to work the employees will allow ships to move again in this difficult period and carry their cargo to destination. Secondly, we must give veterans and the most vulnerable members of our society the quality of service they deserve.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, I will vote for this bill on second reading and I hope that my colleagues in this House will think it over and cooperate with us so that life can go on in this great country of ours where transportation is such a vital part of the economy.

[*English*]

Mr. Robert E. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): Mr. Speaker, I think this is an unfortunate bill. It is regrettable that we have at this time to be dealing with the bill in the House. I totally reject what the previous speaker said with respect to this bill.

I think the government had an opportunity over the past two years to negotiate with the hospital employees and with the ships' crews to reach a conclusion to this collective agreement that would be fair for all concerned, would be fair for people throughout the country and would avoid even the perception of an emergency taking place now—something which many people reject—which would motivate this bill and force us to deal with it at this time.

The real problem is that over the last two years the government has been motivated by its own ideological inability to deal in good faith with its employees. I share the opinion of another speaker in this House who spoke on this legislation yesterday who indicated that nowhere is the government's ideological problem in terms of dealing with trade unions more evident than in its relations with its employees in the postal system. That single corporation has five times as many grievances against it as compared to any corporation of a similar size operating in Canada. The type of labour relations that take place at the Post Office is provocative and destructive of employee-management relations. That type of destructive and provocative labour relations is characteristic of this government and characteristic of its agencies.

What we are dealing with here is not a problem of negotiating between an employer and an employee, the problem is that the employer is ideologically motivated and ideologically hampered, being the reason that we

have difficulty with the negotiations between the Government of Canada and its employees.

I was not surprised to see in the explanations contained in the last annual report of the post office that a tremendous amount of money—millions of dollars—had been spent by the Post Office in hiring scabs, for preparing and training them to break the strike at the Post Office and to provoke the employees of the Post Office. That action precipitated a great deal of violence on the picket line and many people were seriously injured. This left a residuum of bitterness that will govern employee relations between the Government of Canada and the postal workers for a long time to come. One cannot argue that that same type of bitterness has not overflowed into other wage disputes that this government has had with its employees. This particular strike is no example.

I do not have one of the components in my riding that will be affected by this dispute, the hospital employees' component, but I certainly do have the ships' crew component which is front and centre and very evident in my riding. We have Coast Guard establishments up and down the west coast of Vancouver Island. We have lifeboat crews at Bamfield and Tofino which put out to sea every day in rough conditions to protect the lives of mariners and to protect vessels and their cargoes, as well as the people who use the west coast of Vancouver Island in what has been traditionally called the graveyard of the Pacific. These men and women in the Coast Guard risk their lives virtually every day in the service of Canadians and in the service of the maritime industries that serve Canada.

• (1320)

We also have the ships' crews aboard naval tugs, Coast Guard vessels, research vessels and other Coast Guard ships that service buoys and light stations and other Department of Transport facilities up and down the coast. Yet in spite of the critical work that these ships' crews do up and down the coast of British Columbia and throughout my riding, this government does not seem to have attached as much importance to them as it should have over the last two years when it should have been bargaining in good faith with those employees with a view to reaching a settlement with them. As I said before, it appears that the ideological problems that this government has with trade unions is probably the main barrier that prevented it from reaching an agreement with those employees.

When I look at what ships' crews earn in the federal service on the west coast of Canada it is clear to me that the employees have a very solid case for improvement in their wages and working conditions. For example, a seaman in the federal service makes $11.68 on the west coast, while B.C. ferry employees in the same position make $16.49 an hour and those in a similar position with the Stena Line, a privately-owned line operating on the west coast, make $15.53 an hour. Thus private-sector crews make 33 per cent more than those in the federal service. Those in the provincial public sector working for the B.C. Ferry Authority make 41 per cent more than the crews working in the federal Public Service—and that is after the results of this settlement have been included in the wage rates.

So there is no question that the employees of the federal government working for the Coast Guard, on research vessels, on naval tugs and other fisheries ships in the federal Public Service definitely have a case for improving their wage rates and for bringing them in line with the wages being earned by other people doing similar jobs but under less dangerous conditions on the west coast. The ships' crews for the federal service are not even asking for parity. They are asking simply for a reasonable wage rate.

Look at the fact that the average wage of the hospital employees is $18,000 and the average wage of the ships' crews is $23,000, and the fact that many of these employees are sole supporters of their families in many parts of the country. Even though they are working hard, even though they are risking their lives, and even though they are dedicated to the Public Service of this country, they are still living at or below the poverty line, depending on what region of the country they live in. That situation should be redressed. The government should have seen the necessity to redress that situation and should have negotiated in good faith and with commitment to those employees to the point that a collective agreement could have been reached long before now and that those situations which are totally unacceptable should have been redressed long before now.

We are very proud of the workers in the Coast Guard on the west coast in my riding. They do terrific work on behalf of the people of Canada. Even during this strike, working on a voluntary basis, Coast Guard workers have taken lifeboats out and have rescued people on the west coast of Canada. They have made it a policy during this strike that they will defend the life, health and safety of persons, but not necessarily of property. They have gone out in stormy and difficult conditions. They have

rescued people on a volunteer basis at personal or union expense during the period of this strike. They have said that they will never let the people of Canada down. They will provide those emergency services. They will be available to the people of Canada when they are needed during the strike even though they are on strike.

It is the government that has let the people of this country down and that has delayed a collective agreement for so long. The reason for this—and I cannot repeat this too often—is an ideological problem that the government has of negotiating in good faith with its employees. Why else would these crews be paid so much less than their counterparts in the public service in the provinces and those in the private sector? Why would they be paid so much less than those people when their jobs are so much more critical and so much more important because of the involvement of risk to life, health and safety?

It is the government that is at fault for this problem. I suspect that the government has delayed this issue so long because it knows that in the end it has the power to come into the House of Commons to hold legislation of this type like an axe over the heads of the workers. It knows that it can undermine the process of collective bargaining by having this axe.

It is interesting to note that the minister responsible for the Treasury Board is the minister not only negotiating with the employees but the one who has brought this legislation into the House of Commons. On the one hand he knows that he has the axe that he can use to cut off negotiations, forcing those people back to work under whatever conditions he chooses because he has the majority in the House. On the other hand he seems to believe that he is capable of negotiating in good faith. That just is not happening.

After long protracted negotiations during this strike there were people in my constituency who actually suffered physically as a result of violence on the picketline. An employer recommended that employees who are not part of this bargaining unit—and in fact who are not even citizens of Canada but Americans working on testing American weapons at a Canadian naval facility—use their cars or trucks to bump their way through the picketline. As a result a picketer in my constituency was injured and hospitalized with broken vertebrae as a result of violence on this picketline, violence said to be recommended by an employer. Even today charges have not been laid against that American citizen who committed the act.

Serious problems have resulted as a consequence of the frustration experienced by the employees who were trying to negotiate with the government in good faith, but who saw no good faith coming from the other side of the negotiating table.

There is a serious problem here, a problem of regional equity, a problem of gender equity and other problems that have to be dealt with. In this country in this day and age these problems should not really be part of negotiations. It should be taken without it being said that people who do the same work, whether on the west coast of Canada, the Arctic coast of Canada or on the east coast of Canada should be paid at precisely the same rate, given that their jobs are precisely the same and fall within the same classifications. A lot of the things we are discussing should have been dealt with years ago in the collective agreements of these people.

It is interesting that the only time the national government recognizes that there might be an emergency is when the St. Lawrence freezes up. When the St. Lawrence freezes up and no matter happens on the St. Lawrence River seems to become a national emergency. Then we legislate everybody back to work on both coasts because this government seems to view a very small part of Canada as the most important part and the rest seems to be forgotten in its deliberations. That is a serious problem which is certainly evident in this case. Conservative after Conservative has stood up and indicated that the problem of the imminent freezing of the St. Lawrence Seaway system and the lakes is the problem and the reason we have to legislate these people back to work.

You know what the weather conditions are in this country. You know when the freeze-up comes. You should have felt compelled to negotiate and to achieve a settlement in anticipation of that change in weather this winter. Instead you sat on your duffs. You knew at the very end of it that you could rely on coming into this

House to force those workers back to work using the scanty argument you are using at this point.

• (1330)

I feel that there is a need for a type of bargaining between the federal government and its employees that takes the political impediments of the government in power away from the bargaining system. There should be some impartial bargaining process so that the same minister who might bring legislation into this House cutting bargaining or the process off and forcing a settlement on these people would not be the same minister who is also negotiating. There should be some separation to avoid a conflict of interest, and we do not see it in this case.

We have seen this system operate to the detriment of our employees in the past, and I use as an example the maritime employees, the longshoremen who work in the ports throughout Canada. As a result of strikes which have been terminated through legislation in this place, those longshoremen now make less than their counterparts in the United States, and their pensions have not been dealt with adequately because the settlements that were imposed on them by the House of Commons have fallen far behind settlements that were freely and collectively negotiated elsewhere on this continent. As a result, our longshoremen are being paid much less and the pensions they enjoy are much lower than maritime employees elsewhere on the continent. This is due directly to the fact that this government always feels it has the power to terminate a bargaining process by bringing it into the House of Commons, by imposing a settlement, and by undermining the collective agreement process with employees within its jurisdiction.

I intend to vote against this legislation. I hope that legislation, and take those two days to negotiate in good faith, because it cannot be done with this legislation hanging over the heads of the parties to the collective agreement. If the government withdraws this legislation or accepts the resolution that it will be dealt with six months hence, it could then use the interregnum as an opportunity to negotiate with its employees in good faith with a view to reaching a collective agreement.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, at first glance this appears to be a question of back to work legislation and in reality of course it is. But it also raises a number of important questions that I think need to be examined. I can understand, as can most Canadians, implementing back to work legislation perhaps when the security of the country or people are in great danger and, as well, when the workers have been unreasonable.

Let us look at the facts and whether or not in this particular instance the workers have been unreasonable. We are talking about men and women who have not been treated fairly and who are not being treated fairly even now. I believe that this particular legislation shows the government's inability to understand the fundamentals of pay equity, that is equal pay for work of equal value.

I suspect that all members will know that the human rights commission ruled that the hospital services group is under–valued and under–paid. It is true that the classification system was changed but only equalization payments were made, proper adjustments were not made.

With respect to the ships' crews group, we are talking about wages, hours of work, sea duty allowance. Wage parity on the east and west coasts is possibly the most contentious issue, and it is a question of fairness. The whole designation process, the missed dates, is another source of contention and one that is considered reasonably unfair.

What we are talking about is dangerous work. As my colleague mentioned, we are also talking about conflict of interest: the same minister negotiating and bringing in back to work legislation. We are talking about workers who have been without a contract for approximately two years.

Let us look at some of the facts of this particular situation. In the case of the hospital services groups, we are talking about elderly patients who are now dependent upon volunteers for feeding, cleaning and all normal services. Meals have deteriorated and cleanliness is suffering. As an example, soiled bed linens are being shoved into laundry chutes. We are talking about people being frightened, being frustrated, and being angry.

What about the effects of the ships' crews group? Routine search and rescue has been cut, although the crews go out on any emergency. There have been many such indications, and I shall not repeat them. There is $6 million worth of summer navigational aids in the Great Lakes seaway system alone that are at risk because they are out in the freezing waters. Winter navigation aids have not been placed and this is tying up shipping at a

cost that has been mentioned of $2 million a day which is roughly equal to three days of strike losses.

The same situation affects all harbours. The response to environmental disasters such as oil and chemical spills would be virtually impossible if they were to occur. There is no supervision of the fishing grounds, leaving foreign boats free to illegally overfish Canadian waters and research vessels of Fisheries and Oceans and Environment Canada cannot function.

These are serious consequences and while many individuals would like to try to blame the workers for those effects, I think it is really quite unfair, particularly recalling some of the points that I have made with respect to the conditions surrounding this situation, for example, waiting for a couple of years for a contract, not being given pay equity, or certainly minimal advances being made, and low wages, if one compares them to the national average. It is in fact very insensitive.

Let's look at some of the broader questions. What are the underlying issues here? Why these problems? Again I say that it is too easy to blame the workers. We have to ask ourselves what are the fundamental underlying principles that propel government to do what it wants to do.

There are at least two. One is a question of fairness and the other one is a question of trust. How can one trust and how can one feel that one is being treated fairly when you realize that you are among the lowest paid groups? In some particular groups, the majority are women. How can you feel comfortable with government when you know that you are being paid badly and when you are, in fact, part of a group that has been discriminated against over many years?

It is quite clear that people generally no longer trust the government and that is no news to members opposite. If they look at some of the most recent newspaper reports and the polls that they will see that this is true. They do not believe that this government has been fair, is being fair, or can be fair. If you look at the record, you can see why this is so.

This is the government that propelled us into a trade deal with the United States when, at one time, their leader had said that there would be no free trade with the United States. He even ridiculed members of his party who were forthright enough to say that they thought it was a wise move on their part. This is the same government whose leader indicated that Air Canada was not for sale. What's happened? It has now gone.

This is the same government whose leader, or at least one minister and probably more, indicated that there would be no unemployment insurance changes. Of course, we know what has happened there.

This is the government that really attempted to persuade Canadians that rather than destroying the rail system, it would invest in the system. You will recall some of the statements made by prominent members of government before they came into power that they would invest rather than destroy. What has happened now? Half the system has been closed down. Over 2,700 people will suffer. Some of those people have been calling constituency offices throughout the country. What a Christmas present for the 2,700 plus people, and their spouses and children.

• (1340)

This is the government that said it would maintain the transfer payments to the provinces for health and education. What has happened? In 1986, they were reduced by 2 per cent and in the last budget by another 1 per cent. There will be $24 billion less given to provinces for health and education over eight or nine fiscal years because of the decisions made after the government said that it would maintain that formula.

Why the malaise? Let us talk about some of those 31 tax increases during the last five years. We are talking about a goods and services tax which is to be imposed and well over 80 per cent of Canadians are saying it is vicious, unnecessary and insensitive. This is a government that has doubled the debt in five years. Yet, it likes to tell us that it is being fair with Canadians, that it knows how to manage the country and the economy. This is the government that failed in 1985 to reduce benefits to seniors. It came back with the clawback and, of course, have been able to get the seniors finally. How can anyone trust this government? It tries one way and fails, then comes back and gets you another way. This is a government that imposed cutbacks to organizations who

are advocates for women and advocates for native groups.

Part of the platform of this government was that its leader was a great conciliator and negotiator. There is tension everywhere in this country. If the leader is a great conciliator and negotiator, let him come forward and put an end to this particular dispute. Let him come forward and negotiate in good faith.

The truth of the matter is that this government's policies have pitted one region against another, one group against another and one person against another. I do not believe there has ever been in the whole history of the nation so much malaise, discomfort and tension. I hope that the government returns to the bargaining table and negotiates in good faith. I hope that it considers the workers, the situations under which they work, and clearly the fact that they have been without a contract for a long, long time.

[*Translation*]

As I have just said, Mr. Speaker, that issue is, of course, very important to all Canadians, and it affects in a very special way this back-to-work legislation.

Other issues are also extremely important. I for one believe that sometimes the government has to act when the security of our country, of some individuals, or of some groups is seriously jeapordized, or when the workers are not being reasonable. But is it the case here?

These men and women have not been treated fairly, and are not being treated fairly even as we speak.

But one thing is sure, we now see that the government does not really understand the very serious concerns of these workers, for example, pay equity. There has been some changes, some progress, has been made but there is still a lot to be done to settle that very sensitive issue.

What are the basic principles and the main issues underlying this bill? Why are we having those problems? There are at least two fundamental reasons: fairness and trust. When you have a badly-paid job in a predominantly female group, how can you trust anyone? How can you feel you are being treated fairly by this government?

Sad but true, the majority of Canadians do not think the government is being fair to them! If we look at what the government has done in the last five years, how can we blame them. We were told their leader, even before he was elected as leader, had made fun of his colleagues who questioned him when he said there would be no free trade agreement with the United States. After he became Prime Minister, he said that Air Canada was not for sale, and we all know that it was sold. We also heard during the election campaign, not only from the Prime Minister but from other ministers as well, that no changes would be made to the unemployment insurance program. What did we see after the election? Before they became the government, the Conservatives had proposed investments to encourage VIA Rail, so that we would have a national system across the country that would allow all Canadians to travel. Again, what did we see after the election? They cut our passenger service by half. That will affect more than 2,700 jobs just before Christmas. What a nice present for all husbands and wives, for their children, for the whole family, for their relatives!

This same government indicated that it really wanted to keep the formula with respect to transfer payments to the provinces for health and education. Well, it kept the formula, but forgot to tell us that it was going to make some cuts. The Conservatives cut the transfer payments by 2 per cent in 1986 and by 1 per cent again this year, in the last Budget. That means that provinces lost $24 million for health and education. This same government raised taxes more than 30 times since it has been in office and is ready to hit us with a proposed goods and services tax, to which a vast majority of Canadians are opposed. This government will have more than doubled the debt in five years of running this country. This is a government that tried to reduce senior citizens' benefits, and when it failed it came round the back door with its famous clawback provision. This is a government that cut funding, support to women and native groups and many others.

You are aware the Prime Minister views himself as a great negotiator, an individual who can build bridges—but everyone knows that night here in Canada tensions are everywhere. This is a government that succeeded through its initiatives to pit one region against the other and one group against another, that made one person feel very unconfortable towards another. It is time to go back to the negotiating table. It is a time to negotiate in

good faith. I would like to suggest to the government it should do so immediately.

[*English*]

For the sake of those workers, and for the sake of Canadians generally, let us get back to the bargaining table. Let us not use a law to bludgeon the workers. Let us sit down, as equals, as men and women, as Canadians, who care about this great country, who care about what we do and take pride in our work, and talk honestly, fairly and reach a settlement.

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, I rise somewhat reluctantly in support of this bill because I believe that it is a most unfortunate and regrettable circumstance that makes necessary the legislation that exists in Bill C–49.

I believe that one of the most fundamental rights in a democratic society is the right to free collective bargaining. Indeed, on behalf of the individual, one of the most fundamental rights is the right to withdraw one's labour, providing all contractual agreements have been met, if one is unsatisfied with the circumstances in which one finds oneself and, indeed, in accordance with the free collective bargaining process. Of course, that is what this legislation does. This legislation necessitates the disruption of the free collective bargaining process.

However, I must point out at the same time the reason why I am prepared to support this legislation is because the government of the day, the Government of Canada, has a responsibility to see to the interests and the needs of all Canadians, and has a responsibility to see to the safety of Canadians where that safety is imperilled.

• (1350)

It is one of those unfortunate circumstances which happen from time to time, where principles come in conflict, one with the other, and the responsibility of government is not to be effusive with its rhetoric so much as to respond to its responsibilities by doing that which the national need compels.

Indeed, the same responsibility exists, to some extent, for the leadership of collective bargaining associations, the leadership of unions. It is obviously their responsibility to seek the best terms possible for their members. It is also their responsibility to see to the interests of their members by achieving contracts that will give them the best possible deal under the circumstances and to take that deal back to the members and indicate, in a fair and honest way, that that is the best that can be achieved under the circumstances, and not to needlessly put people in a position where they are either forced into or seemingly forced into going on strike or find themselves remaining on strike beyond the point that makes sense or beyond the point that is in their interest.

I know it is a very contentious issue that brought about this strike situation. I note that in my own province of Nova Scotia, there is a very strong divergence of opinion on the issues among those who are members of the bargaining unit and who voted—and I noted that it was only a very narrow vote—in the locals to which I refer by which the decision was taken.

In the final analysis, the government must see to its responsibility. It must see to the public interest, and in this case the public interest involves public safety. Canadians must be able to count on the Coast Guard to rescue them when their lives are in peril at sea. Canadians at sea and those aboard the vessels of other nations must know that the navigation aids that are there to prevent tragedies and accidents at sea are, in fact, the ones that are supposed to be there.

With respect to the other part of this strike, Canadian veterans must be able to count on being given proper care in hospitals. Canadians have a right to expect this and want them to have it.

Others can speak of the St. Lawrence Seaway, hospitals in Quebec, or the situation on the west coast. Quite frankly, my main concern is that a week ago Monday the lobster season opened in southern Nova Scotia. Twenty-five hundred lobster fishermen are going to sea every day. I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, it is not a very pleasant experience to go to sea in December. It is very cold, the sea can be high, the winds are high. So far the catches have not been too bad and we are very encouraged by that. The prices are not as high as we would like. The days at sea are very, very difficult. This year winter came early to Nova Scotia, just as it would seem to have come early to Ottawa. It is very hazardous to go to sea in inhospitable circumstances.

On the other hand, people must make a living. Lobster fishermen must take advantage of the limited opportuni-

ties that exist for them to pursue their activities. In southern Nova Scotia, our season opens on the last Monday in November and closes at the end of May. However, it is only a very limited period that the lobster harvest is at its best, and it is during those first two or three weeks in the season that every individual is anxious to get out and attend his pots and hope that this harvest will provide the base for the year to come to support the family.

Unfortunately, those hazards mean that lives are in peril every single day. Without the availability of the Coast Guard to answer the call, the risk is even greater. I know that the members of the Coast Guard who provide those near-shore coastal services, with those small vessels out of places like Port La Tour and Clarke's Harbour are particularly concerned because what they are faced with is in conflict with what they know they should be doing. Either way, on either side of this issue, they are good solid members of their organization. They wish to stand with their colleagues in their organization. Indeed they wish reasonable salaries and working conditions. I personally feel that those people are very much underpaid. I would like to see the government continue to increase those salaries and bring them up to levels where they should be so that people do not find themselves in the situation where they have to go on strike.

What we are dealing with, in terms of those people in the Coast Guard, are people who are at the lower end of the scale, notwithstanding the fact that they face very hazardous jobs in very hazardous circumstances on a daily basis. At the same time, those people do not feel comfortable staying at home while friends and neighbours are at sea and their lives may well be imperilled. Many of these men are themselves former fishermen. They know what it is like to be out at sea at difficult times of the year and they want to go back to work.

It might surprise members opposite to know that as a member of Parliament from an area that is very directly affected by this, I have had phone calls from members of the bargaining units who are in fact out on strike saying: "Please can't you get the government to legislate us back to work so that we can have an end to this situation and we will not be forced to come to grips with this unpleasant conflict situation in which we find ourselves".

What are the issues at stake here? Fundamentally, it seems to me, there are two issues which have been the source of controversy in this labour dispute. One has to do with equal rates of pay on the east and west coasts. I must say that as maritimers, and particularly as Nova Scotians, for many years it has grated on us knowing that people on the west coast are paid higher rates of pay for doing precisely the same jobs which our people are doing and indeed often not under as hazardous climatic circumstances.

Nevertheless, I think it is important to note that the breakthrough came in breaking down this villainous principle that had been with us for a long time. I have heard members opposite speak of this. It surprises me that the previous member who spoke, the member from St. Boniface, made reference to it. He seems to have forgotten that this principle of unequal rates of pay was one that became a standard practice through the auspices of the former Liberal government, a government which presumably he would have supported.

I think it is important for this House to recognize that the breaking down of this villainous principle occurred during the past two or three years by the actions of this government. I want to remind all members that it was the former member of Parliament for Halifax, who is no longer in this place, who fought on behalf of the members of that bargaining unit in Halifax and got a break in that principle. We have seen a gradual change begin in the last contract with a one-third amelioration of that principle that started to break the ice, as it were, for what is now on the table. That in fact is an offer that eradicates once and for all this principle.

I do not know why members opposite still get up and speak of this differential because in fact, as per the offer that is on the table right now, this government has finally caught up to the fact that work should be at the same pay on one side of this country as the other. I commend the minister for bringing it here as I commend the former minister and member for Halifax for making it happen in the first place.

The other issue, of course, is whether there is a fair offer on the table. There is no question that the Coast Guard workers, particularly those along the shore, deserve and should have higher salaries and higher wage rates than they have. But the government has a variety of responsibilities. It has a responsibility to all its employees. It has a responsibility to see that where there

are people being paid salaries below what they should be, that it raises them as quickly as it can, but the salaries must be fair to all people within the public service.

Therefore I think it is important to note that the offer that has been rejected at this point is an average 5.23 per cent offer, whereas other members of the public service have only received an average rate of 4.2 per cent.

Mr. Mills: Fifty cents an hour. It can be ended for 50 cents an hour.

Mr. McCreath: I might say, as a Member of Parliament, that I would be quite happy to receive a 5.23 per cent increase. However, percentages are not the beginning and the end of these things, because if the rate is low the percentage naturally should be higher.

It is important for the government to gradually move in the direction of bringing these salaries up. As for the circumstances now, it is important to recognize that the offer that is available at this time is a higher percentage offer than has been received by other members of the public service. Under this bill those people will not only receive that equality, not only receive those increases but, at the same time, will have an opportunity before arbitration to make their case. If it is a just one, quite possibly they will get an even better settlement.

Therefore, I think the bottom line is that the offer which the government has made is fair. The legislation, while regrettable in the sense that it does interfere with free collective bargaining is in the public interest and therefore the government is acting responsibly and properly to introduce this legislation. It will provide an opportunity for this dangerous situation to come to an end, for the people to get back to work. I know they want to get back to work and indeed for this House to get on with the important business of the nation.

Therefore, I would urge all members to support this bill at this stage and subsequent readings.

• (1400)

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to take part in this important debate on the Government Services Resumption Act.

The use of back to work legislation at this time raises some very important questions about the government's role as an employer and as a proponent of pay equity.

I would like to register my deep concerns that the government is imposing the back to work legislation on the employees of the hospital service group and ship crew workers. Historically back to work legislation has been used 20 times over the past 40 years: 10 times to end strikes in the ports and shipping sectors, 5 times to keep the railway operating, twice to get grain handlers back to work, twice to resume postal services, and once to provide for the continuation of air traffic control services.

The majority of these actions were taken when disputes involved strikes, negotiation deadlocks and a definite and immediate danger to the well-being of the Canadian public.

Is there such a national emergency facing us today? The answer to that question is no. We have the workers themselves to thank for that. We should commend these workers for their dedication and commitment in light of the circumstances. The ships workers, for example, have responded to each and every emergency call that has occurred in the past four weeks.

The hospital workers, on the other hand, have also offered to leave the picket lines should an emergency situation arise in National Defence hospitals or veterans homes.

These people are not holding the safety or health of Canadians for ransom. They are simply using the only means available to them to arrive at fair and decent contract settlements.

When there is no immediate danger to the Canadian public, it is difficult to understand the justification for resorting to back to work legislation in the situation we are facing today. Taking away a basic right of Canadian workers cannot be taken lightly and cannot be done lightly. The truth is that the right to strike exists in this country for a reason.

Back to work legislation does not only limit the bargaining power of the striking employees. It seriously limits the government's ability to negotiate an agreement in the best interests of the country. This can be construed as an abdication of the responsibility of both the employees involved and the Canadian public at large.

The use of back to work legislation is generally regarded as negative. When everyone knows that the government has this tool in hand the incentive to reach an agreement through bargaining is weakened. Are

there not better ways to foster co-operation and avoid confrontation? In my view there are.

The government has introduced back to work legislation. There is no national crisis at stake. This is an admission that our system of collective bargaining has failed.

Can the government assure Canadians that every effort has been made to arrive at a fair and equitable agreement? Have all the avenues been explored? Is the government willing to go back to the bargaining table? So far the answer is no to all of these questions.

This dispute involves the government on the one side and over 3,500 of the lowest paid members of the Public Service on the other.

[*Translation*]

The government is employing 2,200 ships' crew employees on Coast Guard vessels, fishing boats, lifeboats and other boats of the Department of Public Works, both on the eastern coast and the west coast and the Great Lakes. Those skilled workers are risking their lives on a daily basis to ensure the safety of margation of sea and on our seaways. Their average salary, which is 16 to 28 per cent less than that of their counterparts in the private sector, is only $21,000.

In the area of hospital services, the government employs 1,200 workers who on a regular basis extend care to our veterans and people in National Defence hospitals and homes. There are nursing attendants janitors, kitchen attendants, and so forth. They are to every patient some kind of an extended family. The majority are women, Mr. Speaker and forty-eight per cent of these workers earn $20,000 a year or less.

They are not striking without reasons. They are on strike because they could not get decent, fair salaries. The issue of equal pay for equal work is central to these two labour disputes.

[*English*]

The Canadian Human Rights Act has three sections referring to the equal pay for work of equal value principle. Equal pay for work of equal value became law for federal public servants in March 1977. The government has made commitments to Canadians over and over again that work will be judged on its value, on the basis of skill and knowledge, mental and physical effort, responsibility, and the nature of working conditions.

People must not be paid based on which part of the country they live in, whether or not they are man or women, black or white. It is a principle we have endorsed as a government and as a nation. This is what we are all about. This is what Canada is all about.

Fairness is a principle which is extremely important to the productivity and efficiency of our Public Service. Yet here we are in 1989, almost 1990, and coast guard crews working aboard vessels on the east coast are paid $2,000 less than similar crews working on the west coast of our country. They are doing the same job for the same employer and getting substantially less money for it.

At National Defence hospitals here in our city and elsewhere in Canada hospital service workers, the majority of whom are women, have had to fight for over a decade to achieve wage parity with their general service counterparts. They went to the Human Rights Commission because their rates of pay trailed by 10 per cent or 40 per cent the wages of those in the general service category. The Human Rights Commission agreed with them. They were awarded $28 million, the largest pay equity settlement in the history of the Public Service. More than two years later these employees are still not getting the pay they deserve.

Retroactive pay from 1980 to 1987 based on new classifications has not yet been received by these workers. Retroactive pay from 1987 to the present also has not been paid out by the Treasury Board. These hospital workers are living on wages close to the poverty line. On average, they are entitled to an additional $3,000 per year. Given that the salary range of these workers is between $16,000 to $22,000 a year, an additional $3,000 is a lot of money.

• (1410)

The President of the Treasury Board assures us that he is working to comply with the equalization order given by the Human Rights Commission. He has stated that the various stages of the pay equity process are to blame for these delays which are proving so costly.

Blaming the delays on the pay equity system is not a valid argument. If we have a system where workers earning poverty level wages must wait for two, three or ten years to get fair wages and pay equity, then I say there is something wrong with that system. We cannot ask these employees to bear this burden.

Our Public Service is already burdened with serious problems such as downsizing and job insecurity, the increasing age of the workforce and the lack of promotion opportunities. Women are still under-represented in upper levels of the Public Service, representing only 12.3 per cent at the management level and 83 per cent in support positions.

So far attempts at employment equity have not been very successful. The matter before us today is only a symptom of the problems facing public servants and their employer, the government. The bottom line is that these workers want a fair deal. As a government, we should be setting an example for the private sector, an example which includes real efforts to address critical issues such as wage equity and constructive collective bargaining practices.

The federal government must be a role model for other employers in this country. It is disheartening to see Public Service employees having to fight for fair treatment from the federal service. The government has told this House that these employees are essential employees and should therefore not be allowed to strike. I would reply that every single public servant in this country is an essential employee. Each one deserves to receive a fair wage for his or her work. Each one, regardless of gender or region, deserves to be paid the same wage as another employee doing a comparable job.

Back to work legislation is not the answer. The striking employees are responsible and dedicated to their jobs. They want to go back to work. The Public Service Alliance has offered to go back to the bargaining table.

This morning we have received a call from Mr. Whalen of the hospital services union who indicated that the President of the Treasury Board's statement that employees were seeking 14 per cent for each of the next three years is an unfair statement. In fact, they are seeking 6 per cent for each of the next three years. He also said that the dispute is about two issues: resolving the pay equity first and getting the pay increases second.

It is time for the government to make the concerns of these hard working Canadians a priority and resume negotiations. Legislating these workers back will not resolve the deep-seated concerns at issue today. We must work out a fair and equitable solution at the bargaining table, not on the floor of the House of Commons.

Mr. Ross Belsher (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the bill before us, Bill C-49, an act to provide for the resumption of certain government services. As Your Honour can well imagine I will be speaking mainly on the part of the government services provided by federal ship crews.

Late last week, on the advice of the Canadian Coast Guard the Laurentian Pilotage Authority and the Corporation of Lower St. Lawrence Pilots, the Minister of Transport announced that navigation would be temporarily halted on the lower St. Lawrence because safety could not be assured.

Subsequently, on September 4 after a further review and assessment of the situation, it was decided to permit navigation in the lower St. Lawrence with certain restrictions such as daylight navigation and the requirement to have two pilots on board the vessel.

The cold weather has caused earlier than normal ice formations in the river from Tadoussac west. Floating aids have become iced up. Ice floes have moved many others out of position and these now pose a navigational hazard. Still others submerged by the ice will come to the surface as a ship passes by with the risk that the buoy's anchor cable will foul up the ship's propellers. These are among the reasons navigation was temporarily closed between Quebec City and Les Escoumins.

By this time of year Canadian Coast Guard buoy tenders usually have recovered the summer buoys and replaced them with winter aids, but they have been tied up by the strike since November 14. The Seaway's reopening in 1990 could be affected by the loss and displacement of the buoys.

The temporary closure of one section of the waterway left some 100 merchant ships waiting to start or to continue their voyage. In addition, other ships are

currently in the seaway system above Montreal and will have to exit the seaway by December 19, the announced clearance date of the shipping season.

Ice-breakers need to be deployed without delay to ensure the safe and orderly exit of these vessels and to assure the safety of ships carrying general cargo and petroleum products to St. Lawrence and seaway ports. These ice-breakers are normally assigned to the Quebec City-Trois Rivieres area from mid-December to mid-March each year. The federal government must step in now to restore safe navigation in the St. Lawrence-Great Lakes and ensure the safety of mariners and fishermen in all parts of Canada.

The St. Lawrence Seaway system is the world's foremost inland waterway, used for decades by ships of every seagoing nation. The provision of essential services such as aids to navigation and ice-breaking are fundamental to the safety and integrity of this ocean link to central Canada and the industrial heartland of the United States.

The provision of these services is a key mandate of the Canadian Coast Guard. We have a long-standing commitment to ensure the safety and efficiency of this route for trading nations of the world. Transport Canada has a reputation of efficient and reliable safety services to shipping and the fisheries. The recent cold weather serves to remind us of the importance of these services, especially search and rescue operations.

Many fishermen who go to sea in the perilous winter months are alive today thanks to the Coast Guard search and rescue efforts. Since the strike began, basic search and rescue services have been provided by Canadian Coast Guard SAR operations through co-operative efforts with the union. I want to compliment the unions on the co-operation that they have shown throughout this labour dispute.

While the arrangement has also allowed for the provision of search and rescue services in life threatening circumstances, the strike has curtailed the full range of SAR services. We are thus hindered in our efforts to fulfil our national and international commitments to provide safety services on a continuous basis. Our external trade depends on the provision of these services.

Many of the ships now in the St. Lawrence system are loaded with export grain. It is estimated that one million tonnes of grain must be shipped overseas from ports along the St. Lawrence from now to January, but the Seaway must be open if our grain shipments are to be set apart.

Canadians rely on the St. Lawrence system for a variety of other commodities. General cargo and petroleum products are moved by ship to remote communities and major cities alike. An interrupted supply route will have negative impacts on the livelihood of many people. A reduction in the supply of raw materials carried on the seaway to our industries spells economic hardship.

• (1420)

During 1988 the St. Lawrence Seaway carried over 20 million tonnes of bulk cargo such as iron ore and coal to and from ports in the Great Lakes system. Over 15 million tonnes were also moved through the Seaway. A further 4.5 million tonnes of general cargo were also moved by this great waterway.

The economic significance of such figures is enormous. The seaway's yearly cargo throughput is in the order of 40 million tonnes. Some 60 per cent of the Seaway's traffic is shipped to and from overseas ports chiefly in Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

As of midnight, December 6, there were 51 ocean going vessels in the Great Lakes system west of St. Lambert lock. Of these, 33 are still above the Welland Canal. There are an additional 8 Canadian inland vessels per day requiring service. The average operating cost of these vessels varies from $5,000 to $25,000 per day and more, depending on the type of vessel. Many of the vessels face long delays. These delays will be longer if ice-breaker support is not available. Some ocean vessels may even be trapped in the system for the winter if ice-breaker assistance is not provided.

Should a number of the 51 ocean going vessels currently in the system be trapped, the losses incurred would be huge. Early system closure will also have a major impact on the viability of the Canadian inland fleet as it will be unable to meet all of its commitments.

With the outlook for below normal temperatures to continue for the remainder of December, the announced clearance date of December 19 may not be achievable and the dependability and reliability of the Seaway as a transportation route will be jeopardized. It is therefore critical that the Coast Guard services be restored as soon

as possible so that the seaway can be closed in an orderly fashion and all vessels can complete their transits.

In addition to the seaway, the St. Lawrence River ports have substantial impact on the local, regional and national economy. Traffic at Ports Canada facilities located on the St. Lawrence River generated over 16,500 jobs and $750 million in total income.

Let us look at the problem of ships currently delayed and the time lost. Today there were in excess of 70 ships experiencing delays in the St. Lawrence River below Montreal. In addition there were 51 ocean going vessels still to exit the St. Lawrence Seaway before its announced clearance on December 19.

This gives, in total, in excess of 120 ships affected or potentially affected if this strike is not immediately resolved. At an estimated daily cost per ship of from $5,000 to $20,000, the losses and ship time alone are presently about $1 million per day. This figure could escalate to millions per day if all the ships are not able to exit the seaway.

This strike has gone on for more than three weeks. Mediation talks began on November 26 and broke off three days later. We had hoped for a resolution on this labour dispute through mediation, but this strike which has gone on longer that we can tolerate has meant Canada has not been in the position to meet its national and international commitments to maritime safety.

I want people to note that we are not legislating a settlement to the issues that are involved in the strike. We are asking the workers to get back to their job so that they can carry on. They have an enviable record which is second to none. They are world class in their work. Nonetheless it has a tremendous impact on the Canadian economy as a whole.

More important, this bill calls for the establishment of two conciliation boards, one for either side of the equation. They will bring forth a settlement to the issue but we are not legislating the settlement *per se*. That is a very fundamental distinction.

We still want the unions to have the rights of the collective bargaining process, but there does not seem to be a possibility of that settlement right now between the union and management.

Nonetheless, we feel it is paramount for the shipping industry of Canada and for the economic well–being of the prairie grain system as the cargo flows through Thunder Bay and through the seaway system that the facilities and the efforts of the coast guard be put back into service so that we can be dependable and have a system that is working for the good of our country.

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, it is ironic that I get up to speak today in opposition to this legislation. Today is the forty–first anniversary of the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

I strongly oppose this legislation and I want to outline the bad faith bargaining on the part of this government, which is the employer in this case. I would also like members on the other side of the House to understand the valuable contributions of the labour movement to our Canadian society.

The collective agreements for both the ship crews and the hospital services members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada expired in December 1987, two years ago. We are talking about the lives and the livelihoods of 3,600 people across this country.

In September 1989 the Federal Court rendered a decision that precluded Treasury Board from designating any of these members. For the first time all members of the hospital services and ship crews classification of the Public Service Alliance enjoyed the right to strike. Strikes commenced on November 11, 1989 for the ship crews members and on November 29, 1989 for the hospital service members. Emergency services were still being provided by the members of these unions. Ship crews suspended their strike on at least 10 occasions to respond to emergency search and rescue calls.

This is one of the many reasons why back to work legislation is terrible. These alliance members have shown themselves to be principled and responsible Canadians. That is more than can be said of this government. There is no reason to designate them as essential workers when they know when emergency services are needed, and they have demonstrated that.

The Federal Court obviously agrees that they like all other workers have the right to strike. They have the right to withdraw their labour. The right to strike, the right to withhold one's labour from a bad faith employer, is a fundamental right in our society. It is one of the most effective bargaining tools workers have in a society

where business has almost total economic control over many people's lives.

Along with destroying workers' right to strike, another reprehensible part of this legislation is the targeting of women workers as objects of contempt who do not deserve to be paid what they are worth. The majority of the federal hospital workers are women. They earn an average of $18,000 a year.

The key issue throughout the hospital workers' negotiations have been that of equitable pay. These workers have every right to expect restructured rates of pay and an economic increase reflecting the levels of the major economic indicators in Canada. These workers have experienced at least 10 years of pay inequity and have faced the refusal of the employer to address in any rational manner the issue of equitable rates of pay.

Instead the federal hospital workers were forced to file a complaint with the Canadian Human Rights Commission. They did so on September 9, 1981. The government delayed for almost six years before agreeing to an interim settlement in July 1987.

As I said earlier, it is ironic that this is the forty-first anniversary of the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

The consent order states:

> The parties are agreed that the Hospital Services—Group, which is predominantly female, has received less wages than the General Services—Group, a predominantly male group, for performing work of at least equal value.

• (1430)

The consent order lays out the method and terms for retroactive and future equal pay rates for the hospital service workers. The retroactive phase covered the periods from September 9, 1980, to July 26, 1987. On July 26, 1987, the payments stopped. In November 1989 Treasury Board began to make retroactive payments for the period since July 1987 to the present.

These workers deserve more than haphazard retroactive payments for the money they earned long ago. They deserve the fair rates established in the pay equity settlement to be inscribed in the collective agreement. They deserve to see that money a week after they have earned it, not two years later.

The government is stubbornly refusing to be fair to these workers. The government is openly practising discrimination against women workers. Instead of negotiating in good faith, establishing equitable rates of pay, entrenching the equal pay rates in the union contract, this government is forcing these workers who are on legal strike back to work.

I say abandon this legislation and just give these women the deal they deserve. The government is offering a settlement of between 4 per cent and 5 per cent. The difference in the rates of pay between this group and the general services group is estimated at more than 13 per cent. This issue will not go away by legislating unfairly treated workers back to work. It can only be addressed with a fair settlement.

All of this really comes as no surprise from a government whose own record on employment equity and pay equity is abysmal. The 1988 report of the Canadian Human Rights Commission specifically berated the government on the incredible delays in its study on pay equity in the public service.

The Employment Equity Act came into effect in 1986. It has been roundly criticized by labour, by women's groups, especially immigrant and visible minority women's groups, and by the New Democratic Party as having no teeth.

It is unfair to have to rely on the individual complaint process through the Canadian Human Rights Commission. The commission is not equipped to handle all of these complaints. We should establish and enforce employment and pay equity plans with goals and with timetables in a systematic way.

Some of the other outstanding issues for both the ships' crews and hospital workers negotiations are Article M-16, a no discrimination clause. The bargaining team wish family status and mental or physical disability to be added to the grounds of prohibited discrimination in the union agreement.

The union is asking for changes to Article M-21 of the contract. It wants its members to be able to partake of the new parental leave provisions of the UI Act. It is asking for 26 weeks of maternity leave.

We can compare this with what most workers in some western European countries have access to. In Sweden, women are eligible for nine months paid maternity leave and at a benefit level of 90 per cent of their earnings. They do not have to negotiate with a tight-fisted employer for a 26 week maternity leave.

In this case, the regressive Conservative government is also the employer. This government does not understand that policies that benefit workers also benefit the country. The government does not understand that progressive policies do contribute to a healthy economy. Tory economic policies such as the GST, the decimation of unemployment insurance and the constant attack on labour serve only to impoverish this country and to oppress working people.

The New Democratic Party has been enriched by the active participation of labour. When the Canadian labour movement and the CCF, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, joined together in the early 1960s to form a political party, a powerful force in Canadian politics emerged. Since then, labour has helped to guide the New Democratic Party to adopt the most progressive and sound economic policies of any elected political party in Canada.

Labour and the New Democratic Party have fought for medicare, unemployment insurance, maternity and parental leave, child care, collective bargaining rights, employment and pay equity. We have fought together for a better Canada, one not controlled by the rich few, a democratic Canada in which everyone has the economic and social resources to fully participate in Canadian life and Canadian society. We are committed to an economic strategy of full employment. We are committed to fairness for all working people, men and women.

In my riding, I consult with labour. Labour can always be relied on to come up with practical strategies to build a progressive Canada. Labour can always be relied on for energy and for a wholehearted commitment to bettering the situations of Canadian workers and the most disadvantaged of our society.

I am proud that the New Democratic Party is fighting for the rights of working people. Labour and the New Democratic Party are united against the unfair treatment of working people by this government. We are united in opposition to this back to work legislation.

I am also proud that our new leader, the hon. member for Yukon, is taking a strong leadership role on all of these issues, especially in opposing this back to work legislation. She is following in the footsteps of her predecessor, the hon. member for Oshawa.

We are a party and a movement that is united and forward looking. We put our common goals and our principles ahead of our individual differences. This government must bargain in good faith. It must not put back to work legislation into effect. I urge all members on both sides of this House to vote against this regressive legislation.

Hon. Bob Layton (Lachine—Lac-Saint-Louis): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to join with my colleagues in this debate because of the very special significance that this concern that we are debating today in the House of Commons has for my riding at the west end of Montreal.

As many of my colleagues will know, the Ste. Anne's Veterans Hospital is an outstanding institution at the immediate western point of the Island of Montreal. It accommodates some 726 veterans, many of whom are in their final years, and is recognized in the community by the Legion groups which support it with their volunteer hours and by the many citizens who join with the professional staff to assist in providing services needed in caring for people in their final years.

Included in the Ste. Anne's Veterans Hospital are some 250 permanently bedridden patients. There are also some 400 who can move about in wheelchairs but who, without the assistance necessary to handle wheelchairs, are like the others, bedridden.

In the past days and weeks, my office has received calls expressing concern on behalf of families or volunteers having limited access to those needing care. All these people, my neighbours, electors in the riding of Lachine—Lac-Saint-Louis, electors in Vaudreuil to the west and Pierrefonds in the north, all are concerned about the health and care of the citizens in the hospital.

Patients with Alzheimers and dementia need routine in their life. If people change or meals are not regular, they become disoriented. It is a time when personal care and assistance is so vital to making life possible. All patients need care with bathing and shaving. Most need care with feeding.

• (1440)

One of the ladies who called my office and with whom I spoke expressed concern that regularity and meals for her family member was becoming very critical and that not receiving lunch until three or four in the afternoon is

having a negative effect on the well-being and health of these patients.

Those patients who need physiotherapy or psychological care are not receiving it. The absence of that care at this time in their lives carries with it without question a threat to their well-being.

The volunteers at the Ste. Anne's Veterans Hospital are themselves elderly, many of them senior citizens. Many are becoming very tired. They have been working long hours and extra time to fill in for the services that are normally rendered. It is difficult or awkward for them to cross picket lines.

The Ste. Anne's Veterans Hospital cannot function without its volunteer group. There are many hundreds who visit the hospital to assist the staff. The situation is now reaching a crisis point. Most staff members have been working hard, some of them for eight days straight on 12-hour shifts.

There was originally an evaluation of the work of the some 600-odd workers who service the hospital and it was determined that to keep it operating safely, operating with care, it would require that 90 per cent of the workers contribute. The offer that was made by the union to designate certain workers to assure essential services was 8 per cent of that number.

The seasonal events which are so much looked forward to at this time of year and enjoyed by all Canadian citizens will have to be cancelled at the hospital. Whether it is the music or whether it is the special food that comes with this holiday season, it becomes for those directly affected very much of an emergency.

A patient who is not able to receive physiotherapeutic treatment, perhaps for leg problems for some time, and is not able to walk on the wards, could be expected to suffer a major set-back to the point where he might never be able to walk again.

An Hon. Member: Negotiate then.

Mr. Layton: I know that the negotiations are continuing. We have sat in this House of Commons listening to the reports of the minister that negotiations are ongoing. It is my hope that there will be a negotiation that will bring the workers back together. In the meantime, we have to concern ourselves with the well-being of the veterans. These are the people who actually represented this country with the risk to their lives in the wars of the past.

During the strike, the physiotherapy department has had to be shut down. Another major impact on patients is the change in routine that makes older people nervous, especially when the change is beyond their control. The hospital is for many of them, at this stage in their lives, their home and it is the one area where they feel comfortable.

Quite a number of the Ste. Anne's patients cannot eat by themselves. They require spoon-feeding. If any of the members of this House have shared in the experience of a senior citizen in his or her last years, they will know how key to their happiness and to their good feeling of still being alive comes from having someone there to help and someone there to care. Volunteers are doing that job at the moment, but they are not trained to recognize, for example, the onset of choking. Nor are they trained to act upon the problems of a patient once he has experienced choking.

How can we balance these tremendous needs in our community? On the one hand, the patients should have our very best in service. At the same time, we must consider those who are anxious to share fairly in the distribution of resources of the country, the workers who make it happen.

I can add concerns of their cardiac patients who are becoming more and more anxious. This anxiety is brought on when meals are not served on time and when medication is not being given at the usual time. Daily activities are being rearranged and activity rooms are being changed. These are not big problems for most people, but are part of essential routine for some cardiac patients to whom anxiety can lead to fatality.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Veterans Affairs runs a hospital and two veterans' homes. The hospital is located in Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue, at the western tip of the Island of Montreal. There is the Rideau Veterans' Home in Ottawa and the veterans' home in Saskatoon.

I shall only talk about the situation in the Saint-Anne-de-Bellevue Hospital. The problem is most serious

there, mainly because the patients in that hospital need much more care than those in our two homes.

[*English*]

In the Ste. Anne's hospital, more than half of the staff belong to the hospital services group. While there are procedures in the event of a strike, the House will be aware that there were provisions that allowed designation of positions. This requires people in such positions to continue to perform their services if a strike is called. In this case, the essential service is to safeguard the health and security of the patients and to maintain their welfare.

The department did receive an offer from the union, but it was considered impossible to maintain the services on the basis of that offer. The response of the department indicated that while it was prepared to make an offer, the offer of 45 employees was well short of what was needed.

Now that the hospital at Ste. Anne's has been operating during the strike, it is important first to recognize that the strain on the employees did not begin when the strike started but had begun some considerable time in advance. Doctors, nurses and professional and support staff have been working 12 hour shifts. The nurses, in addition to their own work, have been doing the work normally undertaken by the higher levels of orderlies. The situation is becoming more and more critical.

[*Translation*]

Our doctor, nurses and other professional staff are working 12–hour shifts. In addition to their own duties, the nurses are doing the work normally done by the higher level assistants. The work of the other members of the hospital services group has been done in two ways: first, by the group of volunteers who usually help at that hospital.

[*English*]

It is an immense team of volunteers who contribute to the well–being of our veterans. In addition, they have moved some of the staff from other centres to try to assist. All have been working long hours and all are now, as might be expected, very tired.

• (1450)

I think we should pay tribute, and I am sure the House would wish to join me in doing so, to those who are keeping services available to our veterans and who have committed themselves to this end. Despite our best efforts, the health and safety of the patients is coming into jeopardy and this has been noted over these past days.

The deputy minister, as reported by the minister in his report to the House on this matter, studied personally the situation in Ste. Anne de Bellevue and concluded that we have to act now because the health, safety and security of the patients is in danger. I believe that we have demonstrated why this situation cannot be allowed to continue any longer.

[*Translation*]

As I already told the veterans, my department considers its employees most important and wants to treat them fairly. I believe that the arrangements proposed in this legislation will allow an independent third party to help solve the dispute.

Our personnel is entitled to expect fair treatment.

[*English*]

I would like to ask that the House respond rapidly to pass this legislation so that we may properly care for our veteran patients and look after those who did so much for us and are now unable to look after themselves. It is for this reason that I fully support the government's back–to–work legislation which is absolutely justified under the circumstances.

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, I too am very pleased to rise in the House today to speak to Bill C–49, an act to provide for the resumption of certain government services.

I am pleased to speak to the bill but I am not so pleased about what the bill entails. In addition to this motion, the government has moved closure on this bill to cut off debate on this issue, something that I find absolutely appalling.

I believe there is no one more anxious to go back to work than the health services and the ships' crew workers. We all know that the work of these two groups provide an essential service to Canadians. These two groups of public servants have a long history of being ignored by the federal government, a history of pay inequity. The hospital workers went out on strike in the wee hours of November 30 and the ships' crew workers went out on November 13.

There are provisions in the Public Service Staff Relations Act which allow for the designation of essential personnel who are prohibited by law from going on strike during a labour dispute. However, nine government

departments failed to meet the deadline for submitting lists of personnel that they felt were essential.

The federal court ruled that the departments' mistake could not be overlooked and that these groups had the right to strike. As a result, all members of any of those groups were in a legal strike position if talks broke down. These groups have exercised that right. They are among the lowest paid in the federal Public Service. Is it any wonder that there are also the same groups that rejected the tentative agreement in March?

The major issues that led to the ships' crew group's rejection of a tentative agreement in March of this year were wages, hours of work, a sea duty allowance and wage parity on the east and west coasts. As of July 1987, wages on the west coast were behind private sector wages by 16 per cent and on the east coast wages lagged by 28 per cent. An east coast ship worker makes $2,000 less than his counterpart working for the same government on the west coast.

Given private sector wage increases over the past two years, these percentages are now much higher. The Public Service negotiators are not prepared to compromise any of the employees' requests in exchange for one benefit.

The members of this group work on the east and west coasts, on the Great Lakes and on the Canadian Coast Guard vessels, the fisheries vessels, search and rescue lifeboats, Public Works vessels and on Canadian forces auxiliary vessels providing support for naval vessels.

During the strike these federal employees have shown their good will and dedication by leaving the picket line whenever emergency services to the Canadian public were required. This to me indicates that these employees are dedicated to their jobs. They were dedicated when an emergency arose and they laid down their strikers' pickets and went back to work for those emergencies.

They are proposing, instead of higher pay scales, that they be given across-the-board sea allowances of $210 per month. The Department of National Defence already pays $177 per month to all personnel. The higher amount is because their pay scale is so much lower. The government could have settled this matter for $6 million. Considering how many days that they have been out on strike, they could have saved this $6 million by preventing lost business during the strike period.

The hospital services workers have been on strike since November 30. I listened to the gentleman across the way from a riding in Montreal who spoke just before me and his whole speech was based on the veterans' homes in Ste. Anne de Bellevue and on the volunteers and how great it was that the volunteers were providing this much-needed service. Only briefly did I hear him refer to the workers, those workers who have been so dedicated to these veterans all these years, and those workers who too do not like to see those veterans not being cared for to the extent that they know that they themselves would care for them. I did not hear the hon. member address that.

On July 15, 1987, the Human Rights Commission Tribunal ruled that this group of people is undervalued and underpaid. When is the government going to recognize that? The tribunal's consent order called on the employer to compensate the workers for past discrimination, re-evaluate seamstresses and community health representative positions using the federal general services standard and to revise the health services classification standard to parallel.

The classification system was changed but only equalization payments were issued. No salary adjustments have been made.

This is not something that has gone on for a year or two, it has gone on for years. The Human Rights Commission has ruled that they are being discriminated against, that they are undervalued, that they are underpaid and the government is not recognizing this.

On average, the health services workers are entitled to an additional $3,000 a year. Given that their salaries are as low as $16,000 and average about $22,000, this is a significant amount and a disgraceful wage.

Health services workers offered to provide emergency services but the government would not come to an agreement with them, thinking they could provide services with military personnel and volunteers. I kept hearing from the previous speaker about how these veterans were not being cared for and how these volunteers were overworked and how tired they were. Well, these public servants offered to do the job and they will

not let them do the job and they will not pay them for doing the job.

The bill orders back the ships' crews and the hospital services workers immediately to their jobs. It establishes penalties for failure to comply; $500 to $1,000 a day for an individual. Someone who is making $18,000 a year is going to have to pay $500 to $1,000 a day if he or she does not comply.

• (1500)

It is unfortunate that this government is making out that these workers are the irresponsible ones. It is this government that is irresponsible. It is not bargaining in good faith. If this were really a caring government, then it would bring these salaries into line and get how these ministers would like to live on wages of $18,000 and $22,000 a year. We come into this building every day and we see the limousines sitting there with the motors running to keep the chauffeurs warm. In the summer time we see the limousines sitting there with the motors running to keep the chauffeurs cool. It is probably costing $18,000 a year in gasoline to keep those limousines out there. And these people do not have the courage nor the strength of conviction to pay these workers what they are worth and get them back to work.

This is a disgraceful situation. We have our veterans in the Rideau Veterans' Home who deserve the best care that we can give them. This quality care is given by these dedicated employees. I beg this government, if it wants these people to go back to work and if it is going to legislate them back to work, to make the commitment that it will bring their pay into line with other workers and show that it is bargaining in good faith.

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian marine aids to navigation system is one of the fundamental elements of marine safety in Canada. The system consists of both floating and fixed aids to navigation on the east and west coast and on our major inland waterways. In all, there are some 8,000 floating aids to navigation comprising buoys of various types and sizes, ranging from seven-tonne buoys to lighter smaller spar buoys. These floating aids are complemented by fixed or shore-based aids to navigation, including light stations, ranges and day marks. The larger floating buoys are complex pieces of equipment that carry radar reflectors, whistles, battery power sources, lights, bells, and in some cases, radar transponders. These aids are marked and located in accordance with international conventions so that they are understood by the international marine community. The positioning of floating aids is carefully determined to take into consideration many factors such as channel configuration, local weather conditions, the presence of hazards and the local requirements of marine traffic.

Because of our Canadian climate it is normal practice for many lighted buoys to be removed from service at the end of the summer navigation season because they cannot withstand ice. In areas where navigation continues year around, in spite of the presence of ice, the summer buoys are removed and replaced by a limited number of winter spar buoys which are able to withstand severe ice action. In the St. Lawrence, lighted summer buoys are normally replaced by unlighted spars during the latter part of November. These spars do not provide the same level of service as the normal summer buoys. For example, it is most common on the St. Lawrence when the winter spars are set to restrict river traffic to daylight hours because of the absence of the lights on the buoys.

With the strike of ships crews, the Coast Guard's ability to bring in the summer buoys and, in some areas, to replace them with winter spars has been hampered. In the St. Lawrence, all buoys between Sept Isles and the Seaway normally would have been removed or replaced by this time, particularly with the present weather.

The situation which has developed in the St. Lawrence was entirely dependent on climatic conditions. In view of the severe and early winter weather this year, the summer buoys, beginning in the section between Quebec and Tadoussac, have become iced over. Others have capsized and some are partly submerged. With the accumulation and movement of surface ice, many of these buoys have also been dragged off position severely. Some have been dragged into the channel where they have become potential hazards. Some buoys have had anchor chains broken and some of these have actually floated free.

This situation is deteriorating upstream from Quebec, all the way up to the Seaway, with some 200 of the total 404 river buoys being iced over, off position and sometimes entirely extinguished. The safety of marine naviga-

tion was recognized by both the Canadian Coast Guard and the pilotage authorities. This has been compromised. It was for this reason that navigation on a section of the river was closed to traffic last Friday. As a result of the ongoing assessment of the safety of navigation, the lower section of the St. Lawrence was subsequently reopened to navigation on December 5 under restricted conditions.

The safety of marine navigation is a primary responsibility of this government. To let this situation continue is to risk an accident involving shipping on the St. Lawrence River. Such an incident could possibly result in the inability of all ships to clear the St. Lawrence Seaway above Montreal prior to the closing of navigation.

Because the aids-to-navigation system on the St. Lawrence is essential to marine safety, we must move immediately to remove any buoys that are potential hazards and to restore the system with winter spars so that traffic to and from Montreal can continue through the winter months. The current situation is most critical, given that a number of ocean-bound vessels remain in the St. Lawrence Seaway and must exit the system prior to the announced clearance date of the Seaway, which I understand to be December 19.

I would mention that critical situations also exist in other parts of the country, particularly off the Labrador coast where the Coast Guard maintains some 36 buoys that are normally lifted by this time of year. New Brunswick's Saint John River, now frozen over, holds some 27 buoys which normally would have been removed in May and will now be lost or will be hazards to the navigation system in the spring.

This situation has gone on long enough. It cannot be permitted to continue to threaten the safety of navigation and, most important, the economy and financial well-being of Canada.

I know that when we get into a debate like this, there is always a question of individual rights versus the rights and responsibilities of the Government of Canada. I believe that it is the responsibility of the Government of Canada to ensure safety in shipping. For that reason, I think we have to move in the direction that we are moving. We are doing it for the good of the country.

We are talking about balancing rights in this House on almost a continual basis. This debate today is no different. It is something like the abortion debate in a sense; a balance between the rights of the mother and the rights of the unborn. I think in this debate the rights of Canadians to ensure the safety of their navigation is of prime importance. When the negotiation process breaks down we are all losers in a sense. We hate to see it happen but from time to time in a democracy it does happen. That is what this debate is about today. It has been a long day. It has been a long couple of days in this House. But I believe that we are doing what is right for Canada. We are doing what is right for navigation.

In conclusion, I would simply reinforce the fact that the Canadian government has a responsibility to move quickly. I believe we are doing the right thing for the Canadian people.

• (1510)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau—La Lièvre): Mr. Speaker, After the series of articles that appeared in the press about this strike, which is clearly legal, after talking to some of the strikers living in the riding of Gatineau—La Lièvre, who told me about their concerns and what they consider to be unfair—Obviously, I read the documentation. If I may be allowed to quote, I read a decision that came the PSAC, which said that the federal government's decision to introduce legislation ordering federal public service employees in the ship's crews and hospital services groups to end their legal strike constitutes unjustified abuse of legislative powers.

However, I would not go as far as to say that. I think that what we see here is negligence, when we consider the position of these workers, whether they are on ships or in hospitals.

During the three and half weeks they have been on strike, members of the hospital services and ship's crews groups made sure that public safety was never at risk by always providing essential services. Consequently, it is clear that this bill contravenes the international conventions on freedom of association ratified by that same Canadian government.

[*English*]

If you may permit me, there have been so many articles and so many declarations on this issue it is obvious that the whole issue gets cloudier as each day goes by. The strike continues and we want to put an end to it because we realize it has ramifications, not only for the hospitals, for our ships but for security on the St. Lawrence and elsewhere.

Another person involved in this strike is a representative of the workers. Instead of negotiating a contract for the workers, the government is spending it seems hundreds of thousands of dollars of taxpayers' money. It would make more sense to have the employer sit down to negotiate a settlement with the employees, ratify it with the union and get things back to normal.

When you consider that the Human Rights Commission, not last week or three weeks ago but over two and a half years ago, declared that these men were underpaid, it seems to me that knowing this issue would come to a head that sooner or later the President of the Treasury Board could expect that these men would be in a legal position to strike, which they are, and the whole thing would come to the surface.

If there is anything that governments do, it is to be sure that everything is done equitably; equal pay for equal work. This could be an anomaly, some kind of an exception that could have been overlooked, if we can use the term. We will give them the benefit of the doubt. But two and a half years after the Human Rights Commission declaration which is an independent body respected by everyone, it seems that that should have been the signal or cue to the government to say: "Let us go by the principle of equal work for equal pay, and sit down to negotiate a contract that will stand up to any rigorous examination, be it by the workers or their union". But that is not the case here.

We have had disputes and all kinds of excuses over the past few weeks. The problem is it is not the last three weeks of the strike. It is the fact that it is has been dragging on for two and a half years. Maybe this is unfortunately an aspect of government, that it constantly hedges on time. There is an expression in French that says: "*Tout ce qui traîne se salit. Evidemment.*", and this is the case. *Tout ce qui traîne se salit. Evidemment*. What was rather interesting to me was my Liberal colleague from Ottawa who wrote a letter of nearly two pages to the President of the Treasury Board and concluded with the following paragraph:

> I again assure of my strong commitment to the implementation of equal pay for work of equal value and ask for your support in helping our public to understand what can be a complex and lengthy process to implement.

Like I said, we will give them the benefit of the doubt. There is no doubt that it is a complex and limiting process to implement. But it has been two and a half years. We are not dealing with thousands upon thousands of employees, we are dealing with a group who, for some time, were 26 per cent behind in pay compared with the private sector. Some workers, paid by this government, are 16 per cent behind.

For example, those who are responsible for the maintenance of the Parliament Buildings are paid 16 per cent more. It is not that they are being paid more. They are paid for work, which is justifiable. But here we have the same employees in another part of the country doing important work in our hospitals getting 16 per cent less.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, we could, of course, go on indefinitely about this issue and invoke all kinds of principles. I listened to the hon. member from the Quebec City area, I don't remember his riding, who spoke very well and very sensibly, but we cannot avoid the facts. It doesn't take a university degree to realize that the problem has been around for two and half years. It was bound to come to a head, and it was bound to end in a strike. Of course there was going to be strike. They said that after waiting for two and half years, they were not going to wait anymore.

The government had plenty of time. There was no problem from that point of view. However it was the kind of negligence that we see all too often. I am not saying that the present government, the Progressive Conservative Party, is more to blame than anyone else. That is not the point. I think that the problem is that the government underestimated the will and determination of the people who work in our hospitals, and who know theirs is an essential service, and as so often happens, our governments tend to think that these people are very conscientious and that the chances of their going on strike are minimal. However, after two and half years, especially considering the support they got from agencies like the Human Rights Commission, they knew some-

thing had to give. In fact, it is surprising that it took two and half years.

So I believe that under the circumstances we cannot—In their letter they ask that we understand the complexity of the issue. Quite so, but how can we defend the government's position when we know there has been enough negligence to trigger a strike. The workers walk off the job and obviously the government, faced with a situation it has ignored for two years, is unable to settle the issue once and for all in two or three weeks. So it introduces special legislation—I have seen some in the past—to force them back to work, promising it will negotiate in good faith. But I maintain that after so many years the employees are in a good position and their strike is justified. It is unfortunate to realize that some essential services might be curtailed, but I do not believe that such is the case. But we have to admit that the government is guilty of negligence in this case. It is as simple as that. Never mind the statistics and the various statements, practically anything can be justified, but still we have to acknowledge the fact that the President of the Treasury Board has indeed been very negligent.

• (1520)

Of course we cannot support them on this issue, but at least we can tell them we hope this is the last time we see a government—which can afford to do much better—bring in special legislation to order back to work a group of people who are underpaid when compared with colleagues doing the same job, a fact which has been proved by all organizations. Basically, the way I look at this problem, and I want to put this a simply as possible, is that I am convinced the government will order them back to work. However, as I read the last paragraph of the statement made by the President of the Treasury Board, I believe there will be a final meaningful negotiation to do justice to these men, the kind of justice they have not seen in years.

[*English*]

Mr. Geoff Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, in a way I am very sad to be participating in this debate today. I am also sad from the perspective of producers in my riding, farmers who depend on the system to export grain to market. This is their livelihood.

But I am also glad because it will give members and myself an opportunity to talk about what is wrong with the system that permits these sorts of stoppages and what we should be trying to do collectively to make a better system for the future.

I come from a riding on the prairies which is approximately 25,000 square miles in area and which is almost entirely dependent on agriculture. Indeed, agriculture produces, even now some 16 per cent of the gross domestic product of the province of Saskatchewan. It is quite clear that neither Saskatchewan nor, I suggest, Canada can long continue to endure these sorts of work interruptions. I am trying to be as non-partisan as possible in saying this because I am not anti-labour and not anti-management. I think what I am anti is this sort of senseless system we have which permits stoppages of work that do less damage to the parties than to the nation as a whole causing immense problems for third parties whether it be farmers, whether it be students, you name it.

Whenever the system of collective bargaining breaks down, the safety valve mechanism that we have dates back to the Stone Ages. We live in a modern, sophisticated society. We are capable of putting men into space. We are capable of transplanting organs. Messages can go around the world in the twinkle of an eye through sophisticated telecommunication systems. We live in a modern, sophisticated society and yet our dispute settlement mechanism is one which goes back, surely, to the days of the cave man.

When the system breaks down, it is time for the parties to start slugging each other on the forehead with rocks until one or the other falls down or, as is most often the case, it is time to come crawling into the House of Commons for some back to work legislation. Clearly things should change.

First I would like to talk about this particular bill from the perspective of prairie agriculture, then from the over-all perspective of labour relations generally. I will try to make what I believe to be a constructive suggestion. I think we all know that Canada has a mammoth handling and transportation system which moves grain from the prairies to market. The well-being of much of

western Canada hinges on the continuing flow of this grain, particularly wheat, through the system of rail, river, road, canal and sea to purchasers throughout the world.

I am told that there are some 37 unions involved in the handling of grain between the farm gate and the port. They are involved in the country elevators, the railways and the grain terminals, the seaway, the St. Lawrence, the various ports, and they represent all sorts of individuals and occupations: grain handlers, grain trimmers, grain inspectors, weighers and samplers, seaway workers, lake carrier deck hands, mates and engineers, port stevedores, longshoremen, pilots, tugboat operators, railway trainmen, locomotive engineers, non-op shop craft workers, rail traffic controllers, various country elevator and grain service union personnel. There is a considerable number of employees and a considerable number of employers as well—the grain companies, railway, seaway, port authorities and so on.

Any one of these groups, at any given time, represents a vital link in the chain that is capable of breaking down and curtailing really remains the lifeblood of the southern prairies.

Canada exports more than 80 per cent of its wheat crop. Canada enjoys her reputation as a reliable supplier to the world of high quality wheat. The Canadian Wheat Board, which this government supports fully as the sole marketing agency for prairie export wheat, has been doing a good job maintaining and even expanding Canada's share of the world market in the face of unfair and cut-throat foreign competition.

The European Economic Community and the United States are both offering substantial export enhancement bonuses in order to maintain their share of market. These programs seriously undermine world grain prices, and this, in turn, has had devastating effects on our country which is so heavily dependent on exports. The Common Market has some 330 million people to draw from as a domestic population. The United States has some 250 million people. We in Canada have about 26 million people and so we are doubly dependent on export. We export a far greater share of our product than any of the other major wheat growing areas and, in turn, we have a much smaller domestic population to be able to match support programs.

Clearly it is a buyer's market out there. The importing countries value the quality of Canada's wheat but they can buy wheat elsewhere. The buyers do not have to put up with uncertainty of supply and delays in delivery. So when interruptions occur in our grain handling and transportation system, causing Canada to be unable to meet its obligations, other grain exporting countries will. Indeed, even the threat of labour-management induced interruptions in grain movement could lead to lost sales.

The Canadian Wheat Board, in effect, has to sell wheat to make sandwiches. The wheat has to be there to make tomorrow's bread. The nature of the business is that importers require large quantities on short notice and if the product is not on the shelf then it is simply not going to be sold. Canadian Wheat Board Commissioner Kristiansen, speaking of another work stoppage a couple of years ago, said that the stoppages at Thunder Bay had resulted in a million tonnes in lost sales. He is further quoted as saying:

> As things drag out longer you lose more. There is no question in our minds that we lost sales and substantial sales.

The major cost of these interruptions is lost sales opportunities. Other costs involve demurrage and the back-up following the stoppage, as well as additional rail costs in the case of seaway closures. Given the past history of stoppages in this country I suggest that this legislation is absolutely necessary. I will later suggest that we come up with measures in this House which would deal not just with this problem but with all similar problems so that there will not be the necessity to keep coming back here to resolve problems for which there should be a modern up-to-date mechanism.

I do not believe for a moment that there is anything to be gained by adhering to this status quo, this business of either side bashing the other on the forehead until one drops and there is some sort of a settlement. Meanwhile, there are people out of work, there is grain backed up, there is misery being inflicted in the country. It is archaic; it is antiquated; it does not make any sense in our society today.

I have been disappointed to say the least with some of my colleagues in this House who tell two stories. They go home to the prairies and tell the farmers that they are 100 per cent behind them and that this government is terrible and does not pay attention to agriculture, and yet they come back to Ottawa with a different story. Then it is time for them to start kowtowing to the big union bosses and saying: "Yes, sir, Mr. Bean" or "Yes, Shirley,

whatever you want that will be the way it is". There is one story told on the prairies and then the farmers are stabbed in the back by those same people down here in Ottawa.

• (1530)

I think prairie producers are wise to this sort of tactic. They are getting sick and tired of it. I suggest that colleagues across the way in opposition would be well advised to co-operate in the passage of this bill.

I would in a way dare them to keep it going until Monday and Tuesday when we have the agri-food conference here in Ottawa. They will have the opportunity to hear first hand from producers and those involved in the industry right across Canada. They will tell them how they feel about the stupidity of delaying and continuing to filibuster this sort of measure.

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): Same old Tory philosophy. It is a shameful travesty.

Mr. Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, we are hearing some interruptions of course from our colleagues in the NDP who like to hand it out but are of course are incapable of receiving anything. The difficulty with the simpering pantywaists who are sitting across the way is that they are too, too dependent on the apron strings of organized labour.

As a matter of fact, since we have been so rudely interrupted here by my NDP colleagues, I have to draw the attention of the House to a form letter from one Daryl Bean of the Public Service Alliance of Canada dated December 6, 1989. "Dear Member of Parliament," he states. He goes on to state that we are going to be asked to pass some back to work legislation. He points out that both groups provide services of enormous social and economic importance to the nation.

There is no argument there. Mr. Bean is right on. He is back. He is fresh from his bit part in "Saturday Afternoon Live" in Winnipeg which, as an aside, was really a marvellous spectacle for the nation to observe.

On the second page of this letter that Mr. Bean directs to members of Parliament, he goes on to get the old class knife in here. He states: "Could it be that some ice in the seaway is causing economic pain to the friends of the government in corporate Canada?"

It seems to me that this has been going on now for some four weeks. Indeed there is important work to be done by these people. As Mr. Bean says, they provide services of enormous social and economic importance to the nation. I would think that four weeks of work stoppage is adequate. I would suggest that it is more than time for people to get back to work.

If Mr. Bean really means what he says on page one, he should be very pleased to see legislation such as this which recognizes that importance. I would urge all members to co-operate in passing this legislation as quickly as possible and getting these people back to work.

What is there to do in regard to the problem generally? I have been in this House for five years, and measures such as this have become annual exercises. Here we are now dealing with legislation in regard to the Seaway. Last year it was the Prince Rupert grain handling situation. The year before it was the Postal Services Continuation Act. The year before that it was the Maintenance of Railway Operations Act. We came back in the summer for that. The year before it was the Maintenance of Ports Operation Act. This has been the case all the way along. There is a long list of back to work legislation that had to be passed.

It is clear that the system is not functioning as it should. As I indicated earlier, we have a modern, sophisticated sort of society. Why is it that in the area of labour relations when the collective bargaining process breaks down it is necessary to have a work stoppage? Whether it is on the part of management or on the part of labour, I do not care. It is debilitating for all concerned. It is an embarrassment to the country. There is a great cost to various classes of Canadian people, generally those who can least afford it. In the particular case at hand it is prairie farmers who will bear the brunt of this thing. It is on their behalf that I urge members opposite to co-operate in this particular piece of legislation.

Over all, I say again that this is not a case of being pro-labour, anti-labour, pro-business or anything else. It is a case of wanting to be anti-stupidity. Our failure in our modern society to come forward with some better

way of resolving these impasses in the collective bargaining process is unforgivable. We have to do better.

This is a sort of abrupt cutting off. Hurtful, harmful measures inflicted upon people can cause damage, risk lives, costs innocent third parties considerable inconvenience and costs, cause embarrassment to our nation, threaten our markets and our reliability as a supplier. All these things point again and again to the need to do something better.

It is in that light and with that sentiment that I again make an appeal to this House, as indeed I have done through four or five private members' initiatives past and present, to try to work toward finding a better dispute settlement mechanism, some manner in which we can resolve these disputes before they get to this harmful, hurtful stage.

I do not pretend to know what the answer is, but it seems to me that we could form an all-party committee. Members from all sides of this House could hear evidence, could see what is being done in other countries. It may be a two-envelope system or it might be some form of court. There are specialty courts in some countries. There is the admiralty. There are obviously courts which specialize in matrimonial matters and probate matters. Why not in the resolution of labour disputes?

The collective bargaining process is good. It has to be there, clearly. There is no question about that. But let us have a better way of trying to resolve the breakdowns when they come, because the human cost and the dollar cost to our country are simply too great.

In regard to this particular bill I urge members on all sides to give speedy passage to the legislation in order to stop the terrible damage occurring to Canada's grain sector, to help out prairie agriculture and to help out farmers who are being beset by real difficulties in world export markets.

Over all, in regard to the big picture in terms of labour disputes generally—not just this one, but all of the other ones which have occurred and which we see in here year after year after year—I again say: let us look upon it from an all-party point of view. Let us try to get together to find some new mechanism to deal with it. I do not know what the answer is, but I think we have to get together. Surely collectively we can come up with something. We live in a modern society. There is a lot of talent in here. Clearly there is a need which must be addressed.

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, I rise in this House this afternoon to oppose this bill and oppose it strenuously.

This piece of legislation tries to deal with three fundamental points. First, it talks about pay equity between men and women, between the east and west coasts and it deals with equity between private and public labour. The government has brought this bill in because it has failed to live up to its commitments to bring in pay equity. That is one of the points which I will come back to later.

The second point that this bill is dealing with is the whole question of labour rights. It is part of a Tory government program to undermine systematically the rights of labour in this country. Workers have won the right to organize and to bargain collectively. They have won the right to work or to withhold their work. This bill is part of an agenda to undermine this right.

It is always comical to listen to the Tories at a time when the eastern bloc countries are recognizing as a part of fundamental democracy that one must allow workers the right to collective bargaining and the right to strike. Even the eastern bloc countries are now recognizing this. Yet the Conservatives are going in the opposite direction.

The third thing that this bill shows is the incompetence and bungling of this government. This is a result of total incompetence. Is this not part of a Tory agenda? I sit here bewildered, wondering why they are not willing to settle. It is going to cost $6 million. What is behind it? Why will they not give workers the rights and the money they deserve? It is a measly amount of money.

• (1540)

I begin to ask myself: What ulterior motives do the Tories have? Why are they being so hard-nosed about this? You begin to wonder if it because John Crow has said: "If you give these workers fair wages, with the GST coming in next year there is going to be a push for additional wage increases in the public sector and the inflation rate will go up". Is this not part of their GST package?

Much of this has to do with the lack of the government's fairness with its employees, particularly hospital workers. I have worked in long-term care. I have worked with veterans, particularly elderly veterans. Hospital workers form one of the hardest working groups you will ever get. It is difficult working with seniors. These are

dedicated people. They provide care and nurturing. They provide a whole range of services that must be recognized. Yet, in this case, there is a yawning gap between the fine words of the government and the meagre actions that have been taken at the ministerial level.

Let us listen to the fine words of the Prime Minister when he was debating the leader of the NDP in the 1988 election campaign on pay equity. The NDP leader said: "In this area of pay equity in which you have direct responsibility, you made a commitment in 1984 in terms of narrowing the gap between men and women. Why did you not act?"

The Prime Minister's explanation was: "Because we did. We passed the Employment Equity Act that Flora McDonald was responsible for in the first case. Second, we have the joint union–management committee to implement pay equity in the Public Service that is now going on to Treasury Board under Pat Carney, with all of our unions, where we are agreeing on a policy of pay equity for women for equal pay. This is what has been going on. This is the hard work that is going to produce, I think, quite remarkable results that will meet the objectives we both seek".

Those are nice words but nothing has happened. The Prime Minister is saying "a policy of pay equity for women". Why does he not implement it?

In the case of hospital workers they have been fighting for equity since 1981 and have argued successfully that their work was fully comparable to higher paid general service government workers. Finally in 1987 there was an interim consent order to give these workers $28 million. This was to be followed by job classification changes in a final settlement.

But the government has not kept its word. It has not kept its word on changing classification and pay scale. Instead, it has proposed a token payment as an attempt at compensation. The principle is not token, nor is the amount of money. These people are entitled to a full rate of pay of nearly $3,000 a year more than they are now earning. Their earnings are among the lowest in the Public Service, anywhere from $16,000 to $20,000 a year. That is not even what the members over there get for their tax free allowance, and they are expecting working women, many of them sole bread winners, to support their families on that.

Let us go back to the fine words of the Prime Minister in response to the leader of the NDP. Let us realize that they were spoken on national television during the leaders' debate. Surely this is as close to another one of the Prime Minister's famous declarations concerning a sacred trust.

What did the Prime Minister say? First, the leader of the New Democratic Party said: "But the gap has been widening, not narrowing. The gap between men and women, since you have been Prime Minister, in the Public Service has been widening, not narrowing. Again you say that you have legislation here that is right. It has been passed. You could run off a nice little list saying that we have passed this, that we have done this, but unless it is followed up by administrative actions to bring about fairness and equity it means nothing".

The Prime Minister's response was: "Mr. Broadbent, I am trying to explain to you that this is precisely what we have done. This is being done by the Treasury Board as the representative of the employers of all Public Service unions to work out with the unions in a mutually safisfactory manner a program that will give rise to exactly equality".

Listen to this: "We are budgeting for funds required on an ongoing basis to make sure they are available so that this money will be given to those women who have been deprived of the degree of equity that we seek". That is what the Prime Minister said.

I will repeat that. He said, "We are budgeting for funds required on an ongoing basis to make sure they are available so that this money will be given to those women who have been deprived of the degree of equity that we seek". That is very nice for him to say during an election campaign, but it is so typical as happens with the Prime Minister. Once the election is over he forgets all about it.

What has happened then? The Prime Minister was talking as though there was an inevitability, that there would be pay equity. Have the workers been given the amount due to them? No. Has the government conceded their case as to classification and salary? No. Has the government even recognized that it is paying in some

cases below poverty level wages? No. In all of these things this is what the dispute is about.

Before I go on to labour aspects I wish to deal with the whole question of the people working in the coast guard, the ships' crews. I had a letter faxed to me today from one of my constituents concerning this legislation. I want to read it because it states succinctly what is involved here. It is addressed to myself and reads:

> I am writing you to register my extreme dissatisfaction with the manner in which the Treasury Board has conducted negotiations with the men and women belonging to the Public Service Alliance of Canada, (Ships' Crews). I feel the Treasury Board has not bargained in good faith, indeed they have hardly bargained at all.
>
> Please consider: That after 2 years without an agreement, the PSAC members (ships' crews), out of repeated disappointment and frustration, has engaged in a legal strike with their employer; that the Ships' Crews provide search and rescue functions, on both coasts of Canada, in addition to maintainence and supply services of the Canadian Coast Guards; please consider also that the union and the crewmen themselves, at the outset of the strike, agreed unilaterally to maintain vessel response capability in the event of a marine distress. This has been done. During the course of the strike there have been several instances where striking crew members have responded to emergency distress calls or co-operated in the handling of emergency situations such as the recent oil spill and resultant fouled beaches near Sooke, B.C.
>
> If the Treasury Board is unable to conclude an agreement after 2 years, I submit it is either government policy to delay the implementation of a new agreement or indicative of ineptitude on the part of the Treasury Board. It certainly isn't due to unreasonable wage demands, as a comparison with comparable jobs and duties within the federal, provincial, and civic public services will show. In the event of either government policy or ineptitutde of the Treasury Board, the situation is wrong and should be corrected.
>
> As employees of the federal government, these "—Brave and dedicated men and women—" (Minister of Transport, the Hon. Benoit Bouchard, in *Hansard*, October 16, 1989), to whom the House of Commons recently paid tribute, deserve better treatment from the Treasury Board. As Canadian citizens they have a right to believe that their government will treat them fairly and justly.
>
> After having engaged in a legal strike, as a means of last resort, and after having conducted themselves in a responsible manner consistent with the finest traditions of seamen and democratic trade unionists and citizens, the government has proposed legislation to force these men and women back to work.
>
> This is akin to moving the goal posts in the middle of the game. I urge you to vigorously oppose this forthcoming legislation and I further urge you to apply as much pressure as you can to the Treasury Board to end this dispute, by proper negotiation, in a fair and just manner, not by force of legislation.

I think that sums up a great deal of what is taking place in this House. What we now have is the Tory agenda to undermine the rights of workers in Canada.

• (1550)

I just want to recall a story about my father when he emigrated to this country. He arrived in Edmonton in March and he, like many other men, sought work. Most of the work available was manual labour. At that time there was a need for ditch diggers. The way the ditch diggers were hired was that the boss would put out 100 shovels and the men fought for the shovels. If you got a shovel, you dug and you worked. If you could not fight and get a shovel, there was no work.

Then they put the biggest man up at the top of the ditch. If he dug 10 feet, you dug 10 feet, because if you did not there was another man there to take your place.

It was because of these kinds of working conditions that my father was involved in some of the first organizations of trade unions in this country. I see, systematically, right wing governments like the Vander Zalm government in British Columbia and this Tory government, trying to return labour's rights and workers' conditions to those of pre-World War I.

Labour law in Canada is usually statutory law in which collective agreements between workers and management are worked out under the auspices of labour codes, labour standards and other legislation. Yet it should not be forgotten that the freedom of association is a hard won freedom which has a long and honourable history, both here and in the United Kingdom where much of the fight for labour recognition began.

This freedom of association was recognized—some would say imperfectly—in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1981. Canada has further ratified international covenants recognizing collective bargaining. It is a member of the International Labour Organization which among its roles serves as an international watch-dog on

labour practices of members. It has been disturbing to many of us to see Canada, in the eyes of the ILO, turn from an international innovator to an international violator.

Unfortunately the truth has been that punitive and coercive legislation of several provincial governments and the federal government has brought the International Labour Organization's rebukes. The most recent case involved the federal government itself and its Bill C–68, the Postal Services Continuation Act in 1987.

Not only is there an attack on labour through direct legislation, but many of the other programs introduced by this government are intended to undermine the position of labour. Examples of this are the erosion of the Unemployment Insurance Act, to make it more difficult for people to receive unemployment; the continuation of a high unemployment rate which forces workers to accept underpaid jobs; and the harmonization of wages in Canada with the United States forced by free trade.

Yesterday I was at a committee meeting in regard to truck leasing companies. These are the companies that lease the big rigs and large trucks to truckers and do their servicing in Canada. Their representatives appeared before the committee. These companies are saying that now with the free trade deal it will be cheaper for them to establish their shops across the line and then lease back into Canada these large trucks.

The attack on labour legislation comes with such things as this high–handed piece of legislation that has been brought in by the very government which refuses to bargain in good faith.

If you ever want to see an inherent conflict of interest in labour–union management negotiations, it is when management has also got the power to legislate people back to work. Then they simply sit back and say: "We don't need to bargain in good faith because when the chips are down we will force the workers back to work."

It is also interesting to take a look at the timing of this back to work legislation. The strike has been going on for some time. The employees have acted responsibly. There has only been action by the government when its friends, the big shipping companies, start to get antsy that they are losing money, that they start to be concerned that they are going to lose income. Yes, they are. It is so silly. Their loss of income is significant to this government, but the equity and fairness to the workers does not appear to be.

You wonder about the Prime Minister and how he is able to say that he is a self–proclaimed friend of the working man. Yet what does he do? He certainly does not believe in the rights of labour to organize, to bargain and to negotiate a fair and equitable contract. He certainly does not believe in the rights of women to pay equity and equal pay for work of equal value.

I am proud to be part of the New Democratic Party. I am proud of our alliance with labour. I am proud of the fact that I also have a union background and have been involved in a variety of unions from the steelworkers, to mine mill, to CUPE.

A fundamental part of a democracy is based on the freedom of workers to organize, to bargain for fair wages and to work with other people like the New Democrats for fairness not only in the workplace but for all Canadians.

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, let me say at the outset how well the chair becomes you. It is nice to see you back in your seat.

I have watched the individual presentations on this very serious subject since the outset. I think it is safe to say that I have seen practically every speaker. I put myself in the position of members of the public who have watched the debate. I think there is certainly a risk that some people may be confused about what precisely is going on here. Quite frankly, I don't blame them. It is difficult to understand.

We have a situation here in which people who do a great service for Canada and who, in the opinion of certainly this side of the House, are seeking what is at least a minimum fair compensation are being told: "We have not the time to discuss the problems with you. We are going to legislate you back to work."

I have never belonged to a union and I have not been involved in these kinds of activities. I think, however, there is a logic here that one has to look at. At least from the perspective of where I sit and the perspective of where I have been for the last 30–odd years, I wish to try to put some kind of a sense into what it is we are doing here on a Friday afternoon.

I would like to begin by giving a recount of some of the maritime activities that Canada is involved in and what things maritime mean to this country. I would like to go on and have a look in a little more detail at what this bill does. I would like to have a look at what it does and to whom. Then I would like to be able to give you, Mr. Speaker, some of the ideas that I have on the question of whether it is right or whether it is wrong, in my opinion and in the opinion of many of my colleagues on this side of the House.

• (1600)

We tend to forget from time to time but those of us in Atlantic Canada are constantly reminded of the great maritime country in which we live. Canada is a great maritime country. We also have extensive maritime interests and substantial maritime obligations to go along with that.

I would like to quote some figures. To begin, we border on three of the world's largest oceans. We have the largest coastline in the world, 250,000 kilometres, the second largest continental shelf and our economic zone is so large that it covers about 8 million square kilometres in the three contiguous oceans. That is nearly equal to our land mass of about 10 million square kilometres.

Our continental shelf is rich in oil, natural gas and other exploitable mineral resources. In addition, it is no news to Atlantic Canadians or Pacific Canadians, and I hope to all Canadians that large rich fishing grounds lie off both our coasts. Canada claims jurisdiction over them to a distance of 300 nautical miles now and we on this side of the House are hoping that in the future we will be claiming jurisdiction for a little bit outside the 200 miles, so we can put some order into what it is that happens and we can take control of our own resources.

Canada is the world's largest exporter of fish. One sometimes wonders if that is true by the importance the government gives to the fishing industry. I can assure all members that in the very near future when we talk about total allowable catches on the east coast of Canada off the coast of Newfoundland that it is going to get a profile here that this House hasn't seen in some time. I am certainly guaranteeing that those of us on this side of the House will make sure that that is so.

Our seaborne trade, which is what is involved here, has grown impressively in the last 20 years. As a major trading nation, Canada has to transport many of it products to western Europe and to and from several trading partners along the Pacific Rim, including Japan, which is a very large trading partner of ours.

Exports today represent 30 per cent of Canada's gross national product, making it the third most trade reliant nation in the industrialized world, and 35 per cent of these exports leave Canada by sea. Those exports include wheat, grain, oil. Bauxite and tin are, in addition to some of the strategic materials in the import field.

The last figures I had which I could quote with accuracy were in 1982 and our international seaboard shipping, both exports and imports, totalled approximately 200 million tonnes. That is a lot of shipping. The value of the deep sea portion of the water based trade, excluding the shipping to and from the United States, was $40 billion. To move these goods, to give you some indication of the volume, Mr Speaker, some 110 merchantmen and tankers enter and depart Canadian ports daily.

I want to look at the third ocean, the one that we tend to forget from time to time. Over the past two decades the strategic importance of the Canadian Arctic archipelago has been enhanced for a number of reasons. We have had the discovery of high grade mineral deposits and the development of technologies for their extraction and transport. In addition, the increase in commercial scientific military use of the Northwest Passage has kept the Canadian Arctic in the forefront and indeed has kept all of us in this House in debate on that subject from time to time.

Last, but certainly not least, the three oceans contribute vitally to Canada's security in that they separate our country from the territories of potential enemies.

That has given some indication of the maritime interests that we have in Canada. To say that they are vital is perhaps the understatement of the day.

Who are the people involved in making sure that these maritime interests continue to be served properly? This is not the time or the place to speak about Canada's navy, and I am hoping that there will be other occasions to do that.

It goes without further explanation. It is axiomatic that a country that has a maritime interest must also have personnel, services, measures and policies to make sure that these interests are properly served.

One of the things that we have been very proud of in this country is that we have always responded to the call of the sea, and I think I can say from personal experience and from the knowledge of my history of Canada's maritime heritage, we have done it well.

To quote you one example, and I do not think it would be out of place, I would remind this House that when World War II started, Canada's navy had 10 ships and 2,000 people. By the end of World War II, in something like 2,150 days, the Canadian navy was the third largest allied navy. It had 100,000 officers and men and it had close to 400 ships. If you work that out on the back of a cigarette package, it is around one ship every five days and about 50 men a day.

For my own case in my own province, less than two weeks ago I was honoured to have been the guest speaker with a group of Newfoundlanders called The First 200. They were the first 200 men who answered the call when the call for volunteers went out in Newfoundland in 1939. Within two months of World War II beginning, 200 men were on the Furness Withy jetty in St. John's, Newfoundland, to set sail to serve their country. I was delighted that a goodly number of them attended this meeting and they were as ready to go now, 50 years after the event, as they were when they were in their late teens and their early twenties.

This is one example of the kind of fortitude that our people who served Canada and our maritime needs have shown and will continue to show in the future.

Let me have a look at our auxiliary forces. I am talking now about the crews involved in this particular issue. We are talking about the coast guard. We are talking about the auxiliary forces that serve the Canadian navy. We are talking about fisheries and oceans and we are talking about certain elements of the research categories.

I say in modesty and with a certain amount of humility that I suspect that there are a few people in the House who have a real feeling for what it is that these men and women have to do. I have a real feeling because I have had the honour, the privilege, the duty and the responsibility of being a sailor at sea, all my life. I might add also that my family have followed this tradition for seven generations. I come from a fishing family. I come from a family of seafarers. All my colleagues from Newfoundland have had personal experiences in the sea and with the sea. It is a heritage that we are very, very proud of. I know that I speak also for my colleagues from Atlantic Canada and from other parts of the west coast.

• (1610)

Let me try and paint a picture for you, Mr. Speaker. If it is a a normal situation, you proceed to sea on a Monday morning. If you are lucky you will have a reasonable sea and you will return to harbour with few difficulties. You are not in communication other than by radio with the rest of the world once the lines are slipped until you return to harbour. The captain of the ship is in his own way master of all he surveys and the ship's company, the team that makes up that crew, live a life and death situation from the time they leave until the time they get back.

Let me take an unusual situation. You may sail at any time and you may never return. I reluctantly make reference to a very sad occasion which I recall more vividly than I would like. In mid–October members of the coast guard rescue team went to rescue a diver in distress in a cove just outside St. John's, Newfoundland. Due to the nature of the elements, the crew of four, the coxswain and the crew of that fast response vessel, within view of the public essentially were lost at sea. In fact, their bodies have not been recovered. How do you portray that in the heat of a negotiation? How do you translate that to somebody, either in the highest court in the land, in this House, at a negotiation table, or in any other way, shape or form. It is very difficult.

As I stand and talk with my colleagues here today, I am told that there is a storm in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and around 250 kilometres off Prince Edward Island at least one ship is in dire straits and we fear that something even more difficult may have happened to another one. Eight metre seas, that is a 25–foot swell. Can you imagine launching a small craft in a 25–foot swell to carry out a rescue operation?

Well, Mr. Speaker, enough of the drama, but it is not meant to be drama. These people are on strike through a proper organization. It was deemed totally legal what they were doing. They would not let life and safety suffer. On many occasions they met the normal criteria, they laid down their pickets and placards and went to sea and, in some cases, carried out some of those rescues

that were attempted off Newfoundland that ended so tragically.

People who would do that I believe deserve something in return. I believe that they deserve in return more than an unprecedented action of legislating them back to work, an unprecedented action of closure to do this and an unprecedented action of rewarding those people who give of their time, energy, talents, heritage and, yes, their lives, with an order to go back to work and the inability to continue to negotiate for what is theirs, a fair settlement.

These people earn around $20,000 a year. These people I just discussed take home $240 a week. What are they asking for? They are asking for 50 cents an hour. Should we legislate them back to work for 50 cents an hour? I have no shame and I have absolutely no second thoughts about standing in this House today and going to bat for these people. I do not think they would expect anything else from anybody with a seafaring background, and I do not think they would expect anything else from a background of people who care, like my colleagues around me here today.

We are not asking for something unreasonable. Where I stand on this issue is not determined by where I stand on this side of the House. I feel strongly about this, I feel almost emotional about it and I believe that these people are not getting a fair shake. This is why I am speaking here today and if I were allowed to, Mr. Speaker, even with the great flexibility that you have allowed me in this House, I would go on as long as you would allow me, because I believe it is an issue that needs to be discussed and I hope I have the credibility to do that.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, there are not many of us in this House who can speak on this issue with the knowledge of our colleague who has just spoken. Perhaps, with the unanimous consent of the House, the hon. member could be given another five minutes or so, because I do believe he is able to contribute something that few of us could in this debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is there agreement? The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I have no problem with giving the hon. member another five minutes or so.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): So ordered.

Mr. Mifflin: I have heard the figure of $2 million per day for the ships; I have heard the $6 million total that will make up the difference. Perhaps there is a principle involved on the other side of the House and with the President of the Treasury Board that we do not know about. If there is, could the next speaker please tell us? Will somebody let us know?

There is something that I do not understand about this. If it is as simple as the 50 cents that we are talking about, in return for the services that are provided by these brave men and women, then I cannot understand why we are here on a Friday afternoon and why somebody does not just go back to the table right away and negotiate. There is not a great deal of negotiation to be done. I think it is very fair.

There is another aspect that bothers me. I do not have evidence for this, but I find it passing strange that the hospital service workers for the veterans' hospitals are included in the same business. It was not too long ago that the hon. Minister of Veterans Affairs stood in this House and gave a very eloquent and excellent presentation as a tribute to the men and women who served this country. I believe there are still 144,000 veterans, many of whom are being cared for by the hospital service workers that are the subject of our debate here this afternoon.

From what I know about the issue, these workers are looking for parity. They were, according to the Human Rights Commission, at some point in time at least $34 million behind in what they were owed by an objective standard. That leads me to believe that perhaps what they are looking for is perhaps as fair as what our sailors are looking for. Equally, I have difficulty understanding why we cannot seem to be able to go back and bargain with them, because I think what they are asking for is equally fair.

I am told that the 144,000 veterans, or a number of them who are hospitalized, are receiving care. My colleague, the hon. member for Lachine—Lac-Saint-Louis described the circumstances at Ste. Anne de Bellevue. It is not in my riding, but I made it my business to be in contact with some of the people as part of my responsibility as critic for Veterans Affairs, and I was equally satisfied that, at some cost to the government, these services are being maintained. Therefore, what are we dealing with? We have a situation of dedicated people who are asking for fair treatment. We are not asking for

the world for them. In both the case of the ships' crews and the hospital services workers, their demands seem reasonable, and after less than two weeks' of negotiations, everything has come to a standstill.

• (1620)

The logic of this I find very difficult to understand. There will be a great disappointment when we stand in this House and vote on closure. It will be a great disappointment, I believe, for those people who are affected: 2,300 sailors and 1,300 hospital services workers. I think they will believe, and they have every reason to believe, that they have been let down.

I hope that in my small way I have made some contribution to those of us who are going to vote to try and convince them that in my heart of hearts and on this rare occasion, I must say, speaking totally apolitically, but speaking more as a sailor and as somebody who has been involved in this way of life for many years, I can honestly say that what they are asking for is fair and just and, I believe, quite frankly we owe it to them to go back and have another look.

If I had a closing remark, if I had a closing statement, I think I could convey the business of being a sailor and going to sea by quoting a remark made by Samuel Johnson a few hundred years ago. He said: "Should a man contrive to be in jail, he would never go to sea because being at sea is like being in jail with the chance of being drowned."

That is what we are dealing with, Mr. Speaker, and we need to respect that and do something just and real about it.

I thank you for your indulgence and I thank all my colleagues for their indulgence for the extra time.

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina—Lumsden): Mr. Speaker, in some 21 and a half years in this place, this is the tenth or twelfth time I have been present dealing with back to work legislation.

I want to say at the outset, Sir, that the passing of such legislation has never been a sign of success by the government. It has been a sign of failure by the government on all those occasions. I will not deny that there will be a rare exception that would cause a national emergency or something like that when Parliament probably unanimously would pass back to work legislation, but it is so rare as to be almost inconceivable.

I listened to speeches of spokesmen for the Minister of Transport and the Minister of Veterans Affairs yesterday and may I say something about the matter. As I recall, it was stated that in the realm of safety, security and emergencies this legislation was necessary.

Of course, the coast guard and the people in the onshore facilities guaranteed that they would be there in the event of an emergency, in the event of a requirement for search and rescue. On this very day they stood by their word and they did their job. Apparently two ships have been lost in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and tragically 39 lives may have been lost in the most horrible of conditions. Our search and rescue and coast guard people are still there trying to find survivors. I do not want to hear any more nonsense from government spokesmen about emergencies and search and rescue. The problem is that the Department of Transport is going to lose quite a few thousand dollars on buoys that should have been stored for the winter, but are going to be sunk by the ice.

I listened to the Minister of Veterans Affairs yesterday. He gave a good speech, particularly about what was happening at Ste. Anne de Bellevue. If it is that serious, how come it took this long to take action? I will tell you why it took this long. It was not until it cost the ship owners a couple of million bucks and they put some heat on the government that we got the legislation. Then and only then did it happen. If the government had been bargaining collectively, we would not have reached this impasse.

When you have a stupid or bad employer you are going to have a tough, mean union. It is inevitable. When you have a good conscientious employer, you have a good conscientious union and there is a minimum of difficulty. I have been through this too many times, both in this House and when I worked on the railroad. The deck is stacked. They play one group in society against the other.

PSAC put it very well today in its circular. When the hospital services group attempted to negotiate similar arrangements as the coast guard did regarding emergencies and providing a minimal number of staff, the government would not agree. I would like the Minister of Veterans Affairs to explain that. It was a negotiable item in the immediate term. Nothing happened. They go on to say, and I agree with them, that it was deliberate. The employer and the departments are preferring to pit

one vulnerable societal group against another, making hostages of aged people, the infirm, veterans and poorly paid hospital workers. In terms of being any kind of a manager, that is despicable. It is not good, sound, fair management.

These people have been two years without a contract and three years without a raise in pay. Nobody could say that they were impatient. They have been more than patient. That is a degree of tolerance that I doubt most of us would have. MPs automatically get 2 or 3 per cent every January and do not even have to bargain for it. It is laid on.

However, when there is a situation where employees go two years without a contract, three years without an increase, any government or any management, any bargainer on the government side who would think that these people are not going to fight for and demand to catch up are kidding themselves. If they refuse to recognize and face up to that, they are faced with a strike. Their solution is to fly in the face of every tenet of free collective bargaining. It is called stacking the deck, and the government holds the cards.

• (1630)

I have suggested to various unions for a number of years now that they should return to what John L. Lewis always did with the United Mine Workers. Six months before a contract expired they would submit their demands for the next contract. If a settlement had not been reached when the contract expired they went out on strike. His principle was no contract, no work.

These people have gone two years without a contract. There were instances when they have gone three years without one. I remember once, when I was in the railway, we went two years without a contract. When we had a strike, mostly over retroactive pay as well as the 40–hour week in 1950, it was a chief justice who told the government and the railroads where to head. We got retroactive pay and we got the 40–hour week. We had to shut down the whole country for 10 days and I can tell you the employees were the first ones not to enjoy it.

When you have a situation where management sits around on their hands for two years and there is no contract settlement then something is fundamentally wrong. I listened to the hon. member for Swift Current—Maple Creek talking about the poor farmers. I think he mentioned a million tonnes of grain that is in the Great Lakes Seaway ports, the St. Lawrence ports and on board ships. My first point is that the whole western half of Saskatchewan, all of Alberta and the Peace River country in British Columbia ship their grain west, not east. So, none of the grain in the hon. member's constituency goes east. There might be the odd rare carload of malting barley or something. He was weeping tears for the farmers in his riding.

The point is, as the PSA said, here we have the government playing off one societal group against another. I have always been straight with my farmers and the trade union members in my riding. On countless occasions I have tried to put each side's case for argument to the other. Thanks to the Farmers' Union and the trade union movement there have been countless conferences on the prairies among farmers and workers to sort out the problems that they both have.

There is a principle here that gets continually ignored, not just by this present government but by the previous one too on several occasions. The principle is that when you have a collective agreement, management submits its proposals for the coming year, and the union, on behalf of the employees, does the same thing. I would not mind seeing something in the law that requires both sides to submit proposals at least 90 days and maybe six months before the expiration of a contract so they would be required to bargain.

I am not suggesting for one minute that there have not been occasions when the union has not been wrong. The union doesn't claim to be perfect, but in the overwhelming majority of cases in my experience it has always been management which had the economic power and the political influence, either by the government or from the government, to get its way. Today is another classic example of how any employer, but particularly this government as an employer, could sit back and watch its own lowest paid employees go three years without an increase.

Now, I expect my friend from Fraser Valley to take that into consideration, the fine Christian gentleman that he is. It must twinge his conscience a little bit at least. I would like to think and hope that he went to people in the Department of Transport, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Treasury Board and said that it is not right. I hope he has done that. If he has not, maybe he should, like an hour ago.

There has been a certain atmosphere here for the last several years when it came to collective bargaining no matter whether it was in the private sector or between the government and the employees. But have you not noticed and remarked, Mr. Speaker, that in the last few years most of it has been between the government and its employees.

A remarkably high degree of settlements are reached between the trade union movement and the employers in the private sector. In fact, the truth of the matter is, that 95 to 96 per cent of contracts are reached through collective bargaining. A very small percentage end up in a strike or a lock-out. I remember when the longshoremen went out on the west coast. They appreciated then, as they do now, the difficulties that the grain producers of western Canada and the potash producers were having. So they went to the government, the Maritime Shippers Association and the port authorities and said: "Look, we will move grain. Our disagreement is not with the handling of bulk commodities. This strike is about containers, shift work and how far away we have to go to go to work". They said: "We'll move the grain". There would not have been a single bushel of grain left sitting.

You know what, Mr. Speaker? Management refused. Management refused to see the grain moving. Then I listened to the hon. member for Swift Current—Maple Creek saying that we should have some kind of a law. Well, I can tell him the kind of law we should have. He mentioned marriage breakdowns and so on although I noticed he did not mention mortgage deals. like that happens as happened to the grain handlers and the employer says no, the law says the employer is going to have to do it anyway.

I am sad to say that even our own Prairie wheat pools would not agree to keep the grain moving even though the strike had nothing to do with the movement of grain. Why? Because the other shippers and owners were calling the shots.

I have something else I want to mention and I am glad the Minister of Veterans Affairs is still here, because I want to talk about what the cost of the strike is to the department, the government, Treasury Board or whoever. I have figures which I received from a reliable source. I would like him to check on it and tell us if it is true that the government is paying $50,000 a day for catering? Is it true that the government is paying $163,835 per week to provide extra security over and above what it is already paying for?

• (1640)

Can you imagine, $163,835 per week is what the government's stubbornness and the strike is costing. I would like to know if it is true or not. Nurses being hired from various agencies are costing $350,000 a week. That is what this strike is costing.

The government is currently paying in overtime at St. Anne de Bellevue $840,000 per week. The total cost to the employer during the strike is $1,633,835. Before the strike the cost was $385,000. In other words, the government is putting out $1,300,000 more than it was before. Even if the employees got all they were asking for these figures would only increase by 6 per cent whatever the cost would be of the human rights settlement.

Who do you think is getting that $163,835 for security? Pinkerton's, naturally, those friends of the working man for the last 150 years. Pinkerton's are getting an extra $163,835 a week. It pays to be friends of the government. This government has no objection. I want the minister to get up and tell us if these figures are inaccurate because we are looking at something over $2 million per week that he has frittered away because of his stubbornness and his refusal to be fair.

Some employees have not had an increase for three years. My goodness, it is a good thing he is not commanding a regiment under those kinds of terms because he would have to watch his back more than his front. The doctors are getting an extra $100 a day at St. Anne de Bellevue on weekends. Some of them are prepared to say, and we are looking for some of them, that the patients are starting to suffer. If that is true there is nobody else to blame but the Minister of Veterans Affairs. I can assure you we will find out.

The staff and nurses who are still working have been given an extra $300 each in overtime bonuses. I am assuming that those are bonuses over and above the overtime they made. The government has brought in 80

agency nurses at a total cost of wages, living expenses, travel et cetera of $500 per day each.

I think the Minister of Veterans Affairs and the President of the Treasury Board have something to answer for. How can they say that somehow or other this legislation is necessary because the unions are not being reasonable? The one not being reasonable is this government. The government is not being fair and is victimizing farmers and shippers as well as employees. It is this government and nobody else. You are the architects of your own problem and you are the perpetrators.

I have enjoyed doing this, although I did not relish it. I have enjoyed getting after these birds for what I have seen this government and the previous one do repeatedly. They never learn. Governments continue not to learn, and they will keep making the same mistakes.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I have been listening to this debate all afternoon and I think there are some fundamental facts we are not putting forward. The government stated earlier today in one of the speeches settlement is equal to a 49 per cent increase over 36 months. The government talked about the fact that it cared for the quality of life in this country, about the fact that legislating these people back to work was for the greater public good. It talked about the fact that it cares about the deficit. It talked about the fact that the only reason we are here today is to oppose for the sake of opposing.

Well, I know we are here today to challenge this government's value system. To state that this is a 49 per cent increase over 3 years is really not putting the right face on this legislation. These men and women are making $18,000 a year and they have to be on standby 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They have to put their lives at stake because they are going to sea to rescue others. Obviously most of these rescue missions are at times when they are in danger. They must face twenty–five and thirty–foot waves.

People in my community in downtown Toronto cannot imagine that. These are waves two or three storeys high. We get three and four foot waves in Lake Ontario and we run the other way. These men and women who are at sea are guarding our waters, our fisheries, and they are asking for 50 cents an hour more on a base of $18,000.

I cannot understand the logic of the government because I know there are many members on the other side who care. They are approachable, and they love this country as much as we do, but I think we are going to have to change our style in this House and when situations like this arise from time to time we are going to speak up. This has nothing to do with unions or government. These are basic values and we are just looking the other way.

• (1650)

I have never been on a coast guard vehicle. I probably would not have the guts to go on a coast guard vehicle on the high seas. However, I tried to imagine who in my community has a similar task, provides a similar public service that my constituents of Toronto can relate to. I thought of fire–fighters in Toronto, a group of men and women whom we are proud of and are on stand–by 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They put their lives in danger for the public service. Their starting salary is $31,500. After five years on the job, a first–class fire–fighter receives $42,800.

We are here talking today about coast guard crew who are only making $18,000 a year. They are asking for approximately $2,000 a year more, 50 cents an hour. I cannot understand this, because when I think of a husband and a wife and maybe one or two children with the take–home pay of $18,000 to $20,000 a year which I calculate to be approximately $260 to $280 a week, I do not know how these men and women make a go of it.

We are sitting here in the national chamber, where we are supposed to have national standards, where the person in an outpost in Newfoundland has as much chance and as much opportunity and is given the same dignity as a person in downtown Toronto. This bill is not meeting that national test.

It is December, the Christmas season, and we are supposed to have a spirit of generosity. We are supposed to have a spirit of understanding. We are sitting here on a Friday afternoon arguing about 50 cents an hour for people who are putting their lives at stake.

I think, and I have seen this repeatedly with this government, that the government is really tearing away at the national will. It breaks down the national will by not showing respect for our human capital. In my mind

that is not only bad nation building but it is also bad economics. What of an incentive? What kind of motivation does one have? What kind of pride does one have in one's job when his employer does not think he is worth 50 cents an hour? I just cannot understand the logic.

The Prime Minister of Canada has a reputation for being one of the best deal makers in Canada. After an 11-hour marathon discussion with the premiers of Canada he was able to come through with a constitutional deal. Why can this same Prime Minister, who has children as I do and as do the fathers on coast guard crews who are risking their lives, not display the same leadership and ability to craft a deal? Why can he not do that on an issue like this one? It is a mystery to me. It escapes me.

That is another problem we have in this House. Sometimes we only pay attention to those voices, to those lobby groups and to those organizations that are well financed and the best organization behind their cause.

We are not in this chamber to oppose for the sake of opposing. We are here to oppose constructively. We are here to care about deficit and debt as is the government. Yes, we have made some mistakes in the past, but I must tell Your Honour that there is no excuse for us to be bantering back and forth today in this House for 50 cents an hour for men and women who go to high sea, without notice, saving lives of others, protecting our waterways and protecting our oceans. There is no excuse.

Sometimes the government becomes captive of officials who will tell it that we have to save 15 per cent of this budget and 10 per cent of that budget. They just calculate the gross amounts and they never see the human capital that exists behind those numbers. I believe this is another example where we are just looking at the gross numbers and we are not looking at the bottom line. The bottom line is the human capital, the men and women who put their lives at stake.

I do not want you to think that I am forgetting about hospital services. The hospital service system of this country is the envy of the world. If we are going to play around with the spirit, the attitude and the dignity of hospital workers, I think we are putting a lot more at risk than the government realizes.

I want to repeat: we are not here to oppose for the sake of opposing. What we have today is a situation where there are people who are genuinely disadvantaged and it is our role to speak on their behalf. Again I repeat: a fireman in downtown Toronto after five years of service makes over $40,000 a year. The crews on the coast guard want $20,000.

We have got to be fair here. We have to be daring. The minister with the stroke of a pen could get an order out and deal with this situation immediately. We tend to forget because these organizations are not well organized as lobby groups, but we should prick our conscience and remind ourselves that we are here in this House not for the privileged but for the disadvantaged.

While I was listening to some of my colleagues speak today, I was going through one of my files and I was reminded of an old John Denver tune that I thought was rather appropriate. Even though I have never been on a coast guard ship and I have never met the men and women who have been on those ships or who have been to sea on rescue, it does not mean I cannot feel for them because I am from another region of this country.

I think John Denver says it best in his song *It's About Time*: "There is a man who is my brother, I just do not know his name, but I know his home and family, because I know we feel the same. And it hurts me when he is hungry and when his children cry for I too am a father; that little one is mine. It is about time we begin to turn the world around. It is about time we realized this is the family of man. It is about time, it is about changes".

• (1700)

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, I know that we will all have an opportunity again next week to discuss this, because of the unprecedented decision taken by the opposition members to ensure that this bill not only will not receive the support of both the Liberal party and the other opposition party in the House of Commons, but will not receive any assistance facilitating the bill. We will all have an opportunity again next week to deal with this matter.

I simply want to point out very briefly on behalf of opposition members that the long-standing tradition of this place when this kind of legislation is brought before Parliament is that very often, opposition parties vote against it. But very seldom, in fact I cannot think of a precedent, do opposition parties actually behave in a manner that forces the government into using closure on back to work legislation.

I hope Canadians will reflect on this and realize that this decision is a direct result of the contemplation, of the searching of one's conscience, individually and collectively, and of the conclusion that the government has not bargained fairly with public servants in critical sectors, both ships crews and hospital services workers who are, comparatively speaking, among the lowest paid, given the value of their work, employees in Canada. They have asked for nothing but a fair break.

In the case of ships' crews, they have responded in every instance they could with the emergency search and rescue services, and have conducted search and rescue. They have saved lives by laying down their pickets during the course of the strike.

In the case of hospital services workers, they have offered to provide emergency service and have been rebutted, refused, by the employer.

Canadians who are wondering what is going on this afternoon should realize that process is unprecedented in Canadian parliamentary history. It is a profound statement by members of Parliament who sit in opposition benches—and it is an extremely unusual statement—that there comes a time when the power of government, the big hammer of government, should not be wielded against ordinary citizens, against employees of the people of Canada, not employees of government, not employees of the party in power, but employees of the people of Canada.

There comes a time to stand up, notwithstanding the tremendous political power represented opposite by a majority government, notwithstanding the tremendous pressure coming from corporate Canada, for those who are least able to defend themselves, particularly when they have bargained in good faith and they have been faced with a government that has but one plan and that is to destroy fundamentally their right to collective bargaining.

It is for that reason that we in this party, the Liberal Party of Canada, refused unanimous consent to allow the introduction of this bill, this draconian measure, by the minister responsible for the Treasury Board. We stood up, the Liberal Party of Canada, and we said no, there shall be no unanimous consent.

We say to the government that it is Friday and the weekend is upon us. We want a quick settlement to this strike. We do not want ships tied up in the St. Lawrence. We do not want patients at hospitals having anything less than the full services they should have. We do not want the potential of health and safety being put at risk. We do not want commerce to stop. We do not want trade to be affected.

We want Canada to function smoothly, but we are not willing to sell out the ordinary employees to the power of a government which wants to paint as villains those employees who are hard-working, selfless individuals asking for a fair shake. We are not willing to sell them out as villains to a government that behaves in a villainous manner.

We say to the government, if you want, as we want, a quick settlement, then go to the table with justice in your heart. Go to the table with a commitment to a fair deal, not necessarily a gracious deal but just a fair deal. If you want a quick settlement to the strike, resolve it at the bargaining table because that is where this issue belongs, not with back to work legislation.

We say to the government at the end of a day, a Friday, we will be back here again Monday. There will be no quick passage. We are going to fight for these employees. If you want a settlement that is right and just, sit man to man, woman to woman, across the table and settle it like human beings. Put away the hammer.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question is on the amendment standing in the name of the hon. member for Halifax. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

The House divided on the amendment, which was negatived on the following division:

(*Division No. 140*)

YEAS

Members

Allmand	Assad
Benjamin	Berger
Black	Boudria
Brewin	Butland
Catterall	Clancy
Dionne	Duhamel
Fisher	Gaffney
Gardiner	Harvey (Edmonton East)
Kaplan	Karpoff
Kristiansen	Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)	MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacLellan	MacWilliam
Manley	Mifflin
Milliken	Mills
Mitchell	Murphy
Ouellet	Parker
Peterson	Riis
Robinson	Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Tobin	Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—38

NAYS

Members

Anderson	Andre
Attewell	Beatty
Belsher	Bertrand
Bosley	Bouchard (Roberval)
Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)	Bourgault
Boyer	Brightwell
Browes	Cadieux
Cardiff	Casey
Chadwick	Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Yellowhead)	Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cole	Cooper
Corbett	Côté
Crosbie (St. John's West)	Crosby (Halifax West)
de Cotret	Della Noce
Dobbie	Epp
Feltham	Ferland
Fretz	Gérin
Gibeau	Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Greene	Guilbault
Halliday	Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hawkes	Horning
Hudon	Hughes
Jelinek	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langlois	Layton
Lewis	Lopez
MacDonald (Rosedale)	MacDougall (Timiskaming)
MacKay	Marin
Martin (Lincoln)	Mazankowski
McCreath	McDermid
McKnight	McLean
Merrithew	Monteith
Moore	Oberle
O'Kurley	Paproski
Plourde	Pronovost
Reid	Reimer
Robitaille	Roy-Arcelin
St-Julien	Sobeski
Soetens	Sparrow
Stevenson	Tardif
Thacker	Thompson
Thorkelson	Van de Walle
Vankoughnet	Venne
Vien	Weiner
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)	
Winegard—88	

• (1740)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I declare the amendment lost.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for Québec-Est (Mr. Tremblay) on a point of order.

Mr. Tremblay (Québec-Est): Mr. Speaker, I shall have to chair the Legislative Committee on Bill C-49 and for that reason, I abstained from moving.

[*English*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question is on the main motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On a point of order, the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, you may find that the House would be favourably disposed to applying the same vote in reverse one more time, in order that we may be able to go home just a little bit earlier. This is the usual co-operation of the opposition, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the same point of order, the hon. member for Kamloops.

Mr. Riis: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Therefore we will apply the votes in reverse.

The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:

(Division No. 141)

YEAS

Members

Anderson	Andre
Attewell	Beatty
Belsher	Bertrand
Bosley	Bouchard (Roberval)
Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)	Bourgault
Boyer	Brightwell
Browes	Cadieux
Cardiff	Casey
Chadwick	Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Yellowhead)	Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cole	Cooper
Corbett	Côté
Crosbie (St. John's West)	Crosby (Halifax West)
de Cotret	Della Noce
Dobbie	Epp
Feltham	Ferland
Fretz	Gérin
Gibeau	Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Greene	Guilbault
Halliday	Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hawkes	Horning
Hudon	Hughes
Jelinek	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Langlois	Layton
Lewis	Lopez
MacDonald (Rosedale)	MacDougall (Timiskaming)
MacKay	Marin
Martin (Lincoln)	Mazankowski
McCreath	McDermid
McKnight	McLean
Merrithew	Monteith
Moore	Oberle
O'Kurley	Paproski
Plourde	Pronovost
Reid	Reimer
Robitaille	Roy-Arcelin
St-Julien	Sobeski
Soetens	Sparrow
Stevenson	Tardif
Thacker	Thompson
Thorkelson	Van de Walle
Vankoughnet	Venne
Vien	Weiner

Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Winegard—88

NAYS

Members

Allmand	Assad
Benjamin	Berger
Black	Boudria
Brewin	Butland
Catterall	Clancy
Dionne	Duhamel
Fisher	Gaffney
Gardiner	Harvey (Edmonton East)
Kaplan	Karpoff
Kristiansen	Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)	MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacLellan	MacWilliam
Manley	Mifflin
Milliken	Mills
Mitchell	Murphy
Ouellet	Parker
Peterson	Riis
Robinson	Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Tobin	Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—38

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Bill read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

It being 5.45 p.m. this House stands adjourned until Monday at 11 a.m.

The House adjourned at 5.45 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, December 11, 1989

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

WAYS AND MEANS

TABLING OF NOTICE OF MOTION

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Privatization and Regulatory Affairs)): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 84(1) I have the honour to lay upon the table copies of a notice of Ways and Means motion to amend the Income Tax Act and related Acts together with supporting documents. I ask that pursuant to Standing Order 84(2) an order of the day be designated for consideration of said motion.

* * *

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table in both official languages the government responses to several petitions.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

* * *

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES

TABLING OF REPORT OF LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON BILL C-49

Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Québec-Est): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the legislative committee on Bill C-49, an Act to provide for the resumption of certain government services, without amendments.

I would like to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to thank all committee members and the technical and administrative staff, who are to be commended for the excellent job they have done. More particularly, I would like to mention the dedication and kindness of our clerk, Mrs. Sirpaul. The Chair will recall that we sat yesterday, on Sunday, for over seven consecutive hours. I may say it was a very interesting and worthwhile experience.

[*English*]

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE STATUS OF DISABLED PERSONS – FIRST REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Bruce Halliday (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the first report of the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons in both official languages. Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests a comprehensive response to this report within 150 days.

I want to compliment the members of the committee for the very effective and non-partisan way they approached this topic which was very becoming to the nature of the topic, namely the court challenges program. This program, as members know, is extremely important to disadvantaged groups in the country and we were pleased to give it a very favourable report during the course of our study.

I should also remind members and colleagues in the House that the standing committee has unique terms of reference, inasmuch as we are mandated to propose, promote, monitor, and assess programs of government as well as those across the country with respect to disadvantaged people.

I commend this report to members of the House and the public because of the nature of our committee and the responsibilities we have.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

[*Translation*]

PETITIONS

OPPOSITION TO TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS ON TAX BENEFITS FOR NORTHERN AND ISOLATED AREAS

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I wish to present a petition which rejects the recommendations made by the Task Force on Tax Benefits for Northern and Isolated Areas. Your petitioners, who represent the isolated community of Lebel-sur-Quévillon in the Abitibi region, believe that although isolation is above all a psychological factor, it can be expressed in dollars and cents: no library, no movie theatres, no art galleries, no swimming pool, no museum of fine arts, no in-door bicycle track, no subway, and so forth.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Lebel-sur-Quévillon feel that the task force has failed to reflect the daily realities of the northern areas of Abitibi.

[*English*]

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Alex Kindy (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the honour to present petitions certified by the clerk of petitions signed by 3,595 persons who humbly pray that the Government of Canada abolish the proposed goods and services tax. They believe that this tax is inflationary, regressive, and will reduce the standard of living of Canadians generally.

RIGHT TO LIFE

Mr. Bruce Halliday (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, it is my duty to present a petition to the House of Commons pursuant to Standing Order 36. This petition, which contains 466 signatures is from people in the constituency of Oxford and is certified correct as to from and content. The petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to pass a law which recognizes the right to life for everyone from conception to natural death without exception, without discrimination, and to abolish the practice of abortion.

I submit this petition for the consideration of this House and ask that the clerk determine, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) the possibility of referring it to the government for consideration and response.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions at this time. One is signed by constituents of the riding of Davenport who humbly pray and call upon Parliament to reject the proposed goods and services tax.

I have another petition on the same subject, with the same message, from residents and voters from the city of Edmonton. I submit them for your consideration.

• (1110)

VIA RAIL

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Mr. Speaker, I too rise under the provisions of Standing Order 36 to present a petition signed by several petitioners from southwestern Ontario. They call upon the Government of Canada not to make any cuts in VIA Rail service until a full investigation and report comes from the National Transportation Commission, which I believe is investigating transportation in the 1990s.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour and duty, pursuant to Standing Order 36, to present to this House three petitions, certified correct by the clerk of petitions. They contain the signatures of constituents in the three Conservative held ridings of Hamilton—Wentworth, Lincoln and Burlington. The petitioners call upon this Parliament to reject the proposed goods and services tax.

Mr. Rex Crawford (Kent): Mr Speaker, once again I rise in the House, pursuant to Standing Order 36, honoured to present a petition on behalf of the residents of the riding of Kent, who feel they are being raped by the present government. They humbly pray and call upon Parliament to reject the proposed goods and services tax.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): Mr. Speaker, I stand again in this House, pursuant to Standing Order 36, to present a petition on behalf of another 500 Londoners who ask this government to rescind its action with respect to VIA Rail. This brings the total number of petitioners from London to close to 10,000 who are asking for this government to change its mind on VIA.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg St. James): Mr. Speaker, I too have the privilege and the honour of presenting a number of petitions carrying hundreds of signatures. Most of these petitions have to do with the GST, the goods and services tax. These petitions have been certified correct as to form and content, and they, in effect, say that this tax is regressive and that it is going to be a horrible burden on Canadian taxpayers. The petitioners ask all parliamentarians to reject this tax outright.

RIGHT TO LIFE

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg St. James): Mr. Speaker, I have another petition which has to do with the abortion issue. This petition has been certified correct as to form and content. The petitioners are concerned about the pre-born in this country, as all of us are, and certainly, in my opinion, the legislation currently before the House will not deal effectively with the abortion issue.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, I have some more signatures from people who are just absolutely devastated by this government's plan to introduce a goods and services tax. Irrespective of the level, whether it is a weasel level of—

Mr. Lewis: Read the petition and forget the speech.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Could I ask the hon. member just to summarize the prayer of the petition, please, and not make a speech.

Mr Simmons: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I felt I was summarizing.

An Hon. Member: It is a good speech.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It may be a good speech but it is not—

Mr. Simmons: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, I have some more signatures. And in summary, for the government House leader, I want to summarize for him, what this petition says. It says that people from Parkhill, Ontario, from London, Ontario—almost every street in London—London West, these people are sending me petitions from all over now, telling me, as the prayer says—I will just summarize and will not take the time to read it—that they are absolutely disgusted with this goods and services tax, whether it is 7 per cent or 9 per cent. They are against it, absolutely against it.

EL SALVADOR

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and present this petition containing signatures collected on November 17 and November 18, from residents in my riding. It concerns the situation in El Salvador. There are over 100 signatures from residents of my area. They condemn the bombing of the civilian population by the government forces in El Salvador. They request that the Canadian Government halt all bilateral aid to the government of El Salvador immediately and to refuse further bilateral aid until it is demonstrated that all members of the military and security forces are acting in accordance with the Convention on Human Rights.

They also point out that Canada is a member of the Organization of American States now and should be very careful to pursue an independent diplomatic policy, leading to full protection of human rights as a peaceful resolution of conflict in El Salvador. The petitioners call for an independent investigation by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the OAS into the murder of the six Jesuits in San Salvador and a full report on the protection of human rights in that country.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, I rise under Standing Order 36 to present a petition signed by the residents of Fort St. James in my riding, expressing concern about the proposed grief and suffering tax which will place a significant financial burden on the families of young athletes, thereby detering athletes from entering and continuing in the sport.

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to Standing Order 36. I have a page of briefs from 50 people in Charlottetown—Bonavista Bay. I will summarize it. They are sick and tired and fed up with the 31 additional taxes do not want the goods and services tax at 9 per cent, 7 per cent or any per cent. They humbly pray and call upon Parliament to reject the proposed goods and services tax.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, I stand in my place today pursuant to Standing Order 36, to submit a large number of petitions concerning VIA Rail. In total there are 1,274 signatures on these petitions from people of Kenora—Rainy River, who ask the government opposite to wake up and smell the

coffee and realize that VIA Rail is an integral part of our transportation system in northern Ontario. They humbly beseech the government on the other side to do something about it before January 15, in order that we may maintain this service that is so very important to the region.

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour and duty to present a petition duly authorized under Standing Order 36, signed by members of the communities of Yorkton, Saltcoats, Neudorf, Melville and Domremy, in the province of Saskatchewan who decry the government's action of removing oats from the Canadian Wheat Board, particularly without consultation with the farm organizations in western Canada.

They point out that the marketing boards are farmers' organizations and are essential to the orderly marketing of commodities and certainly ought to be consulted whenever these kinds of changes are made. The petitioners beg and pray that Parliament not remove oats from the marketing boards and that it put oats and barley under the Canadian Wheat Board Act so that in future, farmers and their organizations will be consulted before the government takes this kind of action.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, question No. 167 will be answered today.

[*Text*]

SOCIÉTÉ RADIO-CANADA—BROADCAST IN FRENCH IN THE YUKON

Question No. 167—**Ms. McLaughlin:**

1. Has the government taken any action to resolve the problem of the inacessibility of *Radio-Canada* in northern Canada and, specifically, in the Yukon, as outlined to it by the *Association des Franco-Yukonnais* and, if so, what action?

2. Is it the intention of the government to pay the $60,000 set-up cost and the $7,000 annual maintenance cost of bringing *Radio-Canada* to every Yukoner on the same basis as CBC broadcasts in English?

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of Communications): 1. The Government is very aware of the broadcasting situation for francophones outside of Quebec and in particular of the difficulties experienced by those in the Yukon.

The situation in the Yukon has been a matter of active collaboration among federal government departments. Discussions have taken place among representatives of the francophone associations of Northern Canada, the Minister of Communications and the Secretary of State.

It is not, however, the government's responsibility to establish and operate broadcasting distribution systems. Discussions are now being held between representatives of Radio-Canada and the Association of francophone residents of the Yukon. The objective is to define, in concrete terms, what measures can be taken and what resources are required in order to ensure the extension of French-language services to these areas.

2. The Secretary of State has already received a request from the Yukon's francophone association for financial support in the amount of $60,000 for capital expenditures.

The government hopes to provide an expedient response to that request once the different parties involved have come to an agreement on the best way to provide Radio-Canada's French services to francophone communities in Northern Canada and, specifically, in the Yukon.

[*English*]

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: On a point of order, the hon. member from Churchill.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, I noticed that the parliamentary secretary has answered question No. 167. On the same date I put in question No. 169 which the government has yet to answer. It refers to various law firms which had business with the government, including

firms that involved senators or former senators. I wonder if the government could indicate if they are having any problems answering this question, or could tell us when that question will be answered?

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I am not exactly certain on the member's specific question. I would be happy to check into it.

The Deputy Speaker: Shall the remaining questions be allowed to stand?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1120)

[*English*]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

DISPOSITION OF BILL C-49

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada) moved:

That, notwithstanding any Standing or Special Order or practice of the House, for the purposes of consideration and disposition of Bill C-49, An Act to provide for the resumption of certain government services:

1) there shall be, following the adoption of this Order, one day for the report stage and one day for the third reading stage of the Bill;

2) on each of the said days, at 15 minutes before the time normally provided at the conclusion of Government Orders, the Speaker shall interrupt any proceeding then under way and shall put forthwith, successively and without further amendment or debate, every question necessary to dispose of the said stage of the Bill; provided that if any such day be a Monday, Tuesday, Thursday or Friday, Private Members' Business shall commence, and continue for one hour, immediately following such proceedings; and

3) following such hour of Private Members' Business or, on other days at the conclusion of proceedings on Bill C-49, as the case may be, the Speaker shall adjourn the House.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise, with not a great deal of pleasure to speak to this motion. The intent of the motion before the House is to try to speed up, without in any other way seriously inhibiting the present Standing Orders vis-à-vis Bill C-49.

Bill C-49, as the House will know, is back to work legislation. It is an effort to bring the two groups, that is the Coast Guard workers and the people who work in veterans' homes and hospitals, back to the table in an effort to settle a dispute between management and workers which has been going on for some time.

I think everyone—except if one lives in a large city in central Ontario such as Ottawa—who has any experience with the weather and the transportation system in this country appreciates the dangers of the oceans at this time of year.

Furthermore I think it is fair to say that the farmers of western Canada who have grain on the ships that are presently in danger of being trapped in the seaway appreciate the great cost to the country that is going to ensue if those ships are trapped in the seaway over the winter. I understand there is a possibility of some 41 ships—which would be a record—that could be caught in the seaway as a result of the actions of the Liberal and NDP parties in stalling this legislation.

That may not bother members from Windsor, but if I were representing Windsor, a seaway port, I would be concerned about it. It does not bother anybody from London, they are landlocked. It does not bother anybody from Ottawa because they do not have emphathy for the people out on ships.

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, if they are not concerned about people out on the ships at sea and stalling the seaway over the winter, maybe I could ask the member from Ottawa and the member from Windsor to have some concern for our veterans and the people in veterans' hospitals. These services are presently being looked after by volunteers and if my hon. friend from Ottawa thinks that veterans should be inconvenienced that way and members to have it in their hearts to think about other people.

I see some members here who represent ridings with people at risk on the seas and I do not know how they are going to face their people back home if there are any accidents. I just ask them to think about that. Surely, if I, somebody from Orillia can understand that, the members who have constituents who are at sea might just think about that. They might just think about it the next time they go home.

In any event, I think I have their attention. Kingston is on the seaway. There is the odd big ship going by there but in case of an accident the crews can always swim to shore. That is what these people in Ottawa do not understand.

Why do you not talk to your members from Ottawa and tell them that it may be a big thrill to hold up legislation that puts people back to work if you live in

Ottawa, but if you live somewhere where there is risk at sea, one might have a better appreciation for it.

I did not want to speak for long but I got so incensed at the insensitivity of members opposite that I thought I would put those items on the record. There are some people to which you just cannot get through to.

For fear that there will be some suggestion that we are breaching the rules, I want to point out to the House that there were two ways of moving this legislation through the House; either by a time allocation motion or by this motion. Let us just draw the comparison between a time allocation motion and this motion for fear that after I leave the House there may be some unfortunate comparisons in which there is some variance between the truth and the comments of the members opposite.

One will know that time allocation under Standing Order 78(3) provides for one day at report stage and one day at third reading. This particular motion provides for one day at report stage and one day at third reading. Standing Order 78(3) calls for a two-hour debate. I am sure that by the time we debate this from 11.20 until one o'clock and then probably tomorrow with the opportunity to go until 1 a.m. on Wednesday morning that there will be far more than two hours debate. This will enable us to have met that particular problem in comparison with Section 78(3). The third point that I am sure my hon. friends will want to mention is that they will have the opportunity to speak for longer than 10 minutes. One knows that the debate on a time allocation motion is two hours with 10-minute speeches and the government is providing for much longer speeches by moving.

We think this is an appropriate way to deal with a very serious situation. I would implore my friends opposite to stop the political posturing which may gain some points in Ottawa but which is causing serious problems in other parts of the country where they are just trying to ship grain and look after veterans. I wonder at the reasoning behind the stalling of the opposition parties in not allowing this motion to be voted on immediately and for the report stage of the committee report which was tabled this morning and third reading to go ahead quickly.

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, first of all, let us remind ourselves, it being Monday morning and the start of another week, what we are doing here. Bill C-49 would provide for the resumption of certain government services.

You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that this thing started late last week when the government decided to circumvent the normal process of collective bargaining. It used the sledgehammer approach on 3,600 workers, that is 1,300 hospital workers, and 2,300 ships crew people, some of the lowest paid workers in this country. On Thursday and Friday the government began the process of shutting down the collective bargaining process for these people, their right to strike in particular. It arranged to have a committee sitting yesterday, Sunday, in an effort to railroad this whole thing through as quickly as possible. Here we are again today with Bill C-49 and now with a motion to rush things up even more.

• (1130)

Listen, first of all, to the words of our good friend, the government House leader. If piety were for sale, he would be a billionaire. He tells us: "If you lived by the sea"—I say to him, I live by the sea. I will show it to him some time. He might be surprised by how big it is.

It is one thing as a government to try to use its parliamentary majority to bludgeon and hammer people. But on top of that it is an insult to intelligence to say this morning to those 2,300 men and women who earn their livelihoods in very dangerous situations patronizingly: "If you lived by the sea", I say to the minister, that is their first sin. They do live by the sea. The problem is they are not finding enough wages to keep body and soul together by the sea, thanks to this particular stingy government.

Now, the minister tells us as he continues his pious little lecture this morning that he is really helping veterans. I am touched. Where was he when this thing started three and a half weeks ago? Where was the minister's concern for veterans then? He tells us he is concerned about safety. Well, bully for him. If he were so concerned about safety, why was he not talking to the Minister of Transport and the President of the Treasury Board who a few weeks ago were telling us there was no consideration of safety. There was no problem whatever.

When is this honourable crowd going to learn that they cannot have their cake and eat it too? There is either a safety concern or there is not a safety concern, one or the other.

As I review my notes of the pious lecture from the government House leader, I recall that he told us this morning that he and the government are not inhibiting the process. No, no. He probably believes it is midnight outside right now, too. Not inhibiting the process!

For three and a half weeks, it plays with the negotiators on the union side of the table. The government toys with them. Now, day after day, the government brings in every parliamentary manoeuvre it can dream up to shut down the process altogether, trampling on the basic rights of a lot of people. First, the 3,600 people directly involved in this labour dispute. But it went further on Thursday and Friday and particularly this morning. Now it is in the process of trampling on the rights of every parliamentarian in this House because now the government wants to throw the rule book out the window.

Finally, if I may for a moment get away from the particular elements in this dispute, as important as they are, and look in a more global way at this whole issue is about incompetence. This really has to do with incompetence. We would not be here this morning discussing this particular issue if that crowd over there had been competent in their management of the collective bargaining process. That is the problem right there, absolute incompetence.

You only have to go back to late 1987 when Treasury Board missed a deadline for submitting to the Public Service board the list of personnel to be designated essential during the round of bargaining. It missed the deadline. That is basic incompetence, incompetence in the governing of the country, in the administering of the collective bargain agreements and the collective bargaining process. That is where it started, but it did not stop there.

If there is one thing you can say for this crowd, they are consistent about their incompetence. The Tories have used the same tactic here that they used on the free trade issue. When they could not win according to the rules, they threw the rules out of the window. They trampled on the election laws relating to financing of election, and that is another issue we will come back to in time. I just bring that forward now as example to show how this crowd stops at nothing. The law means nothing to this crowd at all. If you cannot do it within the law, you flout the law.

So the Tories completely missed the deadline back in the fall of 1987 by failing to designate. They could not even do the thing legally and properly. Now they have brought their incompetence one more time to the floor of the House of Commons.

What are the rules we are supposed to live by here, Mr. Speaker? Let me remind you. The rule book we are going by now was written by a committee under the chairmanship of the Hon. James McGrath, now the Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland. But in that incarnation he was a member of this House and chairman of a committee to rewrite the rules. Before he was chairman of that committee in 1984, he was a member with me and some other people of another committee on reforming the rules. This committee on reforming the rules was chaired by a man who is now a senator, Senator Tom Lefebvre.

In 1982–83, Mr. McGrath, the Deputy Prime Minister, several others in this House and I, 18 of us altogether, did a very thorough review of the rule book, the so–called Standing Orders of this House. Some of the rules were implemented and then, of course, came the election of 1984, and a change of government. So it was appropriate, notwithstanding the fact that Senator Lefebvre had done a magnificent job, that the Tories appoint a government member as chairman of that committee. The succeeding committee was in effect the same committee by another name.

Many of the reforms that were contemplated and designed in 1982, 1983 and 1984 were then refined and recommended to the House, again post–1984, by the then member for St. John's East, Mr. McGrath.

Those rules were embraced to the credit of the Prime Minister and his majority in 1984–85. Those rules, recommended by Mr. McGrath, concocted, designed and crafted by two committees between 1982 and 1985, are the rules that we are using in this Chamber today to the credit of the Prime Minister.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, these rules in theory if allowed to work are a set of rules that makes for a pretty full debate and the representation of the concerns and interests of people from coast to coast. House of Commons rules or Standing Orders, as we call them, like everything else finally depend on goodwill, but particu-

larly do they depend and rely on the goodwill of the majority.

This morning, as you heard from the government House leader, goodwill goes out the window too when this crowd gets its back against the wall. So the government that bungled through incompetence its undertaking, its obligation to give notice of a list of essential service people back in October 1987, now brings its bungling here to the floor of the House of Commons.

• (1140)

I took a minute just now to outline to you the background of the rules under which we live and work here in this Chamber because it reinforces, does it not, the hypocrisy of the government House leader in coming here and saying that we want to suspend those rules one more time. We not only want to hoist or hijack the rules, we now want to accelerate the hijack. We want to speed her up now. We want to ram her through just as fast as we can.

What is the rush? I will tell you what the rush is. I was in Burgeo in my riding two weeks ago and the eight Coast Guard people who work in that community came to me with a letter signed by all eight of them, a letter reasonably worded asking the government to get on with the job of finding a workable, mutually satisfactory collective agreement for those coast guard people. In simple terms, negotiate.

That was the rush and that rush has been on for three and a half weeks. It was on for many months before that, before the people got to the point where they had to use the ultimate weapon in the collective bargaining process, to withdraw their services, to engage in a legal strike. Let there be no doubt about it. It has been a legal strike in every sense of the term.

The government House leader unwittingly this morning gives away the government's game. He talks about the Seaway. For those of you who do not know it, the Seaway is not off the coast near Burgeo. It is not anywhere off the coast of Newfoundland. Indeed, it is not even near Dartmouth where so many of the people are suffering because of this particular strike. That was their sin, that the Seaway did not go by their front doors.

Until such time as there was a bottleneck, an ice jam, a problem, a loss of money for the Seaway and until such time as big bucks were on the line, we heard no talk of safety. We saw ministers stand in this House and deny there was any safety consideration.

The minister this morning, in making his plea to the House, his pious little lecture to the House, his hypocritical nonsense to the House, says that there are some problems in the Seaway that are as a result of Liberal and NDP actions. These were his words. How warped! How warped can you be and still be loose? Because of Liberal and NDP actions, the government House leader says, we've got some problems in the Seaway.

I will tell him why we have problems in the Seaway. It is his incompetence, his stubbornness on this issue not to have settled this thing before it came to a strike three and a half weeks ago. That is why we have problems in the Seaway. If he thinks that is Liberal and NDP action, he should have a talk to himself in the mirror.

Mr. Murphy: Who are you talking to? There's no one over there.

Mr. Simmons: The NDP are back. Have you noticed? They are back this morning.

My friend from Churchill asked me who I am talking to. Let me tell him, because like his colleague in the committee yesterday, this whole issue is obviously passing him by. I will tell him who I am talking to. I am talking to the 3,600 people out there. I am talking to the 1,300 people out there who are on a picket line who would rather be in a hospital doing their thing.

I am talking to the 2,300 ships crews people out there, some of whom are on the picket line, but I will tell you where a lot of them are this morning. They are out keeping their commitment off the south coast of Newfoundland, looking for the *Johnny and Sisters II*, out of Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, with eight souls aboard. These people, when they went on strike said two things, in effect. "First, we are going to exercise our right to strike to make a point to the government, to our employer. But, number two, notwithstanding, if there is an emergency, we will be there."

They have been true to their word, whether it is off the Madeleine and Cape Sable area with the *Capitaine Torres* or the *Johanna B*, those two terrible tragedies over the weekend. On 11 or 12 occasions since this strike began,

the coast guard people have been there keeping their commitment.

Now, I hope that answers the question of the gentleman from Churchill.

Mr. Murphy: I just asked if you were talking to government members. They're not there.

Mr. Simmons: The member makes a good point that not as many of the government members are here as we would like to have this morning. However, we have with us from Calgary the minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. We know, of course, that when he is not busy with the post office and other matters, he is giving his undivided attention to the plight of those 3,600 people. I do not know what the member for Churchill is implying but I certainly have great faith in the minister from Calgary to take the message back to the government on this very important issue.

Now, what message is it we want the gentleman from Calgary to take back to the government? I should not neglect to say, of course, that not only is he here in the House—and I should say to the gentleman from Churchill that we are not allowed to say who is absent from the House—but the rules have been kind. We are allowed to say who is present in the House and I can see the Minister and I can see a member there, and a member there, and a member there, and I can see a member there, and a member there. I have seen neither one of those in a Liberal caucus, thank God, and I do not believe, judging by their right-wing speeches, that they would be caught in an NDP caucus either.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Tremblay (Lotbinière): Oh, oh!

[*English*]

Mr. Simmons: Good morning to you, too. I thank the hon. gentleman from Lotbiniere.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Tremblay (Lotbinière): You could at least say the name of my riding in French!

[*English*]

Mr. Simmons: You know, Mr. Speaker, I believe the member feels his maiden speech coming on.

As I was saying, Sir, I want to acknowledge the presence here this morning to hear my speech on this important issue of the minister and five Tory MPs. It is nice of you to drop in this morning, and I hope between the six of you, you will take to the government a message. The message is very simple. I have it written out here, word for word.

In case you are wondering what the problem is in this strike, it comes down to 50 cents an hour. Fifty cents an hour! Now, the government House leader talks about safety, and problems in the St. Lawrence, and big bad Liberals, and big bad NDPers who are causing all the problems. Fifty cents an hour is what is causing the problem.

• (1150)

If the government would go back in good faith and negotiate, this thing would be over in jig time. Would you take that message back to the government?

Would you also tell them that those people who you are characterizing as a bunch of tyrannical people somehow are actually people who are earning about $18,000 to $20,000 if you are talking about the ships crews people and less than that if you are talking about the hospital support service people. These are the people who are asking for some attention from this government.

Let me see what else the government House leader said this morning. I was making the point earlier that the Coast Guard people, on 13 separate occasions, have interrupted their strike to keep their first commitment to the people of Canada, their commitment that they would never let their salary or wage demands stand in the way of or interfere with the safety of or the lives of Canadians.

Some of their people in the last year paid very dearly for their commitment to safety, four of them in this year alone. Albeit they were only earning $18,000 or $20,000 a year, yet four of them have given their lives. Three did so off the Coast of Newfoundland, I say to my friend from Bonavista—Trinity—Conception, trying to rescue a diver, as I recall. I look at him because he was speaking about this particular issue in the House at the time, a month and a half ago.

Mr. Mifflin: Mid-October.

Mr. Simmons: Mid-October. Three Coast Guard people trying to find a diver lost their lives. Of course, the diver was lost at that particular time too.

Back in January on the other coast, near Port Hardy, B.C., the crew of a tug boat was in some trouble. A Coast Guard individual was lost there. Four people, three on one coast, one on the other coast, lost in the pursuit of their duty, in trying to save the lives of others, in trying to assure the safety of other people.

I was away from the Chamber on Friday. I watched much of the debate on the rerun Friday night on television. When you sit there dispassionately, not being egged on by partisans, able to hear the pros and cons from both sides and distil it all for your understanding, you find yourself asking the question, what is this fuss all about?

This in some respects is a tempest in a teapot. Why? Why did the government allow it to come to this? Then you remember who is in charge. You remember what party has got a hold of the reins of power these days. You remember the litany of bludgeoning of rural people by government members in the last few years, particularly in the last year. You see what they are doing to rural Canada.

On every single front, whether it is double-speak or double-talk in terms of the ACOA program for Atlantic Canada, the butchering of the unemployment insurance regulations, the change in job creation for rural Canada, regional development programs and cutbacks in transfer moneys going to the less wealthy provinces, it all translates into one simple, blunt reality which is that the lot of anyone who lives in rural Canada is threatened and undermined by this government at every turn.

In the Coast Guard situation particularly, government members thought they had another winner; they thought they had another cudgel; they thought they had another baseball bat to beat the people of Dartmouth, Halifax, Nova Scotia generally and Newfoundland and northern B.C. over the heads with. They were going to teach rural Canada another lesson.

Just as they were right in the midst of their lesson, teaching rural Canadians who was in charge, something happened. The government overlooked one small detail, a little, tiny, minuscule detail called the St. Lawrence Seaway. The government overlooked the possibility that one day, the strike would begin to have an impact on the less rural parts of this country and that one day, the fellows who financed the free trade debate might be hurt by this particular strike.

The government overlooked that until it started getting calls and until the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, and the various ministers over there began getting calls. "Brian, old buddy, remember, I underwrote your campaign? I helped get you back into office. You had bungled it badly in the middle of the election campaign and we, in the business community, had to lash out our millions to save your neck. Well, the jig is up; we are calling in the favour. Lower the boom! Use legislation. Change the rules of the House. Send the government House leader in to make pious little speeches if you have to. Do what you have to do. We are hurting down here on the St. Lawrence. That is my boat down there".

That kind of message, Mr. Speaker, gets through to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister says to the President of the Treasury Board: "Remember that fine speech you made last week about no problems with safety? Get up now and make the opposite speech". Being the dutiful Tory he is, he got up and made the opposite speech. We heard him last week lament about safety, he, the man who assured this House three weeks before, that safety was not an issue.

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, 10, 11. Mr. Speaker, there are 11 Tories in the House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Tremblay (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Lotbinière, (Mr. Tremblay) on a point of order.

Mr. Tremblay (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, I realize that here in the House we have certain privileges, including the right to say what we think. However, I think a right that can so easily be abused should be exercised very carefully. When someone takes advantage of this august assembly to make nasty insinuations about the presence or absence of certain members, about whether or not they are listening to the more or less interesting speeches being made by certain members, and when someone is constantly harping on this, it boils down to a rude display of political partisanship before this assembly, especially at a time when we are considering whether certain people have the right to strike or whether they should be forced to go back to work, considering the fact

that the health of Canadians is at risk. Through you, Mr. Speaker, I may remind the Hon. Member that he has no business commenting on how hon. members get along in the House and whether they are or are not in the House.

• (1200)

[*English*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Just one comment on the point of order by the hon. member. I understand why he raised the point of order but as far as the Chair is concerned the comments made by the member for Burin—St. George's are in order. What would be out of order would be to mention either the absence or the presence of a specific member, which the member for Burin—St. George's, with the experience that he has, has not done. The member is in order and I give him the floor.

Mr. Simmons: I thank the member for Lotbinière. He is one of the 11 people whose presence I had acknowledged. I was about to pay him a compliment. I was about to say that he is one of 11 people who is giving my words of wisdom some thought. If the rules did not prevent me from saying so, I would have reported that I assume that somebody has just gone to take a message to the government.

Mr. Andre: You can clear a room quicker than anyone I know, that's for sure.

Mr. Simmons: The minister can fill certain rooms pretty fast too, as long as he gives out FBDB grants to the right place.

There is one other issue I want to address briefly. Because so many of my other colleagues want to speak I intend to sit down very quickly. My good friend from Hillsborough, Prince Edward Island, is going to have a few words and then other speakers will want to have a few words. You see, Mr. Speaker, it is very important that we convey to the government the strength of feeling that is out there.

I want to close on a note that the government House leader struck when he was giving us that pious lecture a few minutes ago. He talked about empathy. What I want to know is who loaned him the dictionary. He has discovered empathy, has he? We who live by the sea, to use his words, who represent those Coast Guard people have been empathizing, have been sharing the pain of those people for some time, long before the strike began, long before he discovered there was such a thing as coast guard workers.

Empathy—if this government understood the word "empathy", there would be no strike today. If this government understood empathy, it would not be here trying to railroad legislation through the House, it would not be having a legislative committee sit on a Sunday afternoon. It would not be here now hijacking the rules of the House, the rules that the government itself brought in four short years ago.

I say to the minister, if he wants to talk empathy, let him leave this place and have a quiet chat with his buddy, the President of the Treasury Board, and tell him he can put his money where his mouth is when it comes to empathy simply by finding 50 measly cents an hour per employee. That is not 50 cents on top of a million, that is 50 cents on top of 14,000, 15,000, 16,000, 17,000 or 18,000 bucks a year. These people are not earning enough to keep body and soul together now.

If the minister wants to practice a bit of empathy, let him take a few of the shekels which he is going to drag out of the people with the goods and services tax and pay it to those 3,600 people. Instruct the people on the government side of the bargaining table to get serious. Give them the wherewithal and give them the instruction to settle this thing now. In doing it, remember that the people of Canada will be grateful to you, that you are really just saying thank you to the men and women who have come to the aid of people in distress as recently as this weekend.

If there was ever an occasion where the rug of argument was pulled right out from under the government, it was this weekend when they were in the House talking about safety, saying: "If we don't get this strike over, lives are going to be at stake", and so on and so forth. Right in the midst of that we had no fewer than three separate tragic occurrences, two off Nova Scotia and one off Newfoundland, with a total loss of life of 47 people. The spokesman from the Ministry of Transport was on television Friday night. I saw his face and I heard his words. When he was asked if the strike had in any way impeded or interfered with the response time he said "No". Indeed he said the response time was better than average.

One of the government's own spokesmen is telling us that although there is a strike on, although these people are demoralized because their employers are treating them as adversaries, as enemies. That is an issue that some of our members will talk about today. They will speak of the morale of those people who have to go to the high Arctic and work for months on end for a pittance, of the tension of living in close quarters for months on end with the same few people. The least they could ask for is a fair wage. The least they could ask is not to be kicked in the teeth by their government and by their employer.

But I digress. The point I was making for the minister is that on Friday night a spokesman for the Department of Transport spoke on national television about the response time to those emergencies, those three terrible tragedies this weekend; the *Johanna B*, the *Capitaine Torres* off Nova Scotia and the one south of Cape Race, Newfoundland, the *Johnny and Sisters II*. In the case of those three tragedies the spokesman for the Ministry of Transport says that notwithstanding the strike, because the question was put to him in that context, the response time to all three of those emergencies was better than average.

I urge the House to resist the government's insatiable appetite for throwing out the rules. Let me say it differently. I urge the House not to become party to the shameful incompetence of this government, an incompetence which in this case started with failing to designate the essential workers and which has now been brought to the floor of the House with the government trying, first of all, to hijack the rules and then speed up that hijacking process.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I rise to debate and speak against this motion which the government has introduced. I think it is interesting that in the process that has been involved in these negotiations and in this legislation the government is not only the employer but is using its power, through the legislation, to achieve what it could not achieve at the bargaining table.

This is triply repugnant because it goes against a ruling of the International Labour Organization which found this government in contempt of the convention that is signed by Canada with regard to free collective bargaining.

Let me make reference to that ruling. It is with regard to the 1987 Postal Services Continuation Act, introduced by the government of that time. It is important to realize that that legislation is basically the same as the legislation we have in front of us at this time. In other words, with the legislation forced through Parliament by the government in 1987 which was found in violation of Article 3 of Convention No. 87, the government learned nothing.

• (1210)

Let me read from the finding of the committee. I will not read it all because I only have 20 minutes to cover the whole topic. The committee said that under the circumstances, the legislation was "not in conformity with the principles of freedom of association".

> The committee draws to the Government's attention that section 11(1) of the Postal Services Continuation Act, 1987, constituted an interference in the free functioning of union organizations, and violated the right freely to elect representatives, guaranteed to the workers by Article 3 of Convention No. 87.
>
> The committee invites the Government to keep all these considerations in mind in the future.

That was what the International Labour Organization, of which Canada is part, on which Canada has served very well over a number of years, said about legislation passed by this House in 1987. Why would this same government come back two years later and introduce legislation which has already been found in violation of an international treaty? Remember that Canada freely signed the convention, freely signed the International Labour Organization convention. It is expected that when our nation puts its signature to a convention, we should live up to that convention. We did not and the government has obviously not learned a lesson. It is going to continue to violate the International Labour Organization.

I should point out to those members of the government and others who may not understand that this is not an organization just of unions, the International Labour Organization is composed of unions, all the governments of the countries affected, including Canada, and the employers associations. We were not found in violation strictly by a group of unions. We were found in violation by nations throughout the world, by employers throughout the world, and by unions throughout the world. We had a fair tribunal, we were found guilty and here the

government comes back again with essentially the same legislation.

The motion in front of us today will restrict debate on report stage to basically Wednesday afternoon. In other words, after quickly rushing this legislation through committee on a Sunday afternoon, where there was not really opportunity to do any clause-by-clause study, where amendments were really not presented, this House is going to have to go through the amendments which were proposed and were presented to the government ahead of time and deal with them in approximately two and a half hours on a Wednesday afternoon. That is assuming there are no procedural wrangles or the government does not have some other trick up its sleeve to even further limit debate at that time. Two and a half hours to consider amendments at report stage.

As the former labour critic of our caucus, I know that there have been amendments made on back to work legislation in the past. I know that at the present time there are discussions going on to see if this bill can be improved. However, all desire by the government to improve the legislation is taken away if this motion passes. The government members know they can get the legislation through report stage in two and a half hours on a Wednesday afternoon and then they can all go off to their Christmas party.

I think that is one of the reasons for the legislation. Why is it that they are quite willing to speak all night on Tuesday on procedural wrangles, but when it comes to the legislation itself we must have those bells ringing by a quarter to six and we must start voting at six o'clock, just because the Conservatives want to go off to their Christmas party. That is their idea of essential services.

I said that this is an abuse of Parliament. We have in the past, and there are members on the government side who know this, amended back to work legislation. I have said that already. But restricting our debate to two and one-half hours on a Wednesday afternoon takes away any initiative by the government to be reasonable in improving this legislation.

That is especially important to understand because the government is the employer. The employer has written this legislation. It is obviously a concern, not only of the workers but of anybody who believes in fairness, that the employer should write the legislation and then force it through the House, force it through committee, force it through report stage and force it through a quick final reading without anyone having the ability to effectively amend that legislation.

When the railway workers were ordered back to work the legislation was amended. When the postal workers were sent back to work there were improvements made. This time the government is trying to thwart that possibility. If you are someone who is being ordered back to work, if you are someone who is losing your union privileges, if you are someone who is going to be subjected to severe fines as a result of this legislation, you cannot feel that you have been treated fairly when the government uses its majority and uses a jackboot approach to the rules of this House to prevent adequate study at each and every stage of this legislation.

The government has said that this legislation must pass because it affects essential services. The government failed, we all know it failed, to designate those employees it deemed to be essential within the time limits required by its own legislation.

If the government thought that these services were essential, why did it not live up to the requirements of its own legislation? Why did it not designate those employees doing essential services as is required by law? My colleague, another former labour critic, says the government is incompetent. That is true. But why, as a result of its own incompetence, would it try to rush the legislation through this House negating all sense of fairness, all sense of decorum, all sense of the rules and procedures of this House and against an international labour organization ruling?

The government House leader got up and said: "Aren't you concerned about safety?". Of course we are concerned about safety. "Aren't you concerned about the veterans?". Of course we are concerned about the veterans, but let me speak on a personal level for a few minutes. Both of my parents worked in the Deer Lodge Hospital which was a veterans' hospital. I visited that hospital a number of times when I was growing up and I saw the plight of the veterans, but I also saw the way the workers were treated by the government. There were low wages in the 1960s and there are low wages today.

If the government is so concerned about the plight of veterans and the way they are treated, then why does it pay the people who work in those hospitals and veterans' homes such low salaries? Why has the government failed, in every way, shape and form, to pay salaries that are equal to those paid to people who work in hospitals run by the provinces or by the municipalities? Why has

the government kept the salaries so low for those workers?

A human rights tribunal has already ruled that the government has failed to meet the requirements of pay equity and the government has dragged its heels on that issue. We know that workers in the coast guard on the east coast are being paid less than those in the western half of this country. Again, the government has dragged its heels. When it comes to pay equity, when it comes to regional equity, this government has failed to take the leadership and has failed to deal with these problems in negotiations.

• (1220)

If we allow this government to introduce this motion and pass it through the House without making any attempts to amend the legislation, then this House is being unfair to the employees of the Government of Canada. This House will fail in its requirements to make sure that when legislation passes both sides in an industrial dispute are treated fairly. It is always offensive when one side, in this case obviously the employer, writes the legislation ordering people back to work. It is unfair when the fines in the legislation are so high. It is unfair that people lose their rights as a result of this legislation.

It is unfair for us in Parliament to speed this legislation through because the government finds it inconvenient to do otherwise as Christmas approaches, because the government members want to go to a Christmas party on Wednesday evening, because the government itself failed to live up to its obligations with regard to designating essential employees and because the government really has no understanding of or support for the concept of pay equity or regional development and regional equality. How can we, as parliamentarians, allow them to do this?

Unless there are amendments to this legislation making it fairer, we have no choice but to oppose it vigorously at all stages.

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose this motion which is another method of limiting debate on what, as some members opposite have stated here this morning, is a very, very serious issue. A very serious issue it is. This back to work legislation introduced last week will undermine Canadian values and traditions.

We are dealing with an issue that would allow the government to destroy the collective bargaining process. Ironically, it is this government's own ineptitude which resulted in the situation at hand. I am referring to Bill C–49, an act to provide for the resumption of certain government services. Nicely worded so that Canadians do not read between the lines. They will not be certain just what has been accomplished by this legislation.

Let us be clear about just what is going on. The ships' crews group and hospital services group will be forced to abandon their legal strikes. Both groups have attempted to bargain in good faith with the government since the expiration of their collective agreements. Both groups have merely asked for the right to earn a living, which is hardly an excessive demand. Treasury Board has not attempted to resolve these issues in any way, shape or form. It has done nothing more than use stonewalling tactics from the very beginning.

The introduction of this legislation is basically unjust. There is no need for this legislation and the government should not interfere in any way with the free collective bargaining process. This process has been established in Canada for many years. Inherent in the collective bargaining process is the right to strike although, as we who have been in the collective bargaining business for some years all know, not many people want to strike here or anywhere else.

These unions are exercising their right to strike only to have the government react with strong arm techniques. Not only is this a demonstration of a lack of concern and of caring on the part of government, it also provides us with yet another example of the government's incompetence. The list of illogical and incompetent actions taken by this government continues to grow. I need not give examples because it would take far longer to cite them than the time allotted to me today to speak.

When the collective agreement for the ships' crews group expired in December 1987 the union served notice to Treasury Board. Treasury Board had 20 days after the expiration of the agreement to serve notice designating the group. It let the period expire without designating any of the services as essential. When it later tried to designate the group the Public Service Alliance appealed this move to the Federal Court and won, and rightly so. The Public Service Staff Relations Board supported the position of the Alliance so Treasury Board appealed to

the Federal Court and the original decision was upheld. This went on until September of this year and because of this the collective bargaining process was continually delayed.

If Treasury Board had done the job properly the unions would not have been in a position to strike. It did not and now the government has tabled this legislation and passed it on to a committee, which legislation is intended to force these people back to work.

The scenario I have just described reeks of incompetence on the part of this government. When one asks the government why it is introducing back to work legislation, the answer now is "for safety reasons". As has been stated in this House many times in the last two or three days, safety is not an issue here, as was witnessed this past weekend.

Both groups have been conducting reasonable strikes. In the case of the ships' crews, emergency search and rescue vessels have been on standby across the country and the crews have responded on numerous occasions to life-threatening and disastrous situations. While the workers have exercised their legal right to strike, they have continued to provide emergency search and rescue services to all Canadians.

The same can be said for the hospital service workers presently on strike. The Public Service Alliance has offered to provide essential services but the government contends that the level of services offered are inadequate.

A recent article in a local newspaper suggests that the residents of veterans' homes support the position of hospital workers. One resident is reported as saying, and I quote: "We have very few residents who show resentment. We support the strikers because they are really extraordinary people who have given us the best of treatment".

Where are the serious violations of safety that this government is suggesting? In the case of the hospital workers Armed Forces personnel are filling the gap and at the homes temporary nursing assistants and volunteers are providing services. These hospital workers make between $18,000 and $22,000 per year. That is not very much money to survive on in this day and age. These workers did not seek out a strike but they were given no choice. In the words of PSAC Vice-President Jim MacEwen, and I quote: "We didn't seek this strike, but we have an employer who stonewalled us during two years of negotiations, has refused to comply with the findings of the Canadian Human Rights Commission with respect to pay equity. They have so exasperated the patience and goodwill of our members that they see no alternative but to take this type of action".

The reference to the Human Rights Commission decision on pay equity refers to a decision to award those workers $28 million in pay equity settlements. This means that the 1,200 hospital workers are owed $3,000 each. This decision was handed down in July 1987. Twenty months later they were still waiting for their money. Three thousand dollars is a lot of money to these workers. It is the difference between having food on the table or not.

Federal hospital service workers did not go on strike until November 29. A week later the government refused to allow it. The government fails to realize that these workers are undervalued and underpaid. The Human Rights Commission tribunal has called upon the government to compensate these workers for past discrimination, to re-evaluate all positions and to revise the hospital services classification standard to parallel the government services group.

The ships' crews workers legally went on strike on November 13. The major issues, as have been talked about here daily, are wages, hours of work, a sea duty allowance and wage parity between east and west coast workers. Last week in this House I called upon the minister responsible to finalize the wage parity issue and to negotiate the remaining issues. I have been informed that a carrot was dangled before the union, that being drop the other issues and you will get wage parity. The minister denied that such a condition exists. Either he is mistaken or he has been misinformed by his own people because Treasury Board officials have stated that that conditional offer was put on the table.

Last week I also indicated that this strike, in my opinion, could be settled quickly, and it must be. The Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence Seaway economy alone is losing over $2 million a day and there is only

between $5 million and $6 million in dispute between Treasury Board and the union.

The minister keeps saying that he is willing to negotiate, and negotiate they did. I say to him, stop talking about it and do it. We can end this strike today.

• (1230)

Maybe that is the real reason behind this legislation. Perhaps this is the minister's idea of negotiating. The true motivation has not been to send the workers back because of safety reasons, but to force them back and to break the unions, thereby setting into motion the gradual elimination of the collective bargaining process in Canada, period.

Once again I must remind the House that these groups are in a legal position to strike. It is their right. Now, through this proposed legislation before us, the government intends to fine these underpaid—and I stress underpaid—workers. The fines are quite large—$500 to $1,000 a day for a worker, $10,000 to $50,000 a day for an individual who is a representative of the bargaining agent, and $50,000 to $100,000 a day for the bargaining agent. Those are awfully high penalties for people making in the vicinity of $20,000 a year.

Let us look briefly at what else the legislation does. It orders all ships crews and hospital service workers back to work immediately. It sets in place binding conciliation, that is, both sides have to accept an imposed settlement. The legislation names two chairpersons to the two boards. Normally the process is for each party to name its members for the board and then the members agree to a chairperson. I say that there is no need to do this at all—just settle the strike.

The government must admit that it has bungled the entire process. But why does the government not lick its wounds, return to the table to settle this mess?

I am acutely aware that there are problems out there and that businesses are being affected by the strike. I have received two faxes over the weekend from businesses in the Great Lakes area. I talked to people in Prince Edward Island. There are problems with the shipment of potatoes. The ships are going to be stuck in the harbours. I can appreciate the problems these people are having, because they have to earn a living. The whole economy of the country is suffering. The residents of veterans' hospitals and homes deserve to receive full and adequate services, but the hospital service workers deserve to earn an adequate living.

In order to restore rights to everyone concerned I call upon this government to do the right thing. Negotiate today in good faith. Do not force these men and women to accept an unfair settlement.

The government gave no indication, back when it was negotiating, that it was going to introduce legislation, because it has refused to act in good faith. Sadly, that is typical of everything that this government has done in the past five years.

We must remember that these legal strikes have in no way affected the lives or the safety of the Canadian people. The government is trying to destroy the very existence of collective bargaining in this country, and that is the bottom line.

Because of this I oppose this legislation. We on this side of the House implore the government to settle the strikes fairly and equitably. The government has no right to force these Canadians back to work. That tactic may, more than anything else, affect the quality of service that these groups provide. When you take away a person's legal right to self-expression, you deny them their self-worth and self-dignity. That, Mr. Speaker, will benefit no one.

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Mr. Speaker, I think it is worth while right at the beginning to remind the government and members of the House that the day closure was first introduced on this piece of legislation was the forty-first anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights. There were, I thought, rather eloquent speeches on behalf of all three parties concerning this memorable occasion. But, at the same time, we have to be very aware of how fragile human rights are.

It is not sufficient to simply stand up in the House and acknowledge the forty-first anniversary of this, to say how wonderful the United Nations is and how wonderful human rights are unless we put some kind of action behind those words. Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to you that the action of the government in bringing in closure the first time in this particular round of the debate on this proposed legislation really does show its commitment, or lack thereof, to the whole concept of human rights. That is further exemplified as we go through the history of the dispute between the government, the employer, and some of its employees. These are em-

ployees who, I would point out, are among the most poorly paid in the Canadian civil service.

The government's commitment to human rights and equality are stated on a lot of different occasions. In some cases it has been forced to live up to what ought to be its commitment. Here is an example of where that is the case.

There was a complaint by the Public Service employees in 1981 which actually precedes the life of this government and goes into the life of a previous government. This was a complaint brought by Canadian civil servants against the government wherein one of the groups which we are involved with in this legislation pointed out that they were improperly paid in relation to other groups of civil servants, that is, paid less. The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decided that that was so. I quote the tribunal's decision, "The parties are agreed that the hospital services (HS group)," which is one of the groups we are dealing with in this legislation, "is predominately female and has received less wages than the general services group, a predominately a male group performing the same work of at least equal value."

The government has fought that decision all through the piece, rather than doing the proper thing. I think it is fair to point out that this decision predates the present government, but that does not excuse it for not having taken immediate action when it did come to power.

Nonetheless, during election campaigns the Prime Minister himself has reiterated time and time again—I am not going to read what he said during election campaigns—that this government is unequivocally committed to affirmative action. He said that it is unequivocally committed to making sure that women receive equal pay for work of equal value. In fact he stated on more than one occasion that there was money actually being set aside in order to accommodate the equalization of pay for work of equal value.

This concept on the part of the Prime Minister goes back as far as the 1984 election when I think the nation as a whole was really quite taken up with what appeared to be the sincerity of that man when he spoke to the National Action Committee on the Status of Women and other groups during the debates in that election campaign. Subsequently, very little has happened. The fact that the hospital services group in this particular instance did not receive the kind of amelioration for the problem which they faced is evidence that that did not occur. Not only did it not occur between 1984 and 1988, nothing of any particular substance has occurred since the 1988 election.

When we compare the forty-first anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights and the government's apparent commitment to it and its actions, we can only conclude that there certainly is a sense that the government has not lived up to its commitments. Of course that is really not too surprising considering some of its other actions since it came to power even as far back as 1984.

• (1240)

The problems did not start there. When we look at the problems that the ships crews are having, as well as the problems the hospital groups are having, and compare that to the time when there was another strike in progress a month or two ago with the parole officers and another group of employees in the federal government, we see that these three groups make up the total of those who have gone on strike in the civil service within the last short period of time.

I do not suppose it would be a surprise to anyone if I were to point out that if the government had had its way and followed its usual course of action, then these three groups of people literally would not have been able to strike. Since the inception of the ability of the Public service to go on strike these three groups of employees, along with many others, have not been able to go on strike. That is because each year as contract time comes up, the government designates a certain number of people within particular groups whom it considers to be performing essential services, therefore precluding them from being able to go on strike. This year, that did not occur.

The course of action on which the government proceeded as a result of its having overlooked designating

these people as essential certainly reflects incompetence. It goes back again to its lack of commitment to the very basic human rights which were spoken of so eloquently when this legislation was first introduced. Once the government realized it had made a mistake, once it realized there was a possibility that not only these three groups, but many, many others within the civil service action that it conceived possible to prevent these people from going on strike anyway. Specifically, it went to the courts. It made a mistake, and then went to the courts to try to get the courts to overturn the fact that it had made a mistake. It went to the courts to try and get the decision that these people would be able to go on strike overturned. It went to the courts not once but twice.

I suspect it would have gone to the Supreme Court as well had it not been for the fact that by the time the Supreme Court decision would have been rendered the contract would have long since expired. The government had other fish to fry, other ways of getting these people back to work, even though there was a possibility they may go on strike.

I think it is important to point out, as I said before, that many, many more people within the Public Service were able to go on strike other than those in these three groups. In spite of the fact that many other civil servants had the right to go on strike, because of the government's mistake only those three groups did go on strike. I refer to the parole officers, ships crews and the hospital services people who did go on strike, exercising their democratic right for the first time since 1967, when it first became possible for civil servants to be unionized at all, and ostensibly at least to have the right to strike.

There are some very good reasons for these people to go on strike when for the first time they had the opportunity to do so. It in no way signifies that they are strike-happy. What it does signify is that they had no other alternative. Through all the preceding years of their employment with the government they had been prevented from going on strike. As I pointed out before, they had become the most poorly paid within the civil service. I was on the picket line the other day with them and there were different ones pointing out to me the problems they were having. One woman was a single parent with two children earning $16,000 a year.

I do not think there is a community within Canada where $16,000 with one child constitutes anything above the poverty level. That is an atrociously low amount of money for a person to make who is trying to support a family in any kind of meaningful style.

Another woman, a widow with four children, pointed out to me that she was earning $20,000 a year. I guarantee that at those levels of earning, unless one lives in a rural area that is certainly below the poverty level.

It is shameful that the Canadian government, and I am sure that the Canadian people, would find it impossible to support a situation where the Canadian public are condoning—and I guess that is the only way to describe it—employees of the government making so little money and living in such dire straits.

We have a situation where out of desperation these three groups did exercise their democratic rights. They have gone on strike in order to try, as is the common practice in such a situation, to improve their condition in life.

The arguments put forth by the government concerning the need for this back to work legislation certainly begs a question. We have been through one day of debate. We have been through the legislative committee process on this issue. Nowhere has the government been able to point out that there is any threat to the livelihoods of Canadians, or any threats to the lives of Canadians. There was reference made earlier to a decision of the International Labour Organization. I do not intend to go into a description of how the ILO is constituted, that has already been very well pointed out.

The decision of the committee of the ILO states in part, "Nevertheless, unfortunate as these consequences are, they cannot justify an abridgement of the fundamental rights guaranteed by conventions number 87 and 98, unless they reach the point where they affect the life, personal safety or health of the whole or part of the population." In no case has this been evidenced. The Coast Guard workers, the ships crews group, as admitted to by the government, have exemplified the greatest of responsibility in this situation. Before they went on strike they offered to supply personnel wherever it was necessary in order to protect the safety of the Canadian public on our national waterways. The government admits that in no way has there been any threat whatsoever as a result of the strike.

In the case of the hospital group, the hospital services group offered to supply services in their places of work. They offered to provide 8 per cent of the people who would ordinarily do the work. The government said that was not satisfactory. It summarily dismissed the whole situation as if there were no other alternatives which may not have been any more complicated than asking the hospital services group, the Public Service Alliance of Canada, whether or not the 8 per cent was the absolute maximum which they would supply. That was never done. There was a great deal of evidence in the public domain to show that the government was very insincere in its approach to the hospital services workers. In addition, it has been adamant in trying to prevent them from going on strike at all, in spite of the fact that it has been so demonstrably uncaring with regard to its obligations under the decision of the Human Rights Commission.

• (1250)

There have been references made to the different people affected by this strike. There is a veterans home in Saskatoon. Long before these people were able to go on strike legally, the government had taken action to remove people from the home and to put them into different medical facilities within the city of Saskatoon. That was much to the dismay, I would point out, of the families of the people involved. These hospital services workers are a part of the families of these veterans who are in our home. In many cases they are the only families that some of these veterans have, since their own families live very far away. They have become part of the daily lives of these people. Even where the family members do not live great distances away the families themselves have said, "Please do not move these people". It is going to be far more disturbing to them to have them moved. The government could have found a way to accommodate the union's offer to provide the essential services that these people would have required without having disturbed them unduly.

The issue of pay equity with the hospital services workers are something which the government is going to have to address sooner or later. The decree is there. If the government wants to settle this strike quickly, then it can start by showing good intentions by simply saying "Look, we do not have to wait for the long process of the Human Rights Commission Tribunal to be implemented." It could just go ahead and do it as it is. I cannot understand why the government has not done that.

These people will never get another chance to strike. If the government is going to designate workers as being essential then I challenge it to pay them as they are as valuable and as essential to society as the government now claims. That has not been the case in the past. If the government is going to designate them, then pay them.

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, I have some comments about the speech that was just given by my colleague from Saskatoon. The comments that he made deal with a very important principle in this country. It is a principle of paying people what they are worth. It is a principle that this government has absolutely steadfastly refused to adhere to.

We heard a lot of rhetoric in this House over the last number of weeks as this issue came before us. I think my hon. colleague would agree that there are a lot of individuals out there who are not exactly sure what the main issues are that have precipitated the strike and this very unusual motion, which I think has only been introduced twice before in this place. Basically, it is an advance closure motion. Not only will this government not negotiate in good faith with the unions and adhere to the collective bargaining principles, it is trying to override the established principles and the standing orders of this place by using strange motions in the House.

What I want to get to is the issue of pay. I think many Canadians out there are saying, "Well, we have these two groups of public servants who are on strike and causing some dislocation in the economy". It is in the economy that the dislocation is taking place—the St. Lawrence Seaway economy. We have heard everybody from all sides of this House say that they are concerned about that, and we are concerned about it.

But let us not blame those employees who have exercised their right to strike for just pay for the work that they do. The individuals that I have talked to who work with the ships crews get paid on average about $20,000 a year—a wonderful salary. People who work in the retail sector, restaurant sector, transportation sector and private sector in the marine industries get paid much more than that. But for some reason this government is hell bent on painting these employees as somehow trying

to gouge the public purse, somehow trying to pick the pockets of the taxpayers because of their greed.

I just want to put that on the record. I think my hon. friend will agree, since he has been following this issue as intently as members from my party have been doing. These individuals are getting $20,000 a year. What do they do? They come and say to the government, "We want a couple of things. First of all, we want to negotiate in good faith". They did that for over two years. They did not go on strike the first day that they could have, they negotiated for two years. Did they ask for a 50 per cent increase? No. Perhaps they should have. If they had known they were going to get the treatment that they are getting now in this place by this government, they should have asked for 100 per cent. They would be well worth 100 per cent. But that is not what they did. They came in with a reasonable request.

First, they said, "Don't discriminate against us for the job that we do based on where we live. Get rid of that regional rate of pay". That is exactly what the union asked on behalf of its membership.

The second thing that they asked was that they get paid a shift differential, that they get paid for sea duty. It works out to $177 per month. They asked for a couple of other very small fringe benefits. The over-all cost of the package was not the 17 per cent that the government and the President of the Treasury Board continue to push out, the actual increase was closer to 6 per cent. That is terribly misleading to the Canadian public and a great disservice to those men and women who work as ships crews.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague to make some comment on the government's misleading figures, about this terrible group of ships crews who are looking for 17 per cent, when in actual fact we both know that it is 6 per cent. I would like him to comment on that.

Mr. Fisher: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the questions. I would point out that that is not the only area in which misleading statements have been made by the government.

There is one very misleading statement that came out as a result of questions in the House of Commons the other day when the President of the Treasury Board implied that the President of the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada was condoning the introduction of back to work legislation.

I have a letter which I am not going to quote, but I would certainly like to put on the record that Iris Craig, president of that organization, wrote to the President of the Treasury Board and stated in no uncertain terms that she was in no way in favour of the back to work legislation and was condemnatory of the government's actions, as the rest of us are.

On the matter of rates of pay, it is very hard to understand why the government would distort what is actually happening. It is true that if these agreements are implemented, the rates will be a little bit higher than the general percentage of settlement within the rest of the public service. But it is not the rest of the public service that is complaining about this, it is the government itself. The basic principle is that this kind of settlement has to be put in place in order for these people to receive the kind of pay that they ought to get.

It is certainly not 14 per cent every year of the contract. For the government to imply that that is the case is so erroneous as to be beyond description. It is a reasonable 5 per cent, 4.8 and 4.6, something like that, over what will probably be, in the end, 42 months. That is certainly what is being negotiated now. I thank my colleague for raising that and the opportunity to respond to it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It being 1 p.m., I do now leave the chair until 2 p.m.

The House took recess at 1.02 p.m.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

TRAGEDY AT SEA

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, I just want to say a few words about the sailors lost at sea in Atlantic Canada the last few days, some of whom were Nova Scotia fishermen.

We all know how cold a Canadian winter can be, but just imagine how cold it is on the deck of a 50-foot fishing boat in seas with 30-foot waves in the middle of December. Imagine trying to work your hands on frozen lines and nets while being sprayed with freezing water. Imagine seeing a huge wave coming at your boat and wondering if the boat can take it.

It appears now that three such vessels were victims of such waves and did not make it.

Any time a small vessel goes to sea there is always a chance that it may not come back. It is still a shock and a great loss when it does happen.

All Nova Scotians feel the loss of these sailors and our sympathy goes out to all those who lost relatives, loved ones and friends in these three related tragedies.

* * *

SOCIAL SCIENCES

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I have previously stood in this House and condemned the government's decisions with respect to the centres of excellence project, in so far as they excluded completely and totally any project from the social sciences or the humanities.

I would like to quote briefly from the words of Allan Bromley, the American assistant to the President for science and technology policy. It is a very important quote which states:

> Many of the outstanding problems we face today—such as the fate of the environment, the danger of nuclear war, the curse of world hunger, and the burgeoning costs of medical care, to name just a few—are often laid at the door of science and technology. Yet in all of these cases, the science and technology needed to solve these problems are effectively in hand. What we do not know are the social, behavioural, and economic consequences of the various possible courses of action available to us.

On this day, the third symposium of scientists and parliamentarians, I think it is befitting for the government to review its decision and to fund a social science or humanities project.

* * *

CAMBODIA

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, with all that is happening in the world it is easy to overlook the crisis in Cambodia. Yet immediate international attention is required because of the possible return to power of the reprehensible Khmer Rouge.

Since the Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge have launched a number of attacks and made some territorial gains. Their membership in the opposition coalition, recognized by the UN—thanks ironically to western support—creates a real possibility that they will be participants in a future Cambodian government.

I urge the Prime Minister to withdraw Canadian diplomatic support for the coalition and to oppose any new arrangement which would include the Khmer Rouge. Canada must also pressure other nations to follow suit and to act together to have China exercise a more responsible role in that region.

It is also time—indeed overdue—that Canada put in place, through non-governmental organizations, a development assistance package for Cambodia. Improved ties with the Hun Sen government might also be in order.

Finally, let us look at improving ties with the Vietnamese government. The war in Vietnam is long over. Vietnamese troops have now left Cambodia. Let us try to reintegrate Vietnam into the international community.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CHILD ABUSE

Mrs. Gabrielle Bertrand (Brome—Missisquoi): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon our country paid a last tribute to the victims of the tragic incident that occured last Wednesday. As a result of these events, we have given serious thought to some of the situations in our society.

Today, I would like to consider one of these situations in particular, namely, child abuse.

In some countries, children die of hunger. They cannot ask for help because they do not have the strength to do so. In our supposedly wealthy and civilized country, there are also children who cry for help. These children have been abused, shifted from foster home to foster home, and often left fo fend for themselves.

There are children who are unloved, street children, children of divorced parents, unwanted children. And they are all very much alone.

At a time when people talk about the rights of the unborn, and so they should, perhaps we should also consider the rights of those who have already received the gift of life, but a life that is often one of undeserved suffering, with terrifying consequences.

* * *

[*English*]

HIGHWAYS

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, in this last week the Ontario government has committed almost half a billion dollars toward improving the highways in northern Ontario.

Premier David Peterson, the Minister of Transport, Bill Wrye, and the Minister of Northern Affairs, Rene Fontaine, realize the needs of the north. They have acted, and they should be congratulated.

We need this government to develop a national transportation policy which addresses the needs of the highways in northern Ontario.

If the planned cuts to VIA Rail proceed on January 15, residents of rural and small-town Canada will become more reliant than ever before on our highway infrastructure. I urge this government to follow the leadership demonstrated by the Ontario government and allocate sufficient resources to the development of highways in northern Ontario. This government can no longer use the excuse that it is waiting for the province of Ontario to act. Ontario has taken positive action, positive action to the tune of $460 million for future highway expansion.

The onus is now on this government to reciprocate. Show your commitment to northern Ontario. Prove that you do have a total commitment to the north of this country.

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[*Translation*]

CANADIAN EXPLORATION INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Exploration Incentive Program was introduced on May 3, 1988.

The program was a response to the concerns expressed by the natural resources sector about the impact of two factors that may make things difficult for companies that try to raise new capital by issuing flow-through shares to finance exploration activities, and I am referring to the stock market crash in 1987 and tax reform.

The CEIP expires on December 31, 1990, and today I am worried about the survival of this program.

Mr. Speaker, the next federal budget is imminent, and we must ensure that the finance minister does not get rid of the CEIP in the next Budget.

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[*English*]

CANADA-U.S. FREE TRADE

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Alliance for Trade and Job Opportunities has at long last decided to release a partial list of corporate donors that eagerly lined up to donate money to the free trade advertising extravaganza launched by big business in the last general election.

Contrary to earlier promises, this is not a complete list. Many American multinationals that were only too happy to go public with the support for the sell-out free trade deal have become surprisingly modest about releasing information about how much money they spent propping up the Tory Party. Companies refusing to release such information includes such huge U.S. companies as AT&T, GM and 3M. After shouting support for free trade from the roof-tops, why skulk in the closet about how much they spent supporting their Tory pals? Are they having an attack of conscience after seeing the disastrous effects of the deal on the Canadian economy? Or are they afraid to draw attention to themselves and endure the wrath of a duped Canadian public?

The most shameful aspect of this list is that every one of these huge corporations earned a tax deduction by donating vast sums to support the re-election of their cronies in the Tory Party. For example, Alcan contributed $250,000. Not only did this outstanding corporate citizen deduct every cent of this blatantly political contribution, but in 1986 the company managed to make so many tax deductions that it received a tax credit of $32 million after earning profits of $220 million. The Tory Party was so concerned about Alcan's measly profit of

$220 million that it decided to top it up with another $32 million of taxpayers' dollars.

In addition, four Canadian donors contributing over $250,000—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I regret having to interrupt the member.

* * *

• (1410)

[*Translation*]

PATENT ACT

Mr. Jean-Marc Robitaille (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, December 7 was the second anniversary of the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board, created as a result of the 1987 amendments to the Patent Act, contained in Bill C-22.

With these amendments, our government intended to guarantee consumer access to drugs at reasonable prices, while at the same time providing an incentive to medical research in Canada. And those are exactly the results we are seeing today.

According to the first report, this new policy saved the Canadian consumer betwen $60 to $80 million last year.

Furthermore, during the first years the act to amend the Patent Act was in effect, the pharmaceutical industry invested over $72 million in research and development in Quebec, with Montreal benefiting most from these investments and the new jobs they generate.

Mr. Speaker, without those endless discussions by members of the opposition, especially by Liberal senators who did everything they could to prevent these changes from being enacted by Parliament, consumers, industry and workers in Quebec and across Canada would have enjoyed benefits much sooner.

[*English*]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, December 10, was International Human Rights Day. It is therefore fitting to consider today the case of Reverend Laszlo Tokes of Romania.

Reverend Tokes is a well known religious leader and human rights advocate. Last year he boldly protested the "village destruction program" undertaken by his government. He has continued to knock on government doors and seek, through peaceful means, full enjoyment for all Romanian citizens of their right to private worship and community life.

For his determination to pursue his mission, he was evicted by his government from his congregation. Canada must persuade Romania to live up to its international responsibilities on human rights. Reverend Tokes, in fact all citizens of the world, have the right to practice their religion without fear of persecution.

I ask this government to take action to ensure that the Romanian government allow Reverend Tokes to continue to minister to his congregation. In the name of international solidarity, Canada must ensure that all citizens of the world be given their rightful place in their own country as we in our own land support the work of the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

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[*Translation*]

TOURISM

Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Québec-Est): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to pay tribute today in this House to a distinguished Quebecer who has made a name for himself in tourism in the Quebec city area.

Mr. Speaker, Jacques du Sault has just been named president of Canada's Capital Visitors and Convention Bureau following a nation-wide competition in which more than 220 candidates competed this prestigious position.

Jacques du Sault will be able to bring together people on both sides of the river in Ottawa—Hull and pool

everyone's efforts in the National Capital Region for properly planned and coordinated tourism development.

He has been a hotel keeper, founding president of the Quebec City Region Tourism Board, president of the Tourism Committee of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Metropolitan Quebec and director of the tourism development plan management committee for the greater Quebec region. His great personal experience, perfect bilingualism and desire to develop this beautiful region harmoniously will make Jacques du Sault an effective president.

* * *

[*English*]

GUN CONTROL

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, today in Montreal thousands of people are mourning the deaths of 14 women at the hands of a gun-toting madman. He was able to buy his semi-automatic rifle because he had met all legal requirements.

On Saturday, the Prime Minister said the ease with which Marc Lepine obtained his instrument of mass murder was "serious and unacceptable". He is quoted as saying his government would deal with the problem if necessary.

The fact that a man with serious psychological problems was able to legally obtain a powerful rifle and kill and wound more than two dozen innocent people should make it obvious even to the Prime Minister that action is necessary.

At the end of October, the Minister of Justice said he expected to bring in gun control legislation before Christmas. On Friday, the Solicitor General said it would be January or possibly later before legislation is tabled.

The time for action is now. We cannot wait for more innocent blood to be shed.

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THE LATE ROBERT HAMILTON HUBBARD

Mr. John E. Cole (York—Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, may I ask this House to note the passing of a distinguished and scholarly Canadian gentleman. I refer to Robert Hamilton Hubbard who, until his sudden death this past November, served this nation in a quiet, unassuming and scholarly way, adding to our knowledge of ourselves as a nation and gently refining our view of the world.

It is not my intention to recite the details of Robert Hubbard's illustrious career, his entry into the Canadian *Who's Who* is almost four inches long, but to ask this House to note his passing and to acknowledge his aid to the ordinary business of Parliament.

I refer to the fact that the work of his later years; historian and cultural advisor to our governors general, and his unchallenged position as Canada's foremost art historian, made it an entirely natural matter to ask for his advice in an important artistic and cultural endeavour, such as the creation of national monuments.

As adviser to the committee formed to produce the splendid Diefenbaker monument that is engaged in similarly honouring Lester B. Pearson, Robert Hubbard will be missed both for the fine mind that he used to our benefit and for his gentlemanly and courteous demeanour which was a model to us all.

* * *

CLOSURE OF CFB SUMMERSIDE

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, since the government announced its disastrous decision to close CFB Summerside, Prince Edward Islanders have presented many valid objections but their protests continue to fall on deaf ears.

Now the Medical Society of Prince Edward Island says the relocation of the 413 Search and Rescue Squadron to CFB Greenwood will jeopardize the health and lives of islanders due to delays in medical evacuations to the mainland. Under the most ideal conditions, a one-hour delay in missions will occur. In bad weather, departures from Greenwood are time consuming and dangerous, whereas from Summerside they are safe and efficient.

Islanders are already isolated and therefore vulnerable. Why is this government deliberately exposing them to unnecessary delays in medical treatment resulting in distress, pain and even death? Islanders have a right to efficient medical services which means keeping the 413 Squadron at CFB Summerside.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Barbara Greene (Don Valley North): Mr. Speaker, the carnage at the University of Montreal surely represents the manic edge of hatred and resentment by men against women achievers in non-traditional fields. Almost every woman in this House and other women who compete against men have experienced actions that reveal the misogyny that confronts women in universities, colleges, the workplace, the home, and on the streets of our nation. This hideously unjust desecration has brought home to most Canadians the need for action.

I urge the Prime Minister to establish a joint parliamentary committee to investigate violence against women, the harassment and the structural obstacles confronting women as we attempt to take our rightful place in society.

I also urge the Minister of Justice to bring forward gun control legislation to prohibit the sale or possession of automatic or semi-automatic weapons with the exception of those required by police forces. Lethal weapons should not be easily available to disturbed individuals. There should be no repetition of a mass killing such as the one in Montreal.

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TOURISM

Mr. Bob Wood (Nipissing): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my concern over the grave and ominous future that confronts the tourism industry in the north. The futile and uncoordinated policies that this government has put forth will do nothing but decimate this key mechanism for northern development.

Tourism is perhaps Canada's biggest hidden industry, hidden to the tune of $21 billion per year. It plays a major role in stimulating northern development. Yet this government has done nothing to promote tourism in this country. On the contrary, with the cutbacks to VIA Rail and the impending goods and services tax, the government has come a long way in promoting tourism in other countries except our own. The loss of VIA Rail's Canadian route, combined with the loss of other northern routes, does not bode well for prospects for further development.

The government has said that the GST will not affect tourism. However, the Conference Board of Canada estimates that $1 billion will be lost in 1991 alone and the Northern Ontario Tourist Outfitters Association has predicted a 20 per cent decline in tourism in the north. The government should be seizing every opportunity to expand this sector of the economy. When will this government give tourism the high priority status that it deserves?

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Douglas Young (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister have insisted that there will not be any major changes to the goods and services tax proposal. The minister said no tax on groceries, and some Conservative MPs said: "Well, let's try it". The minister said no to GST on existing housing, and the Blenkarn report says: "Let's do it".

Now, in what has been described by some as a non-criminal leak, the government says: "No taxes on groceries, no taxes on existing housing, but a GST rate of 7 per cent".

Will the Finance Minister not wait this time for polling results and withdraw his crazy quilt patch-work proposal because Canadians are not prepared to take seven strokes of the tax whip any more than they are prepared to take nine strokes of the GST tax whip.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I might take that particular suggestion more seriously if I had had any sort of alternative proposal from the Liberal party during the course of the last four months.

Ms. Clancy: Scrap it.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): The hon. member from Halifax says "scrap it". This is the sort of tax that we have been struggling with as a country for 65 years now. There was a Royal commission in 1940. There was another commission in 1955, another one in 1966, another one in 1973, and another one in 1983. All of them said: "Let's get rid of the tax". We have to move to a new type of sales tax system because the existing tax is hurting the economy.

• (1420)

We are going to be proceeding with this tax. As the Prime Minister said, we will be making an announcement sometime before Christmas. As soon as I have the precise timing on that announcement, I will be advising the House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Young (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, the federal government is now negotiating with the provinces, no doubt to force them to accept an agreement on a national sales tax. Does the government intend to force the provinces to accept a national sales tax by freezing transfer payments for post-secondary education and health care? My question to the Minister of Finance is this: Does he now intend to put through his goods and services tax on the backs of the provinces?

[*English*]

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, it is not a question of forcing the provinces to do anything. We had a meeting of federal and provincial finance ministers last Thursday. At that meeting there was a discussion of the goods and services tax. The provinces indicated there were a number of areas on which they wished to have further discussion. We have established a process, starting with meetings probably very early in January so we can pursue some of these concerns that the provinces have.

There is no question, there never has been a question, of whether or not we will force the provinces to do something. If they wish to join a national sales tax at some time in the future we have said all along that the door was open. There will be nothing done in the proposal, either in the design or in the implementation, to preclude that from happening.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, the government now has been dog-dancing around the goods and services tax proposal for quite some time. The minister just referred to whether or not there were any alternatives.

What I think would be interesting for Canadians to know is whether the Minister of Finance recognizes that he must focus on interest rates in this country that are up to 5 per cent higher than interest rates in the United States and on a Canadian dollar that has gone over 86 cents. Those two single things alone cause more damage to exports in Canada than anything that the MST has done over the years.

The question to the Minister of Finance is: After all this time spent on the goods and services taxes and all the flaws that are in it, is he prepared now to focus on doing something about the high interest rates and the high value of the Canadian dollar in this country to try to protect our export industries?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): I think that the hon. member can only look back over the last five years to the number of statements I have made which recognize very clearly the importance of the export industry in this country and also the importance of having low interest rates.

We do have a problem of inflation in the country, a problem that is not just limited to certain parts of the country, but is growing more and more widespread across it. It is this problem that we feel we must deal with and we are going to deal with it, but that takes time. Unfortunately, it is taking longer than we expected because of the underlying strength in the economy. There are some signs that have appeared in the economic data over the last little while which indicate that there is some subsiding here, and hopefully there will be some time in the future when we can see lower interest rates.

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, after months of hearing the Minister of Finance say that the goods and services tax rate could not be reduced from 9 per cent, Canadians are not going to be fooled by the suggestion of a 7 per cent rate. The Minister's problem, I suggest to him, is his own credibility.

No one believes that this government is not going to bring in the tax at one rate and increase it as soon as it gets a chance to do so. Canadians know that no matter what rate the GST is at the tax is going to be an administrative nightmare. They know that no matter what the rate is, it is not going to be visible. They know it is going to hurt the poor and the disadvantaged.

Why does the Minister not listen to what Canadians are saying and scrap this insane tax instead of sitting around listening to the pollsters trying to figure out how to hoodwink Canadians?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, there is so much that is wrong in the preamble of the hon. member's question that I do not know where to start. Let me make it clear.

The question has not been whether or not you can get an 8 per cent rate, a 7 per cent rate, or a 6 per cent rate. It is how you get to that rate, and that is where the difficult trade-offs come. This is what I have been pointing out time and time again. When people ask me that question on rate, I say there are very difficult trade-offs and the question that you have to respond to is what trade-offs are you prepared to make.

We had some useful suggestions from the Conservative members of the finance committee. We got absolutely nothing from the Liberal Party of Canada as to how we might get the rate down. As I replied in answer to one of the earlier questions, it strikes me as very unusual that we should have this posturing on the part of Liberal members when they have done absolutely nothing to contribute to the dialogue and the debate that is going to result in a better sales tax system in this country.

Mr. Manley: Mr. Speaker, I turn the minister's words back to him. The problem with the GST is that it is such a mess it is hard to know where to start to criticize it.

The government is proposing to replace a tax, which is currently paid by about 75,000 firms, with one that is going to be collected by about 1.25 million firms, and most of them are going to file monthly forms. Whatever the rate, Canada is going to be the only developed country in the world with a two-tier retail tax, and the minister will enjoy the distinction of having introduced the single most complex fiscal measure in Canada's history.

Will the minister not admit that implementing the GST in January, 1991, will be an administrative fiasco and the only reason for his obsession with this date is that he hopes election.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, at some time governments have to decide on these major issues and do something.

As I indicated in response to an earlier question, the Liberal party looked at five consecutive reports every ten years and ignored each one of them. Each time a report came back it stated: "Get rid of the manufacturers' sales tax." The point is that at the time when we know there is a tax that is a bad tax for the country, it must be removed and we are going to remove it.

The hon. member said there are only 75,000 people who pay the tax directly, but indirectly every Canadian consumer pays the existing federal sales tax. But it is invisible. No one knows that it is there. In response to my friend from Gloucester, this tax is going to be a very visible tax. There will not be one person in the country who will not be aware that there is a goods and services tax, and that is accountability. For years and years the Liberal party ignored the fact that the existing tax is hidden. This is one of the things we are going to change because it brings about better accountability in government.

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AGRICULTURE

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. Government figures for next year's farm net income show declines of 54 per cent in the province of Alberta, declines of 87 per cent in Manitoba, and a whopping decline of 101 per cent in Saskatchewan. His anti-inflation program seems to have wiped out farm incomes altogether on the prairies.

Farm families have no unemployment insurance, they are not eligible for welfare, and other safety nets miss them as well. Since they will not have enough income to pay cash costs, let alone something to support families and make capital payments, what does the government intend to do?

• (1430)

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture has addressed that question in the House. There is a major conference on today and tomorrow that will involve discussion of that very question. I expect that the more appropriate time to respond to that question is after the consultation has occurred, after the Minister of Agriculture has listened to the concerns of the farming community. After that we can make some decisions.

Mr. Althouse: Mr. Speaker, global farm production has failed to meet global demand in three consecutive years. Yet, Canadian grain prices are lower this year than last year. Will the Minister of Finance abandon his high

interest rate, high dollar policy to allow farmers to reduce their input costs and increase the export value of their grain?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, I think if the hon. member reflects on the purpose of the goods and services tax, he will see that that is a means by which all farmers can remove the tax on all of their—

Mr. Althouse: That wasn't the question.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): The hon. member is shaking his head. Clearly, the hon. member does not understand what the goods and services tax is all about. It will allow the farmer to remove all forms of taxes on all business inputs into the farming operation.

The hon. member has raised the question of interest rates. If he thinks back to 1980–81–82, at a time when interest rates were very high in this country, it was because the government of the day forgot and ignored the whole question of inflation that was building through the course of the seventies—

Mr. Althouse: You wiped out income.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): It did not address the problem, and the result was the blow-off of high inflation of 13 per cent, high interest rates of about 20 per cent to 25 per cent and the tremendous disaster which resulted from that. That is what we are trying to avoid. We understand that there are concerns which are being expressed now, but if we do not address this problem we are going to get right back into the mess—

Mr. Althouse: No income is not inflationary.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member can only yell. If he could listen a bit, he might learn something.

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Agriculture, I will also direct my question to the Minister of Finance. Article 703 of the free trade agreement states that in order to facilitate trade in agricultural goods, Canada and the United States shall work together to eliminate what is termed "restrictive trade barriers". Given the fact that supply management programs are under heavy attack during the current GATT negotiations and also by the international Cairns Group, constituting what we could define as "restrictive trade barriers", will the minister agree that the future of Canada's supply management systems under the provisions of the free trade agreement in fact hinges on our successful performance at these negotiations?

Second, will the minister specify what actions his government is prepared to initiate and to take to ensure that our supply management systems, as we know them today, are going to be maintained?

Mr. Murray Cardiff (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to respond to the hon. member, especially at a time like this when we have so many farmers and agri-food people in Ottawa to attend a conference. This conference is one of the largest ever held, where all of the sectors of the agri-food industry are brought together to work toward a common goal of achieving a better income and a future for the industry.

The member addressed supply management. Part of that meeting is devoted particularly to supply management, where these issues will be addressed. I hope that some hon. members will be there and take part by providing input and listening to the concerns of their constituents as well. We would welcome all of you to come to that conference this afternoon and tomorrow.

We are firmly committed to the continuation of supply management. We are addressing it and working hand in hand with the producers on supply management to keep a viable industry operational and working with them at GATT in what decisions are being taken there. We will stand firmly committed to working with them and to the supply management sector.

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PORNOGRAPHY

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, the fact that violence in the media contributes to violence against women is accepted by virtually all experts. Twice this government has introduced legislation against pornography and twice has had to withdraw it.

My question is directed to the Minister of Justice. Will the minister undertake today to bring in legislation against pornography that includes sanctions against violence, violence outside of sexual context, in movies, television, videos and magazines?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, my colleague is correct that during the last Parliament we brought in legislation which would have tackled the very serious

problem of pornography. It included child pornography, violence and all sorts of pornography.

Had my hon. friend been here I am sure she might have been able to persuade the members of her party who filibustered it to let it go to committee so that it could have been studied in detail. Unfortunately, we were unable to move it through the House due to the intransigence of the Liberal party.

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, I suggest the minister knows better. That legislation was very defective. One of its shortcomings was that violence in itself, apart from sexuality, violence against women was not identified in that legislation as pornography. Is the minister prepared to bring forward legislation that this House would support that will deal with that kind of pornography?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I welcome my friend's transformation on the road back from Damascus. I hope that my hon. friend will know that during the previous administration this area was never properly addressed. We tried in good faith to address it. We brought in a bill. We do not claim, as did the previous liberal administration, that everything we do is perfect. We brought it in and had we got it to committee that very important subject could have been addressed. I regret that. However, we are working on it and I hope to bring something forward in the near future.

* * *

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mrs. Diane Marleau (Sudbury): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Finance. Transportation is a key factor to Canada's economic and social well-being. It is the life line I would suggest to all the outlying regions of our country. Yet the proposed goods and services tax will apply to all transportation costs whether it be at 9 per cent, 7 per cent or any per cent. Northerners will pay more. They will pay more for the snowsuits for their children. They will pay more for their heating bills and they will pay more for all other necessities of life because transportation costs will be built in, and those are higher.

Will the minister admit that the goods and services tax discriminates against people in outlying regions? What does he propose to do about it?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me say very clearly that the tax on transportation cost is removed by the particular design of the goods and services tax so that there is no tax on the transportation cost.

The hon. member is expressing some surprise on that. I would suggest that she learn how the tax is designed to remove the tax from all business inputs, and one of those inputs is transportation costs. The hon. member has zeroed in on one aspect of the tax but I think it is very clear in the economic analysis that has been done that the regions of the country, because they normally depend more on exports, normally depend on very capital intensive industries, are beneficiaries of the goods and services tax. That is why the regions of the country benefit more than parts of the country like southern Ontario or southern Quebec. That comes from the nature of the tax itself.

• (1440)

Mrs. Marleau: Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe this. The Minister of Finance does not understand his own tax. Since when does a vendor pay a cost of transportation and not add it into the cost that he charges to the consumer? When you buy a refrigerator in northern Ontario, do you not pay for the transportation costs in the final price, and then there is a tax?

What will the minister do to offset this double whammy to people who live away from the major centres? Maybe he should study his own tax.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker I think that I understand the tax having sat around boardroom tables and talked to people from coast to coast to coast on the nature of this tax. I think I do understand how the tax is constructed.

Let me again go back to the comments that the hon. member has raised. There is no question that transportation costs are one of the costs in a product that is consumed in any part of the country. That is only one part of the cost. There are other costs that are part of the over-all cost of the product that is consumed but the key here is that you have to look at the broad benefit, the

broad impact of the tax to different parts of the country as opposed to identifying one particular element of it.

As an example, the costs of accommodation in downtown Toronto are far greater than they are in other parts of the country. If we want to zero in on one particular aspect of the tax, I could draw an argument that says the tax is unfair in downtown Toronto. You have to look at the broad impact of the tax and that is where the economic analysis says that the regions of the country are greater beneficiaries than is the case in the more developed areas of southwestern Ontario.

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FISHERIES

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. He knows that today National Sea Products announced that 1,562 people will be losing their jobs.

The minister has had a special cabinet committee on this crisis for the last six months. Name one thing that the government is going to do to keep those plants going and to help those communities. Why has the government done nothing after six months of having a special committee? Why has it done nothing to keep those plants going, even on a part-time basis?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, no words exchanged in this House could capture the distress that families are going to feel as a result of the decisions announced by National Sea Products this morning. These decisions affect the communities of Canso, St. John's and North Sydney as well.

It is true to say that the government has not announced a major package of initiatives to date but we do recognize the serious dilemma facing the groundfish sector in Atlantic Canada. We are very much in tune with the needs, sentiments and anxieties of the people living in communities affected by these matters.

That is why my colleagues, the Minister for International Trade and the Minister for Public Works, in Canso and St. John's East this morning announced major initiatives in the area of industrial adjustment and industrial diversification. There will be further information to follow, as appropriate.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, the minister completely ignored the question. The government has had a special committee of cabinet for six months. No announcements have been made. They have known for weeks and weeks and weeks that these closures would be occurring. Why has the government done nothing to maintain the jobs in those communities? Why has it done absolutely nothing?

Mr. Siddon: Mr. Speaker, it is not true to suggest that anyone has known for weeks and weeks that specific communities would be impacted by specific decisions.

These are decisions that are taken by the corporate side and they depend very heavily on the circumstances in the market-place and with respect to resource supply. I repeat that the government is taking measures to ensure that there is a bright future, that there are in many cases alternatives and in some cases alternatives within the fishery in order that these communities can continue to to survive and prosper as this government would intend to be the case.

* * *

[*Translation*]

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

Mr. François Gérin (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Justice. Since November 29, Richard Bilodeau, a Canadian living in my riding, has been detained in prison in New Hampshire, in the United States, following an automobile accident in which three people were killed. U.S. authorities object to his release. They claim, on the basis of a written opinion by the U.S. Department of Justice, that the extradition treaty between Canada and the United States does not apply in the case of manslaughter and criminal negligence, when such offences are committed while driving a car. The district attorneys of the State of New Hampshire are concerned about the possibility that Canadian authorities might not observe the extradition treaty.

Clearly, Mr. Bilodeau's rights, are not being respected, and he has every right to our support and assistance.

Could the Minister of Justice reaffirm his confidence in the extradition treaty between Canada and the United States, and re-establish the facts with respect to its scope and eventual compliance with the treaty? Furthermore, could the minister reassure Mr. Bilodeau's family and

contact the U.S. Department of Justice to ensure that his rights are respected?

[*English*]

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I will take this question, if I may, on behalf of the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

The extradition treaty which is in effect between Canada and the United States does apply to this type of situation. The government is aware of Mr. Bilodeau's case and his difficulties in New Hampshire. We are following the situation carefully. I am sure the United States of America and the courts in that state will preserve Mr. Bilodeau's rights. I understand that the matter should be solved shortly.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Beauséjour): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. It is indeed a sad day for Atlantic Canada, especially for the workers in St. John's and Canso. There will be over 1,500 jobs lost and in the case of Canso, a loss of 750 jobs means the closure of the community. This government cannot allow this closure to go ahead without proper plans and proper programs to save the community.

What considerations were given by this government for the people and the workers of that community. Did the bottom line of National Sea Products weigh more than all those people put together in those communities?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, it is very important to know that the government will be very concerned with the workers and with the communities. That is our first concern.

There are a number of things under way as the Minister for International Trade and the Minister of Public Works announced this morning. First of all, we are ensuring in the short term that all of the workers will qualify for unemployment insurance and if they do not that they will obtain sufficient weeks of work to qualify. Second, there is a particular concern for older workers and the Older Workers Adjustment Program will apply in this case. Third, there is a community development fund that will be a significant step for the communities which are affected in terms of helping them to build a future.

It was also said this morning in our announcement that the level of funding will be determined by the size of the lay-offs and the needs of each community because we want to ensure that each community is looked at individually.

Mr. Robichaud: This still means that the plant will be closing.

• (1450)

[*Translation*]

How can we really be sure that the government has looked at all the options for keeping the Canso plant open? Why did National Sea announce all these cutbacks even before the fisheries plan for 1990 was published? My question is as follows: Is the government an accomplice in all these lay-offs and plant closings?

[*English*]

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, that is certainly not the case. My colleagues who have sat and discussed these pending developments without knowing which specific communities would be hit and to what degree have wrestled intensely for several months with the dilemma posed to a number of communities in Atlantic Canada, not only because of the market factors I mentioned but also because of the deteriorating abundance of supply to these plants.

The question then arose as to whether a number of plants could be kept open by operating on such a marginal basis that they no longer became economic and viable. We decided that those decisions in the final analysis were best left to the private sector but that the government would move in with the full strength of resources to look after the needs of people, to look after the rejuvenation of these communities. My colleague, the Minister of Employment and Immigration, will in the days ahead be giving further detail on how we intend to do that.

Oral Questions

NORTHERN TAX ALLOWANCE

Mr. Réginald Bélair (Cochrane—Superior): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Finance. At the end of October the northern tax benefits report was made public. If the recommendations are implemented as proposed, some 72 communities in northern Ontario will lose this benefit and drain some $5 million from the economy. Some of the communities like Marathon, Terrace Bay, Schreiber and Geraldton should also have qualified.

Considering that seven sawmills have closed and 2,000 jobs have been lost already, can the minister assure this House and northern Ontarians that he will totally reject the report's recommendation?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member has said, the report was made available some time toward the end of October. We have been reviewing this report and are continuing to do that work. At this point I do not have any statement as to what the government's position will be.

We appreciate the work that was done by that task force, a task force composed of people who live in isolated communities and who spent a good deal of time going around the country understanding the problems and trying to come up with a proposal that was an equitable and stable proposal. That is the result that they have presented to the government.

As I said, we are studying this now and I hope that not too far down the road we will have a decision.

* * *

FORESTRY

Mr. Bob Wood (Nipissing): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister for International Trade, I have a question for the Minister of Forestry that also deals with the serious northern Ontario problem.

It seems contradictory that on the one hand the government claims that the manufacturers' sales tax is hurting Canadian exports and uses this as a rationale for introducing the goods and services tax, yet this government has turned around and hit our forestry sector with a 15 per cent export surtax in this era of so-called free trade.

In view of the fact that our dollar has reached a 10-year high, making our exports less competitive, when will this government stop sabotaging our primary resource industries and ensure that we are competing on a level playing field?

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of State (Forestry)): Mr. Speaker, we are, of course, sensitive to the difficulties of this particular industry, particularly in northern Ontario. A number of factors are at play, including the fibre supply situation, the exchange rate and perhaps, more important, a decline in housing starts in the United States. All of these are important factors.

The hon. member knows that it would be up to the province of Ontario principally to propose, as other provinces have done, that certain offsets be required before this particular tax can be eliminated.

Let us not forget that the tax does not accrue to an American jurisdiction, but accrues to the province of Ontario which, of course, has the option to return some of this money back to the resource in northern Ontario.

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PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

On Saturday the Prime Minister announced that the government was prepared to drop the rate of the proposed GST to 7 per cent through major spending cuts of up to $6 billion per year. This promise carries an implied threat. Since the 1988 election we have seen the elimination of universality in our social programs, further cuts to health care and education, cuts in regional development, the gutting of VIA Rail, the removal of government financing of the UI program and the lay-off of tens of thousands of Canadians.

Will the Minister of Finance confirm that the proposal to reduce the proposed rate to 7 per cent will mean further massive cuts to programs affecting Canadians and will he tell us where he plans to cut back?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I think that the preamble to the hon. member's statement was as loaded with inaccuracies as I have heard in any preamble since I have been in the House.

The Prime Minister did not say that. He did indicate that there would be some spending cuts over the course of the next little while. I think the hon. member, if she is listening to people in Canada, will find that they are concerned about the debt. They are concerned about the level of government spending. They are concerned about the level of taxation.

Canadians want to be assured that we are spending taxpayers' dollars as effectively and as efficiently as possible. They also want to know that we are doing everything we can to get the level of debt down so that we are not carrying over to future generations a very heavy burden of trying to support that debt.

This is what we have been trying to do since November 1984 and we are going to continue to do that because we understand the significance of debt control in the future health of this country and in our ability to be able to maintain the programs that Canadians value.

Ms. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, the finance minister maintains the pretence that the GST is inevitable and he has said again today in this House that he has no intention of withdrawing it.

I think he has already answered this question but I am going to put it so I can get it straight from him. Is it not the strategy of this government to feed the anxiety over the federal deficit in order to sell this regressive sales tax?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, I do not think it is a question of feeding any anxieties. It is simply a question of reading the facts. The facts are there. The debt in this country is too high. It must be controlled. The deficit when we came in was $38 billion. We got it down to $28.7 billion last year, but that is still too high. It means that we have to continue to control government spending. That is the best way—

Ms. Hunter: What about interest rates?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): The hon. member throws in another question. Possibly she could get it all together and put the question to me at one time and I will give her the answer she wants.

FISHERIES

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Fisheries.

If, as the minister suggests, some of those plants are not economically viable, I believe he will agree that he must bear a fair amount of the responsibility for that. While he stood by and let the Spanish and the Portuguese rape our fish stocks those plants were having trouble finding enough fish to process.

I ask him, now that St. John's and Canso is shut down thanks to his mismanagement of the fishery, what is he prepared to do to prevent further closings, including plant closings by FPI down the road?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, later this week I will be meeting again with the Atlantic fisheries ministers who provide guidance and whom I consult regularly on the proper management plans for the Atlantic groundfish industry.

At the end of December we will be announcing our plans for 1990. In view of the extraordinary circumstances in the market-place and the persistent decline of the resource in some zones, extraordinary measures are going to be required. I will be prepared to give the member a full account of some of these measures later this month.

• (1500)

Meanwhile, I want to assure the hon. member that we have taken every measure necessary to eliminate foreign over-fishing of our domestic stocks within the Canadian 200-mile economic zone and to bring all possible pressures to bear internationally to end foreign over-fishing beyond that limit, two initiatives which the government of which he was a part failed to take in all the time it was in office.

Mr. Simmons: Mr. Speaker, by way of supplementary, I want to come to the question that has been put to the minister in various forms as to what the government intends to do to help those people who are affected by plant closings. He can look up the line to his minister of manpower, but if she stands up, I hope she does better than she did the first time.

I am not talking about the established programs, the stuff to put people on UI. I am asking the minister of fisheries or the minister of manpower what programs there are to give these people alternate job opportunities, not the stuff we already know about the UI. That is not what they want.

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I have already told the House that the entire adjustment mechanism that we have put forward is designed to ensure short-term assistance. I see the hon. member is not even listening.

Mr. Simmons: Point of order.

Mrs. McDougall: It is to ensure short-term assistance that will help to facilitate some long-term solutions.

The problem clearly is a resource problem, as the hon. member knows. That means that our resources as a government working together with the provincial government have to be to help people through the short term and then to move toward some solutions for the long term.

The community diversification issue which I spoke about before is one that is going to help communities to establish new directions and it will help deploy the resources in a way that is helpful to them.

The Deputy Speaker: We will close Question Period with one question from the member for Vancouver East and one question from the member for Abitibi.

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HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance.

This past weekend, the Canadian Ethnocultural Conference on equality rights for ethnic and visible minorities established that racism in Canada is increasing and cases which will take years to process, involving discrimination, have yet to be tested under the Charter.

I want to ask the minister if he will assure minority groups and disadvantaged people across Canada that the court challenge program which is essential if these people are to have access to the courts will not be terminated in three months' time and that there will be funding assured for 1991 and beyond, as our own Human Rights Committee of this House has recommended today, that it should continue to the year 2000. Will he recommend this?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I know of no thought being given to changing that program.

* * *

[*Translation*]

NORTHERN AND ISOLATED AREAS

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance.

At the request of the Quebec Treasury Board, the Bureau de la statistique du Québec has conducted a study to reclassify northern and isolated communities in Quebec according to the disparity index of 84 isolated communities in Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, my question is as follows: Could the Minister confirm whether the Task Force on Tax Benefits for Northern and Isolated Areas has read Quebec's final report,—I repeat its final report—which classifies isolated communities from 1 to 84, Joutel ranking 45th, Radisson 64th, Lebel-sur-Quévillon 70th, Matagami 79th and Chapais 88th. This study is a contradiction of the task force's report—

Some Hon. Members: Order!

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, let me confirm that it is my understanding that the members of the task force appointed by the federal government did consult with the members of the Quebec study group that were looking into this particular situation. The federal task force report did come out before the Quebec report was made available, but they had consulted prior to the completion of the conclusions they came to in the federal task force report.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that at the next sitting of the House, immediately before the Order of the Day is called for resuming debate on government Motion No. 1, and on any amendments proposed thereto, I will move that the debate shall not be further adjourned.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

ENERGY SUPPLIES EMERGENCY ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C–4, an act to amend the Energy Supplies Emergency Act and to amend the Access to Information Act in consequence thereof, as reported (without amendment) from a legislative committee.

Hon. Doug Lewis (for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources) moved that the bill be concurred in.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Lewis (for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources) moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a few moments just to review Bill C–4. Just over ten years ago, the Energy Supplies Emergency Act was put into place to ensure that Canada has an appropriate contingency plan in place to deal with any possible disruption in the international oil market.

As a result of the oil market crisis in 1973 and 1974, Canada became a party to the agreement of an international energy program which is administered by the International Energy Agency, the IEA. Through the IEA, 21 nation members are joined in planning for their collective energy and economic security.

The Energy Supplies Emergency Act established the Energy Supplies Allocation Board, ESAB, and made it responsible for Canada's fulfilment of the act's objectives and programs.

The act underwent a series of amendments in 1982 to improve the allocation and rationing programs. Again the government is advancing another series of housekeeping amendments in Bill C–4 to overcome operational problems which the industry and the board together have identified.

I will very briefly review the clauses of this bill. Clause 1 amends the definition of the wholesale consumer to include owners of homes, farms and small businesses and thus ensure their fair share of available supplies in case of allocation or rationing.

Clause 2 amends the composition of the Energy Supplies Allocation Board, removing Petro–Canada's membership from the board. Since its appointment to the board over a decade ago, Petro–Canada has evolved from being an instrument of public policy to becoming a major competitor in the market–place. It is now an inappropriate time to have Petro–Canada represented on the board, given the confidentiality of information supplied to the board and the control which the board would exercise on the marketing side of the petroleum industry, in the event of a declared emergency. This amendment is designed to remove Petro–Canada's conflict of interest.

In line with the Clause 2, amendment Clause 3 replaces Petro–Canada on the international agency's standing group on emergency questions with a senior official from ESAB or Energy, Mines and Resources.

Clause 4 removes an ambiguity in relation to ESAB's powers to regulate wholesale prices in an allocation program. It authorizes the board to set the manner for determining wholesale prices for controlled products. This is in addition to the existing authority to set prices or a range of prices and would allow ESAB to be sensitive to market forces.

Clause 5(1) would provide flexibility to ESAB to use any department or agency of the Government of Canada including Canada Post Corporation to distribute, return and account for rationing documents.

Clause 5(2) extends the powers of ESAB to regulate rather than prescribe retail prices under the rationing programs.

Clause 5(3) would allow financial institutions under provincial authority, for example, credit unions and caisse populaires, to participate in the delivery of the rationing program along with banks and trust companies.

Clause 6 relates to the contractual supply obligations at the time of allocation and rationing. This amendment would make clear that contracts would remain in force despite price changes arising from the board's regulation in times of emergency.

• (1510)

Clause 7 concerns petroleum companies and their role in ESAB. During a national emergency, it is essential that companies be able to discuss their supply situation at meetings of the petroleum industry advisory committee. This is made possible by exemption from the Competition Act. The amendment simply extends the protection under the Competition Act from 12 months to 24 months in order to save time and effort, as the process of obtaining the exemption involves a number of months each time.

Clause 8 would place a duty of confidentiality on ESAB, its officers, its independent contractors, agents and employees assigned to it. It further provides that confidential information may not be released for legal proceedings except for administration and enforcement of this act and for criminal proceedings under an act of Parliament.

As a consequence of adopting the aforementioned amendment of confidentiality of information, Clause 9 amends the schedule to the Access to Information Act by adding the Energy Supplies Emergency Act.

The need for Canada to maintain its state of preparedness against a possible petroleum emergency continues to be an important component of Canadian energy policy. The bill before the House today is simply a further step in the process of strengthening the provisions of the Energy Supplies Emergency Act so that they may be more effectively implemented in the future.

I would like to thank the members of the committee on all sides for the work that they have done.

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, today we debate a bill which has been given very little attention by the press and will likely leave this House with little fanfare.

This legislation does not take power from the National Energy Board. It does not make possible controversial energy megaprojects in the west and in Atlantic Canada but it does have the potential to be more important than all of those. That is because this bill deals with what Canada has planned in case of an international energy emergency, what we do when a major political incident threatens international trade in oil and forces energy consumers to drastically alter their consumption habits.

As the minister himself has said during second reading of Bill C–4, and I will quote:

> We want Canadians to be assured that the best plans are in place in case emergencies have to be met.

However, I have to question the government's sincerity on that point. If the government was really intent on preparing for an emergency, why did it wait for two full years to introduce this bill? In fact, an official from the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources has said that the government did not consider the bill a priority.

The Government of Canada must prepare for emergencies, and it is shameful that this government has been so slow to take the necessary steps in preparing for doing so. This carefree attitude is characteristic of this government when it comes to energy issues. It seems to be content to sit back comfortably as the world turns and let the free market take care of things.

But not so with the Liberal party, which had the foresight to introduce the original bill that dealt with the international energy emergency. The Liberals introduced that back in 1974. This present government, on the other hand, prefers to cut programs like conservation and alternative energy, which would help Canada prepare for the future and would do a great deal to protect our fragile environment. But we will get to all that a little later.

First on the matter of Bill C–4, I think there are some very important issues raised by this bill, issues which are of great concern to me. One of them is the privatization of Petro–Canada and Canada Post. Another issue of great concern is the effect of the free trade deal on Canada's energy future. A third is the fair treatment in times of emergency of various groups in Canada including farmers and small business.

At this point, I am certainly glad to see in Clause 1 of the bill that owners of homes, farms, and small businesses will be included in the definition of a consumer so that they will get their fair share of available energy supplies in times of emergency. However, I have to say that on the first two points, I have some serious concerns about this bill.

On the issue of privatization, this bill would remove Petro–Canada from the Energy Supplies Allocation Board in the International Energy Agency standing group on emergency questions. While the government claims that a conflict of interest exists because Petro–Canada is now more a commercial enterprise than a government representative, I am concerned that the

government's action may be another step on the role to privatizing Petro-Canada.

The reason we are so concerned about this happening is that once shares are privately owned, the policies of that company will serve the interests of the shareholders and not necessarily the interests of Government of Canada or the interests of Canadians. If it ever happened that Petro-Canada was privatized, concerns with profit could come before concerns with the environment, with energy self-sufficiency and with security of supply. This would remove options the government and all Canadians now have regarding their energy future.

I also have concerns about whether there will be a full and frank debate on the merits of privatization or whether the government will go blindly ahead as it did on other issues. The VIA Rail issue comes to mind as one example of this. In this instance, the government refused to listen to Canadians and even to Parliament. Instead, it chose to follow a policy that suited its own political interests. So will a Petro-Canada debate be another example of this arrogance? I certainly hope not.

The other concern I have with regard to privatization is the sale of Canada Post. In my province of Prince Edward Island and in other areas of rural Canada, post offices have been shut down because of this government's policy. In Clause 5 of this bill, the government continues that process by removing Canada Post from the plan and allowing other government agencies to perform functions that would have been performed by the post office.

By removing the reference to Canada Post, the government is signalling a third change of plans for the post office. By nudging Canada Post even further along the path of privatization, this government is putting more rural post offices at risk. In so doing, it is putting a way of life in rural communities at risk as well.

Another important issue raised by this bill is the free trade agreement. As we know, this deal makes it possible for the United States to continue to receive energy from Canada while Canadians are being forced to cut back. Under Article 904 of the agreement, if Canada wants to cut back its energy exports to the United States, it must first cut back supplies to Canadians.

The amount we keep from the Americans is just a drop in the bucket by their standards, but the amount that we deprive our fellow Canadians of may be much more serious. In a country like Canada with a cold climate, energy reductions could have major effects. If Canada proceeds with energy conservation and energy efficiency in an effort to protect the environment, the room for cutting back will be even smaller. That is another reason to safeguard our energy supply.

• (1520)

We think that the trade deal fails to do this. Instead, what it does is it puts at risk Canada's future energy security. As we see it, Canada's energy bounty should benefit Canadians first and Americans second. We are not convinced that the free trade agreement follows that philosophy.

The Minister of Energy has said that Canada's obligations under the international energy agreement are more demanding than those under the free trade agreement, and therefore we should not be worried about the FTA, but rather the IEA. But as the minister knows, the free trade agreement governs trade in normal as well as emergency situations. So that argument really does not convey the whole picture.

Under the international energy agreement, Canada is obliged to share up to 7 per cent of its oil with other countries at the time of international disruption. The free trade agreement does nothing to limit our obligations. In fact, it increases them by extending our obligations to non-emergency situations as well.

I would like to comment briefly on the context into which Bill C-4 fits, and what this government should be doing in this regard in the future.

As we all know, major disruptions in the oil supply do not occur every day. The last two, in 1972-73, and in 1978-79, were due to international conflicts concerning oil-producing countries. But the world today is not the same as it was 20, 10 or even one year ago. Major political, economic and social changes have taken place which bode well for the future.

The dismantling of the Berlin wall, for example, is just one event, but it symbolizes the whole easing of tensions between east and west. Canadians can be encouraged by

such events. In fact, a recent poll by the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security found that Canadians today consider environmental and economic threats to be more serious than military threats. When asked what will be the pressing concerns in the year 2000, Canadians ranked the environment even higher.

I think the lesson that we learn here is that the government should be stressing the environment in its policies. Oil spills, not oil shocks, are threatening to become the real energy emergency issue in the future.

This government has been slow to respond to environmental issues which threaten not only our energy future, but our very survival as well. For example, the government has cut back spending on conservation and alternative energy from $410 million in 1984–85, to $49 million in 1989–90. In my province of Prince Edward Island, the federal energy conservation office has been closed. The same is true all across this country.

These programs help provinces like mine diversify their energy mix and become less dependent on oil. In Prince Edward Island, we are trying to do this by using biomass fuel. In doing so, we are not only helping the environment and getting ourselves off oil, we are also creating jobs.

The federal government would do well to assist provinces like Prince Edward Island generate industries which not only reduce our dependency on oil, but on federal transfer payments as well.

I would urge this government to prepare for the real energy emergency in the future, and of right now, the environment. It should be listening to Canadians on environmental issues, working within the IEA to push for global action on the environment. Opponents of measures such as carbon tax have argued there is no point in putting a carbon tax on fuel sold to Canadians while fuels sold in the United States and elsewhere are not similarly taxed. This would only hurt Canadians, they argue.

I suggest by working within the IEA and within other organizations, the government could push for measures by all countries so that both Canadians and the environment come out on top. Mr. Speaker, that generally covers my concerns about the issues raised in and by Bill C–4.

I just want to conclude by saying that while I am pleased that the government is taking steps to prepare for emergencies, I have some serious concerns about how it is doing so.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: On division.

Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed.

* * *

NATIONAL ENERGY BOARD ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C–23, an act to amend the National Energy Board Act and to repeal certain enactments in consequence thereof, as reported (with amendments) from a legislative committee.

SPEAKER'S RULING—MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Mr. Deputy Speaker: There are 16 motions in amendment standing in the name of the hon. member for Malpeque set down in the Notice Paper for the report stage of Bill C–23, an act to amend the National Energy Board Act and to repeal certain enactments in consequence thereof.

[*Translation*]

All of these motions are in order and deal with three different areas or subject matters.

[*English*]

Motions Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 9 deal with international power lines and are in order. They will be grouped for debate and a vote on Motion No. 1 will apply to Motions Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5 and 9.

[*Translation*]

Motions Nos. 6, 7, 8 and 10 which deal with interprovincial power lines are in order and will be grouped for debate.

A vote on motion No. 6 will apply to motions Nos. 7, 8 and 10.

[*English*]

Motions Nos. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 deal with the exportation of electricity. They are in order and will be grouped for debate. A vote on Motion No. 11 will apply to Motions Nos. 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16.

[*Translation*]

I will now propose the first grouping, namely motions Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 9, to the House.

[*English*]

MEASURE TO AMEND

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque) moved:

Motion No. 1.

That Bill C-23 be amended in Clause 23 by striking out lines 20 to 28 at page 10 and substituting the following therefor:

"58.11(1) Except in the case of an international power line in respect of which an election is made under section 58.23 and which the Board considers to be an international power line that is to be constructed and operated under a certificate issued under section 58.16, the Board shall, on application to it, without holding a public hearing, and following an assessment by the Federal Environmental Assessment Review Office, issue a permit authorizing the construction and operation of an international power line."

Motion No. 2.

That Bill C-23 be amended in Clause 23 by striking out lines 7 and 8 at page 11 and substituting the following therefor:

"mine whether the international power line should be designated as an international power line that is to be constructed and operated under a certificate issued under section 58.16."

Motion No. 3.

That Bill C-23 be amended in Clause 23 by striking out lines 9 to 32 at page 11 and substituting the following therefor:

"58.14(1) Where it appears to the Board that it is necessary to complement any measure taken in respect of an international power line by the governments of the provinces through which the line is to pass or to take any measure that should have been taken in respect of an international power line by such governments, the Board may designate the power line as an international power line that is to be constructed and operated under a certificate issued under section 58.16.

(2) In designating an international power line as an international power line that is to be constructed and operated under a certificate issued under section 58.16., the Board shall have regard to all considerations that appear to it to be relevant, including

(a) the effect of the power line on the provinces other than those through which the line is to pass; and

(b) the impact of the construction or operation of the power line on the environment."

Motion No. 4.

That Bill C-23 be amended in Clause 23 by striking out lines 34 to 41 at page 11 and substituting the following therefor:

"make an order revoking any permit issued in respect of an international power line."

Motion No. 5.

That Bill C-23 be amended in Clause 23 by striking out lines 10 to 20 at page 12 and substituting the following therefor:

"ernor in Council and pursuant to an assessment by the Federal Environmental Assessment Review Office, issue a certificate in respect of

(a) an international power line in relation to which an order has or has not been made,

(b) an international power line in relation to which an election is filed under section 58.23, or

(c) an international power line in relation to which a designation is made under section 58.4,".

Motion No. 9.

That Bill C-23 be amended in Clause 23 by striking out lines 37 to 42 at page 20.

• (1530)

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that we are debating Bill C-23, an act to amend the National Energy Board Act. This year is the thirtieth anniversary of that board, an organization that has served Canada extremely well and one which has developed a reputation as a defender of the national interest in energy matters, no matter which way the political winds happen to be blowing.

The board's solid reputation and the importance to Canada of not hurting that reputation means that any amendments to the board's legislation must be made with great care. The government has not done this with Bill C-23. Witness after witness at the standing committee poked holes in the government's arguments concerning C-23 and from that committee I come with the amendments that I am proposing today.

I would like to explain and defend the motions before you, Mr. Speaker, regarding Bill C-23. Motion No. 1 deals with international power lines. This group of amendments would accomplish several things. First, it would eliminate the potential for most kinds of political interference by the cabinet in the regulation of electric-

ity and also in matters that rightly belong under the jurisdiction of the non-partisan National Energy Board.

As you know, right now, when the board receives an application for a power line application, it automatically holds a public hearing. But that will no longer be the case. Under Bill C-23 the board will have to ask the federal cabinet for permission to hold that hearing. Mr. Speaker, we disagree with that kind of interference which the government could use to further its own political agenda at the expense of the national interest. This motion would eliminate that by giving the board the power to call a hearing.

Also, with this amendment the National Energy Board would do a better job of protecting the environment from the effects of electrical production and export. It would do this by assigning to FEARO, the Federal Environmental Assessment Review Office, the task of helping to assess an application to the National Energy Board for environmental effects. It would do so in the context of providing a second opinion for the NEB to consider.

As it stands now, the environmental team at the board look at the applications for environmental effects. We feel that the House of Commons should be able to call on the Minister of the Environment to account for what the government is doing to safeguard the environment, and this amendment will allow the House of Commons to do that.

Bill C-23, as it is presently worded, allows the Governor in Council certain unwarranted powers. These powers include deciding whether there will be a hearing on electricity export or power line projects, setting the criteria for whether the National Energy Board recommends a hearing and deciding what the NEB will examine at the hearing.

At the Standing Committee hearings we heard mainly negative comments on these sections which give a good measure of power to a political body, the federal cabinet. From Nova Scotia Power we heard:

> These provisions interject too much uncertainty into the process and could serve to discourage exports.

New Brunswick Power said that through Bill C-23 the government is:

> —transferring a jurisdiction away from an independent and impartial National Energy Board, according to well-defined legal rules, and giving it to the cabinet to be exercised according to no rules whatsoever.

We agree with what New Brunswick Power has said because we feel that the decision as to whether that public inquiry should be held should be the decision of the National Energy Board and not the cabinet.

I would, in fact, suggest that the government take the wise advice of the Quebec Cree who said: "Bill C-23 must be completely rewritten". The Cree of Quebec are very concerned about the prospect for public hearings if Bill C-23 passes, and they are concerned with good reason.

At this point I would like to refer to a statement by one of the government members of our committee who expressed his confidence in the bill. He said:

> If I thought that (the) opportunity (for hearings) was not there, for anyone in Canada, I would be the first one to demand changes.

I shall attempt to prove to you today, Mr. Speaker, that that opportunity will likely not be there. I hope that afterwards the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Energy will honour his word and support this motion.

I would like to begin by taking a moment to compare the National Energy Board to the Federal Court of Canada. The Federal Court has greater powers than the National Energy Board and its rulings are binding. The court's advice to the cabinet is open to the public as the National Energy Board's advice to the government would be in the case of an export of electricity or power line application. The public, including groups like the Quebec Cree, has a chance to go before the court and make its case.

In a recent case the Cree went before the court to demand hearings on the James Bay hydro project. Despite a court precedent against them regarding a Saskatchewan dam project, despite the fact that everything was made public, the government still refused, until this fall, to allow a public hearing on James Bay. Even the way the government arranged the hearing was objectionable, for it violated both the spirit and the word of the 1975 James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement.

This agreement requires that the Cree be involved in any discussions on the James Bay project including those leading to an environmental review. Talks were held between Ottawa and Quebec but they excluded the Cree. After months of foot dragging and after being dragged through the courts, the federal government probably feared it would face the embarrassment of being ordered by the court to call a hearing so at the last

minute it agreed to a joint public hearing with the province of Quebec.

If this bill passes as it is, it is going to be very difficult every time for the National Energy Board to convince the cabinet to allow a public hearing. We can only look at other examples in the government's record. As stated earlier, in the case of the Saskatchewan dam project the Minister of the Environment was shown to have failed to implement his own guidelines. If we take the decision to shut down or cut back on VIA Rail we find that no public hearings on environmental effects on the decisions were held, let alone hearings on economic or social effects.

• (1540)

The government just decided to shut down or cut back parts of VIA Rail. It made that decision without any public discussion, with no concern whatsoever as to how this decision would affect the people of Canada. If we look at the record of the government we can easily see why the Cree would be concerned about public hearings.

I know that my time is about up. I have further arguments to make on other amendments which I will put forward later. I want to conclude my remarks on the first motion by saying that Bill C–23 gives too much power to the cabinet. We are proposing this amendment so that the National Energy Board, not the cabinet, will decide if a public enquiry is necessary.

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak on the first group of amendments to Bill C–23, an Act to amend the National Energy Board Act. My colleague from Malpeque would know that my hon. friend from Edmonton East, who is our energy critic, has done a considerable amount of work on this legislation. I know he brings considerable expertise to this House and to this party, being the first New Democrat elected to this House from the great Province of Alberta.

In committee a great deal of work was done in studying this legislation and many of the concerns were raised by my colleague, and we rise here today to support the amendments that are being brought forward by the hon. member from Malpeque. In fact, if I am not mistaken, most of these amendments were presented in the committee in its legislative review of the bill. Unfortunately, the government refused to accept them and we are here today in one final effort to try to improve this legislation. We hope that with our convincing arguments we will be able to have the government support our view with regard to the changes that are required to this legislation.

Let us take a look at the general problem we have with Bill C–23. In our view it undermines the National Energy Board, politicizes the decisions, makes the exports of a strategic resource easier, public hearings will become more rare, and environmental concerns, already given short shrift by this government, will receive even less attention in the future.

One of the principal concerns we have with this bill is that the final decision on whether or not a public hearing is held on the construction of a power line or the export of electricity is made by the cabinet and not the National Energy Board. With the passage of Bill C–23, these decisions would be much more likely to be made on narrow political grounds. We know the reasons we have argued in this House for independent bodies. We argue for those to make sure that, as much as possible, the decisions that are made are made in the best interests of that particular sphere and in this country, not just for cheap political gains as has all too often become the case with the government opposite.

During second reading, my colleague from Edmonton East pointed out how this could easily result in the national interest being poorly protected and in the interest of a small province being unfairly trampled by a cabinet trying to please a large province, something we all know about from the federal election.

We pointed out that the authority of the National Energy Board itself could be seriously undermined if cabinet decided to override a recommendation by the NEB merely for political reasons. We also pointed out that under the changes in this bill the National Energy Board will routinely approve applications for power lines and electricity exports. As a result, in the vast majority of cases public hearings will not be held.

Well, what have we proposed? We proposed a system of licensing power lines and electricity exports that had at its core the notion of prudence. The hon. member from Edmonton East is a man of great prudence and he

considered this strongly when he was making these suggestions in committee.

For example, we are hearing now that the Government of Ontario is speaking of future electricity shortages although some people are in fact suggesting that this is mere manipulation by the Liberal government in Ontario, in effect, to implement what would appear to be a shoddy electrical generation procedure and policy already in place and, of course, to whip up support for future nuclear projects.

We heard evidence from the province of Quebec before the energy committee the other day that hydro reservoirs are much lower than normal. We are hearing from climatologists that global warming will likely change weather patterns and that this could affect rainfall and the viability of certain hydroelectric facilities. We are hearing further from Canadians all across this country, on television and in the newspapers, that Canadians are deeply concerned about the environment and they want public officials, government, to take real action and not just spout rhetoric.

I have no doubt that south of the border demand for electricity will increase in the future, partly because the pollution it causes is emitted mainly where electricity is produced rather than where it is used. I think that is an important point to remember. Our approach in dealing with this increasingly strategic Canadian resource is to be prudent. I come from the province of British Columbia where electricity is considered a resource by the provincial government and one that we must take pains to ensure that we develop properly in environmentally sound ways. The key is to be prudent.

We believe that the Governor in Council, the cabinet, should act not as an accelerator for the National Energy Board but as a brake of last resort. That is why my colleague proposed in committee that if the NEB refused a proposal to build a power line or to export electricity that that would be the end of it, the cabinet could not overrule a refusal by the NEB. On the other hand, if the NEB accepted such a proposal the cabinet could still review and overturn the NEB decision. This would have the effect of protecting the national interest by having a double check on electricity projects and exports.

Let us take a look at some of the proposals presented by the Liberals. The amendments proposed in this package do not go that far, but they do proceed in the right direction. These amendments would have the effect of helping to protect the independence of the NEB and we support that. Protecting the NEB's independence may not be the main aim of the amendments but that is the effect that they would have.

We believe that the National Energy Board should be able to make the decision on its own, without interference from the cabinet, about which power projects should receive close environmental scrutiny, and in the case of these amendments, by the Federal Environmental Assessment Review Office. We learned just last week that, in fact, legislation on a legislative environmental assessment review process has yet to even make its way to cabinet ministers or into the cabinet. That gives rise to concern among many people about, again, the ongoing rhetoric from the government and no real action being taken.

We also believe that the environmental consequences of public policy must be considered much more fully than is currently the case. This is especially true for energy policy. More and more Canadians recognize the environmental consequences of energy consumption; flooding valleys when hydro dams are built, trying to manage nuclear waste, adding to the greenhouse effect—you name it. Canadians are more and more concerned about the environmental consequences of energy generation.

When it comes to power lines, there is great concern on Vancouver Island over this matter. Scientists from either side are lining up to present their arguments as to the impact and effect on not only the health of all of us but the health, in many cases, of farm animals.

There is an argument to be made that the role of the NEB and other regulatory bodies should include environmental reviews as part of their mandate. This bill goes some way toward that but we need a great deal more impact when it comes to the legislative environmental process that has been promised by this government.

We are looking forward to the debate on this bill. I know my colleague from Edmonton East has done a considerable amount of work on this. We will be supporting the amendments as proposed by the hon. member from Malpeque and I hope the government will listen

today so that we can ensure that we get better legislation out of this proposal.

• (1550)

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the fine intervention by my colleague from Malpeque and the arguments that she made in connection with the importance of public hearings. Before I do that, however, I would like to point out that this bill is another measure down the slippery road that we have undertaken by way of the free trade agreement.

I would like to draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, particularly to Division III and section 119.5 which commits ourselves and forces the National Energy Board to commit itself to the overall energy agreement with the United States which we opposed in the last election and which we continue to consider to be detrimental to our national interest.

For that reason alone, we must rise in this House and oppose it because we do not think that the long-term interest of Canada is served by taking us down this slippery road in connection with our long-term energy interest because of the commitment that was made, unfortunately, under the free trade agreement which in the last election, of course, we opposed.

Bill C-23 is another example of a bill prepared without sustainable development and the long term in mind. Despite the proclamations, commitments and statements that the Prime Minister of Canada makes abroad, despite the commitments that the Environment Minister makes in his speeches at the UN and when he appears before the Environment Committee, here we have a bill that restricts even further the powers of an institution that has served Canada well, namely the National Energy Board, and says that we will let cabinets of the future make certain decisions, but you as a board should have less and less power.

What does that mean? We all know that cabinets have, by virtue of their political nature, so to speak, short-term sights. They can think at best, under the best of circumstances, of the next election. To think beyond that requires a supernatural effort, let alone thinking of the next generation and generations after. By that I mean the long term, 50, 60, 100 years from now. That is why the National Energy Board was formed and that is why a stronger National Energy Board is necessary and not a weaker one.

Here we have, in the name, allegedly, of sustainable development as interpreted by the Progressive Conservative government, a bill coming into the House which weakens instead of strengthening the National Energy Board. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, does that make sense to you? That is one reason alone to oppose it in addition to the other one I gave you a moment earlier, namely, Division III, the section related to the free trade agreement.

The importance of holding public hearings, and not at the whim of cabinet, has been eloquently described and underlined by the member for Malpeque. Of course we all agree with her. We know that that should not be a political decision of the day. It should be an established practice because we know the importance of seeking public consultation.

I cannot for the life of me understand, considering the commitments that the Progressive Conservative Party made in the election of 1984, proclaiming its great belief in consultation with the people, that the government would come into the House with this bill today and practise exactly the opposite, as it does in Bill C-23. It is inconceivable, it runs counter to all the commitments made in public at election time by the Progressive Conservative Party.

If anything, the National Energy Board should retain that function. It should not be made a decision of cabinet because we know what the political pitfalls are of that process. If anything, the powers of the National Energy Board to hold public hearings should be strengthened.

But what is worrisome about the long-term implications of this bill is the mindset in the political philosophy behind it because it reinforces the destiny of Canada as a provider of energy for export purposes. It reinforces the notion that Canada's future is to be more and more a hewer of wood and a drawer of water with this increased dependence of our well being on the export of our natural resources instead of using our natural resources as a tool to attract investment to Canada and to create jobs at home rather than creating jobs abroad.

That notion has not penetrated the foggy collective minds of this cabinet. Probably they do not have one, or if they do it is so thick that they have not yet understood that energy means jobs and that if you insist on exporting energy and expanding those energies, you export jobs. Is that not elementary? We are facing a profound malaise

in the thoughts of this government as to what constitutes the long-term interest of Canadians when it comes to energy.

The fourth disturbing aspect in Bill C-23 is the total absence of any reference to the importance of renewable sources of energy as a mandate that the National Energy Board should not only make its own but also strengthen and expand. Obviously, one day we are going to run out of our non-renewable sources of energy. At least when it comes to oil, the horizons are already visible. With natural gas, perhaps they are beyond the horizon, we do not know. The same may be said of coal. But in the very long term we cannot hope and expect that these resources will remain forever available. They will run out.

Therefore, when you discuss a bill that relates to the National Energy Board, it is necessary to introduce as a responsibility the concept and the importance of giving renewable sources of energy the place that they deserve.

It is astonishing to learn from the minutes of the proceedings in committee that the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources would say that the board may be perceived to be in an apparent conflict of interest situation and that "the board would literally be deciding how much more work it makes for itself", when it comes to the question of public hearings. I can hardly believe that a minister of the Crown would interpret the role of one of the major agencies under his or her jurisdiction in that manner, as an agency whose main task would be one of deciding how much more work it can create.

Obviously, if that is the opinion that the Minister of Energy has of the government's own National Energy Board, then a change is necessary at the top, namely a change with the minister himself.

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-23 would seek to amend the National Energy Board Act if you take the bill literally at face value from its cover. That it is what it proclaims on the cover sheet.

If you read the bill in the form we have it to date, without the amendments that are being proposed, you will find that a more apt characterization of what Bill C-23 does is to gut the National Energy Board Act. So that is why I rise in support of the first group of amendments put forward by my colleague for Malpeque.

• (1600)

If you were to listen to the rhetoric of this government, one of the themes that comes through again and again, whether you are talking about VIA Rail, Canada Post, or so many other Crown agencies, is that this government because of its basic purity of ideology maintains an arm's length relationship. That has been the message again and again. This government has repeatedly sent out the signal that its philosophy or way of operating is to give agencies statutory authority and let them operate within that authority to make decisions within their mandated area.

What is happening here in so far as the National Energy Board is concerned is that we have an agency with adequate statutory authority and broad powers that has ensured over the years that Canadians, both individually and in groups, can automatically through the vehicle of public hearing have their say whenever there is a contemplation to export electricity out of this country. Under statute there is a provision that there be a public hearing by the NEB.

Mr. Speaker, does it not make you back up and wonder what is behind the effort here to restrict the National Energy Board's ability to proceed with a public inquiry? As I pointed out, it flies in the face of the way in which this government has been operating on Canada Post and VIA Rail, just to use two examples.

In this case the government is going against the strain. It is going in the opposite direction. It is not arm's length—it is fingertip. The government wants to keep the question of electricity exports right at its fingertips. What does it provide in its unamended legislation? It provides that the cabinet will decide as to whether or not there will be a public inquiry.

I direct you to an example, Mr. Speaker. We all know how American Express got into this country in the way it did. We all know it was not as a result of any public inquiry. We all know that it was as a result of an order in council, a cabinet decision, made either on election day or hours before election day.

I submit to you, Sir, that the timing of that decision was no accident, that American Express' entry into Canada, and the fact that the decision was made on election day or thereabouts, was a direct trade-off between American Express' support for the government's position on free trade and American Express' objective of getting involved in the Canadian financial community.

By example that is my concern with this piece of legislation and that particular provision in it. It is that once again government gives to itself the vehicle, the wherewithal to do a political trade-off. It is not the NEB that will decide whether an inquiry is needed. Under this legislation the NEB will have to go to cabinet and ask it to make the decision.

Compare that procedure with what happens with the competition bureau, which is provided for in legislation introduced, sponsored by and passed by the current government. At the competition bureau the director of competition, up until recently Mr. Cal Goldman, makes the decision. He makes the determination as to whether or not there will be an inquiry—in the words of the act, a tribunal. It is left in that case to the judgment of a senior bureaucrat. I have difficulty with that because the discretion is left in the hands of one person. I raise it here in terms of an example to draw a contrast for you, Sir.

In the one case government has deemed that something as important as the merger of Canadian Airlines and Wardair, or the merger of Imperial and Texaco, to use a recent example and a very current one in the case of Imperial and Texaco, is to be left to the decision of one man, a bureaucrat. But on the question of exporting electricity, energy from this country is taken out of the hands of the National Energy Board which has administered it very competently over the years, and it is now put into political hands. I submit that it is being done for a very direct reason.

I come back to what my colleague from Davenport was saying when he spoke a few moments ago. He was asking whether this government has a mind or whether it has a collective mind. I would say to him: "Yes, this government has a mind all right."

Mr. Hockin: You guys are split all over the place.

Mr. Simmons: I am looking forward to the participation of the Minister of State for Small Business and Tourism in this debate. It sounds like he has something on his mind on this issue. We have been here waiting. There have been three or four Liberal members in a row, together with my colleague from the NDP, four or five speakers all together from this side of the House. As you know, Mr. Speaker, normally with your renowned reputation for fairness you would have one from each side of the House stand. Here we have had five from the same side of the House. The reason is that the Minister wants to interrupt what I have to say. I do not mind. I rather enjoy his interjections, they are so few and far between, and so easy to understand at the same time. If he wants to speak I will yield the floor now because I am sure he has some concerns as well about the issue that I have raised here.

I was about to say before the minister made his speech that my friend from Davenport wondered whether this crowd has a mind. I say to him: "Yes, they have a mind, and they have a mindset, too." The mindset has to do with subservience to the American agenda at all times. I gave the example of American Express, and now I give the example of changes in the National Energy Board Act. What is at the bottom of this change that I have been talking about is that the government is looking for a guarantee. The government wants to have it all completely within its power, no ifs, ands or buts. It does not leave it up to bureaucrats, or to the National Energy Board, or to any agency in this case. The government sitting around that table wants to be able to deliver the political plums. It wants to ensure that no independent bureaucrat, no arm's length board gets in the way of exporting electricity to its American friends.

There is something drastically wrong with the mindset of this government when it is so preoccupied at all times with dancing to the American tune, serving the American agenda at all times, instead of asking once in a while: "How can we better serve the people of Canada?"

I intend to support the amendment put down so ably by my colleague from Malpeque because, if carried, it will help to ensure that there will not be undue political interference in the question of decisions about electricity exports from here to the United States.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE RAISED

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: The hon. member for Brant—National Defence; the hon. member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing—Health; and the hon. member for Burnaby—Human Rights.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

NATIONAL ENERGY BOARD ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-23, an Act to amend the National Energy Board Act and to repeal certain enactments in consequence thereof, as reported (with amendments) from a legislative committee; and the motion of Ms. Callbeck.

• (1610)

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to the amendment put forward by my colleague from Malpeque. The issue is the fact that the legislation as it now stands leaves a tremendous amount of not only power in the hands of cabinet itself but, as my colleague so ably pointed out a few minutes ago, power in the hands of one or two individuals who will be advising cabinet on these issues.

My colleague from Malpeque spoke very eloquently about the impact that this bill would have on the environment. I want to expand on that very briefly and speak about the environment in which we live in close proximity in many cases to high voltage transmission lines. I have a proposed line across the constituency of Lambton—Middlesex. I say "proposed" line because we already have two lines at the present time. They are 230,000 volt lines. One of them will be raised to 550,000 volts.

Until recently, until some of the citizens started to complain, they were going to take these right through the heart of three small villages and in close proximity to a fourth. Yet I do not see any guidelines in this legislation whereby cabinet would be directed to keep away from the built-up areas. There are enough questions at the present time to indicate that these transmission lines do impact on human health. In fact, if you are wearing a pacemaker you do not dare go anywhere close to a high voltage transmission line or else your pacemaker will act up and you could have very serious health problems resulting immediately.

I think we have to stop and examine the type of power we are leaving in the hands of the cabinet when there are no guidelines established at the present time regarding how close these lines can be to built-up areas. There are some areas in the United States where they make them stay back approximately 1,700 feet from a built-up area. In Russia it is 2,300 feet.

Yet when we talk about this here in Canada they say there is no proof that these lines do have an impact on human health. There is no proof that they do not have an impact on it either.

I think it is foolhardy for us to go through with a piece of legislation that does not recognize that there is an area here that must be studied further as to the impact on what it does to an individual. It is well documented as to what it will do to a dairy herd that is pasturing under one of these high voltage transmission lines, or a milking herd that is living in a yard or a barn close by. There are problems with conception in those herds. There are problems with the milking in that the quantity of milk produced drops dramatically.

In my constituency I have an individual who has a dog kennel close by one of these lines. He could not understand why the dogs killed their pups at birth if they did conceive. A lot of the dogs would not conceive until they took them a few kilometres away to another location. If there are impacts on the health of animals living in close proximity, then what is it going to do to humans who live close by?

There is a lot of suspicion at the present time that this may cause cancer, particularly to young people. I also have to point out that a young person in close proximity to one of these 230,000 volt transmission lines is already being treated for that dreaded disease at the present time.

We do not know enough about the electromagnetic fields that are created by these transmission lines. I suggest that it is not acceptable to Canadians to place the health of our citizens at risk in order to export energy to another country. It is fundamentally wrong to give such powers to cabinet to circumvent hearings whereby people are allowed to speak. It is morally wrong to allow any utility to create an environment that is dangerous to

public health for the sake of exporting power to another country and placing the health of our citizens at risk.

I suggest that to allow cabinet to bypass public hearings would deprive Canadians of the chance to voice their concerns they may have about the serious health consequences I spoke about. Before any decision like this is left to cabinet there have to be guidelines drafted based on information now available. If it is not available in Canada, then let us look at the records and the measures being used in other countries. We need guidelines that place the health of the citizens of this nation first and foremost.

I suggest that these guidelines should not be drafted by the utility companies but by known experts in the field who have watched the development of these transmission lines, not only in this nation but in the nation to the south of us, and Russia. This must be done recognizing that in many cases the utility companies are more interested in the export of power and the profits generated thereby than in the health of those who are living close by.

I would ask this House to support the amendment put forward by the member from Malpeque. I do so because of the unknowns that are facing us here and the tremendous amount of power that is to be left in the hands of cabinet to bypass these public hearings that give our citizens a chance to voice their concerns.

I recently attended a meeting in my constituency where one of these high voltage transmission lines was being discussed. There was a tremendous depth of fear there that was based on the best information available. The utility company downplayed it and tried to assure the people in attendance that there really was no problem. If there was a problem, it would tell them about it. The people did not accept that, and I do not accept it either. If that is the kind of information that is going to be available to the cabinet when it makes a decision to bypass the public hearings, then we as Canadian citizens deserve better. It is for that reason that I wholeheartedly support the amendment of my colleague from Malpeque.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question on the first grouping?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: A vote on Motion No. 1 will apply to Motions Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, and 9.

The question is on Motion No. 1. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed to the motion will please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to the appropriate Standing Order, the recorded division shall stand deferred.

Motions Nos. 6, 7, 8 and 10 which deal with interprovincial power lines are in order, as I said earlier, and will be grouped for debate. A vote on Motion No. 6 will apply to Motions Nos. 7, 8 and 10.

• (1620)

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque) moved:

Motion No. 6.

That Bill C-23 be amended in Clause 23 by striking out lines 22 and 23 at page 14 and substituting the following therefor:

"respect of which a designation is made under section 58.4."

Motion No. 7.

That Bill C-23 be amended in Clause 23 by striking out lines 10 and 11 at page 19 and substituting the following therefor:

"provincial power line in respect of which a designation is made under section 58.4."

Motion No. 8.

That Bill C-23 be amended in Clause 23 by striking out lines 14 and 15 at page 20 and substituting the following therefor:

"respect of which a designation is made under section 58.4 as they apply in".

Motion No. 10.

That Bill C-23 be amended in Clause 23 by striking out lines 1 to 14 at page 21 and substituting the following therefor:

"58.4(1) The Board may designate an interprovincial power line as an interprovincial power line that is to be constructed and operated under and in accordance with a certificate issued under section 58.16.

(2) No person shall construct or operate any section or part of an interprovincial power line in respect of which a designation is made under subsection (1)".

She said: Mr. Speaker, this motion contains amendments which follow the ones in the previous motion. They deal basically with the same issues—cabinet powers, public hearings and the reputation of the National Energy Board. They also deal with the subject of interprovincial power lines.

I urge this House to adopt the motion for the same reasons that I stated earlier. It would eliminate the potential for unhelpful and potentially very harmful political interference by the federal cabinet.

It would do this by leaving the decision as to whether a public hearing on an application to the National Energy Board would be held not up to the cabinet but up to the board. I think the reasons stated during debate on the previous motion are well understood and need only summarizing here.

The fact is that when trusted to decide in the national interest in similar situations in the past the federal cabinet decided rather in its own political interest. We saw this with the Rafferty Dam in Saskatchewan, with James Bay, with VIA, and I suspect that we will see it under Bill C-23, unless these amendments are adopted.

We heard from a lot of witnesses before the legislative committee on Bill C-23. Some of them indicated that they feel this bill will not accomplish the goal of deregulation, but may in fact do just the opposite. That is to say that it may cause more headaches for the electric utilities than it solves.

With such a conflict between what government claims to be the purpose of the bill and what industry says it will accomplish, the real reason behind Bill C-23 becomes clear. That reason is simply to give the cabinet the power to control Canada's electricity trade to a far greater extent than it does today, and certainly more than is in the national interest.

Some of the most interesting testimony that we heard on Bill C-23 came from the minister himself. At our committee the minister gave a somewhat incredible explanation as to why cabinet wants more power over the National Energy Board. The minister says that the board may be perceived to be in an apparent conflict-of-interest situation because: "The board would literally be deciding how much more work it makes for itself".

As you know, Mr. Speaker, Bill C-23 will mean that the board will have decide whether to recommend to cabinet that an application before it go to a public inquiry, or whether adequate regulation is already in place.

I would like to draw to the attention of the minister the National Energy Board's reasons for a decision regarding Trans Mountain Pipeline of July, 1988. The length of this pipeline was such that the board did not have to hold a hearing. In its report the NEB decided to hold a public hearing on the application, thereby making more work for itself.

The government does not seem to have any problems with the NEB's powers on its potential for a conflict of interest when it comes to pipelines. For what reason should the government be taking this power away from the board and giving it to the cabinet when it comes to electricity exports and international power lines? I suggest that it is a purely political one. Certainly, the witnesses whom we had before the legislative committee hinted at this.

The witnesses we have heard have pretty well all expressed nothing but the highest faith in the board and its procedures, which means that they believe not only in the people who make up this board who are there now but in the whole process. Take for example the minister's parliamentary secretary who said he had full faith in the National Energy Board, in the guidelines and in the people who work within the board.

He also said he was certain that if they feel any of the guidelines are not met, any public hearings or input required will be there. This seems to contradict what the minister has said about the board not wanting to make more work for itself. I certainly have to agree with the comments of the parliamentary secretary as I have just quoted him. It seems that practically every witness that we had before this committee agreed.

The Quebec Cree have not had that much faith in the NEB, but they have even less faith in the federal cabinet. Really who can blame them?

New Brunswick Power is more complimentary and well represents the evidence given before the committee. I want to quote what it had to say: "The point is that after 30 years of operation the National Energy Board has not acted in a rogue way. It has acted in a highly respectable way. Its decisions have been a credit to the Government of Canada".

It seems that the only person who doubts the National Energy Board's character is the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. He has more faith, understandably, in his own cabinet whose opinions he knows and can count on. But not so the Cree who say: "We need an independent body which is concerned about the public, not a party that has gotten into power, not Progressive Conservatives, NDP or Liberals". I could not agree more.

Also in agreement with this last point is the advisory committee of the energy options report that this government set up in 1987. The committee states in its report:

> It is of paramount importance that the NEB be seen as a non-political institution if it is to ensure that its messages to Canadians are effective and credible.

We agree. Therefore we are concerned that a board that gets overruled on major decisions often enough by cabinet may in time lose some of its credibility.

Just last month the committee's former chairman, Tom Kierans, told our committee that the board ought to be free to inquire into something and the inquiry ought to be public. He said that the only instance in which the cabinet should intervene is at the end of the process, after the NEB makes its final decision. Again, this is exactly our position. That is why we are proposing this motion.

• (1630)

Let me add one last piece of testimony on this point. It comes from the legal counsel to the Maritime Electric of Charlottetown who stated: "The NEB ought to be given authority to designate exports rather than authority only to recommend designation."

The evidence on this point is clear and it points in the direction of giving the National Energy Board the power to regulate in Canada's national interest. I have more arguments to make regarding Bill C-23 and these deal with the important issues of free trade, electricity, the effects of energy development on the environment.

I will conclude my remarks on Motion No. 2. I certainly call on members of the House to act in the national interest by letting the National Energy Board act in the national interest and I would urge members to adopt the motion now before the House.

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a few brief comments on the second grouping of amendments to Bill C-23 which is before the House today. The member for Burin—St. George's commented about the concerns that we have on this side, and I trust and hope that members opposite also have, about the politicization of the National Energy Board. In fact, I think the government has made a mistake in the title of the bill. It should more accurately read, "an act to gut the National Energy Board and to unduly politicize the export of electricity from Canada" because for all intents and purposes that is exactly what Bill C-23 is doing in this legislation that we are debating

We are beginning to see the results of this government's record of making decisions within cabinet, behind the curtains, behind closed doors where the public does not have an opportunity to participate, to discuss, or to share in those decisions. The decision regarding VIA Rail has already been mentioned today, the complete about face by the government from its previous position when the Liberals were cutting VIA Rail. We now have the example of the Conservatives in office cutting VIA Rail with no public hearings or any other provisions. If the Canadian public asks for anything when government is making decisions on such critical issues as hydroelectric lines or the export of power, it is that those decisions are made with ample opportunity for public input. In many cases, all we ask for is a chance to make our comments then, fair enough, a decision has to be made at some point.

Bill C-23, which we are debating today, goes in completely the opposite direction of the kind of openness that all members of this House have been calling for, at least certainly those on this side of the chamber. I know that my colleague, the member for Edmonton East, raised these matters in committee in the legislative review of this bill. We are rising here today in support of the Liberal amendments because we think they will help move this legislation in the right direction. I certainly call

on the government members also to support this very important amendment.

Mrs. Diane Marleau (Sudbury): Mr. Speaker, I would also like to speak to these motions, especially the motions proposed by my colleague for Malpeque.

Bill C-23 is really a wolf in sheep's clothing or vice versa. I am very worried about some of the things that are being proposed today. One of them is the politicizing of the decisions on our future energy needs and of the power lines. In effect, this bill states that the National Energy Board can now recommend a public hearing and the cabinet will decide whether they will agree or disagree with the National Energy Board.

A comment that I have heard is that of course the cabinet is always going to act in the highest regard because there is always public pressure. I hasten to point out to some members opposite that that is not always the case with this cabinet. sometimes, there are other times when political expediency certainly plays a very large role in their decisions. I will bring to light something that came up just recently, and that was a request by the Auditor General that the cabinet release documents concerning their travel expenditures. The cabinet decided not to release these documents because it was not necessary, or for whatever reason they had, but I do not believe this decision is in the public interest. It would be far more in the public interest to have the details released.

What happens if the National Energy Board decides that there should be a public hearing because the provinces concerned have not held the proper hearings and the cabinet decides not to? There is nothing preventing the cabinet from deciding against a public hearing.

Future energy needs and the whole reason for the National Energy Board would be undone. Because cabinet can overrule any decision, why even bother with a National Energy Board, if that is the case? I believe that the future energy needs of our country have to be safeguarded. They must be safeguarded. One must not play lightly with some of the best resources that we have here in our country, and that is our energy.

With these amendments the National Energy Board would have the power to ask for a hearing and I believe it should have this power. Therefore, I support the amendments of my colleague.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question on the second grouping?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We will be voting on Motion No. 6 and that vote will apply to Motions Nos. 7, 8 and 10. The question is on Motion No. 6.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The recorded division shall stand deferred.

Motions Nos. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 are in order and will be grouped for debate. A vote on Motion No. 11 will apply to the other motions.

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque) moved:

Motion No. 11.

That Bill C-23 be amended in Clause 34 by striking out lines 5 to 8 at page 26 and substituting the following therefor:

"119.03(1) Except where the Board considers that an exportation of electricity is an exportation that is subject to the issuance of a licence under section 119.08, the Board, following an assessment by the Federal Environmental Assessment Review Office, shall, on application to it and".

Motion No. 12.

That Bill C-23 be amended in Clause 34 by striking out lines 26 and 27 at page 26 and substituting the following therefor:

"mine whether the exportation of the electricity should be subject to the issuance of a licence under section 119.08."

Motion No. 13.

That Bill C-23 be amended in Clause 34

(a) by striking out lines 28 to 41 at page 26 and substituting the following therefor:

"119.06(1) Where it appears to the Board that it is necessary to complement any measure taken in respect of an exportation of electricity by the governments of the provinces where the electricity is generated, or to take any measure that should have been taken by such governments, the Board may decide that the exportation of the electricity shall be subject to the issuance of a licence under section 119.08.

(2) In determining whether the exportation of the electricity should be subject to the issuance of a licence under section 119.08, the Board shall"; and

(b) by striking out lines 23 and 24 at page 27 and substituting the following therefor:

"(d) the effect of the exportation of electricity on the energy supply in Canada; and

(e) the effect of exportation of electricity in regard to Article 904 of the Agreement."

Motion No. 14.

That Bill C-23 be amended in Clause 34 by striking out lines 26 to 32 at page 27 and substituting the following therefor:

"may make orders revoking any permit issued in respect of the exportation of electricity."

Motion No. 15.

That Bill C-23 be amended in Clause 34 by striking out lines 3 to 6 at page 28 and substituting the following therefor:

"ernor in Council and following an assessment by the Federal Environmental Assessment Review Office, issue a licence for the exportation of electricity."

Motion No. 16.

That Bill C-23 be amended in Clause 34 by striking out lines 35 to 42 at page 29.

She said: Mr. Speaker, these motions deal with many important issues raised by Bill C-23. They include free trade, the environment, and the whole question about how clear this legislation could be.

The last point is certainly important because Parliament has an obligation to make its laws as clear as possible so that misunderstandings do not arise.

• (1640)

First, the issue of free trade. The motion before the House would make Canada's electricity exports to the U.S. with regard to Article 904 of the free trade agreement an explicit concern of the National Energy Board. As the House knows, Canada exports a great deal of electricity to the United States, but with the free trade agreement Canada has to guarantee the Americans an opportunity to buy these exports in the future.

Generally speaking, if Canada is forced to cut back on exports for some reason, we have to guarantee the United States the chance to bid on the same proportion of exports we sent them during the previous three years. The other side of the arrangement is that we can only cut the supply to the Americans if we do the same to Canadians. Therefore, we along with other groups, feel that it is a good idea that the National Energy Board be given responsibility for making sure that Canada does not bite off more than it can chew. That is, we want to ensure that Canada can sustain its level of exports for some time so that Article 904 of the free trade agreement does not come crashing down on us.

The Council of Canadians has certainly supported this idea. It recommended to our standing committee the widening of the mandate of the NEB to take into account the new situation under the free trade agreement with the proportionality clause. The government may scoff at the advice of the Council of Canadians, which opposed the trade deal during the election last year, but the same argument was also made by the advisory committee to the Energy Options Report which this government set up in 1987. This report advocates a market based approach on most energy matters, but on one issue they are clearly in favour of involvement by the NEB, and that one issue is free trade.

The committees say in the Energy Options Report that with free trade it becomes even more important to keep a vigilant watch over export levels to ensure that they do not exceed long-term sustainable proportions. That is exactly what this motion will accomplish.

The government has said that there are issues and matters today which were not foreseeable when the NEB act was originally passed in 1959. Surely concern about the environment is one of those issues, and some duplication of provincial regulations may be a second. But there can be no doubt that a major new development is the free trade agreement which will be colouring Canada's energy policy for many years to come.

What happens when one province's exports of electricity significantly tilt the balance for all of Canada? All of Canada will have the responsibility of meeting our export requirements under Section 904 of the free trade agree-

ment. With responsibility come certain rights. In this instance, all of Canada through the National Energy Board should have a right to examine this country's energy exposure to the United States.

This motion will also ensure that the National Energy Board considers how an export affects Canada's energy supply position. The government says that the question of surplus is not as important today as it was back in 1959 when Prime Minister Diefenbaker said the NEB was supposed to ensure that exports were: "surplus to the needs of the Canadian economy in this and foreseeable generations in order to ensure for Canadians an adequate supply of the natural resources which are the heritage of this country—"

We are told that provincial utilities will only export when they are in a surplus position. But will this always be the case? A recent article in *The Globe and Mail* reports that demand is threatening to outstrip supply for the first time in Hydro Quebec's history. The crunch is the result of low water levels in the James Bay area and also labour difficulties at Hydro Quebec. Hydro Quebec says that no one could have foreseen today's climate conditions. But that is not the point. The point is that if utilities are not going to plan in case of shortages, someone should. We think that someone should be the National Energy Board.

This motion also contains an amendment that aims to further protect the environment from the effects of electricity projects. The goal here is to allow a preliminary study of an application that is presented to the NEB. There would be a preliminary study Office, and that study would help the National Energy Board decide whether to hold a full public hearing on the application. FEARO would report its decision to the National Energy Board and they would make that recommendation public. The advantages of this is that FEARO is an independent body. It is free from political interference. The Minister of the Environment cannot tell it what to do. The minister, however, must be responsible to Parliament for FEARO's work and can be questioned on such matters in the House.

For these many reasons, I recommend that the House adopt this motion. This motion also deals with some small matters which were raised in committee. Some confusion exists as to whether the National Energy Board can act in the public interest where the province being examined takes no action to be complemented by the National Energy Board. The original bill said that the board could complement measures taken by the provinces of regulating electricity, but what happens when provinces take no action of their own? As Maritime Electric has stated, you cannot complement measures—add to something—if they have not been taken in the first place. So, if no provincial measures get taken, there will be no measures for the National Energy Board to complement.

While the government amended the bill in committee to take out the words "complement measures", we would still like to amend it in this way, because for one thing the wording of our amendment accomplishes several things, this technical correction being only one. In the interests of efficiency, this amendment is still being proposed.

Some confusion also exists as to which province the board ought to look at. Should it be the province where the electricity is generated or the province from which the electricity leaves Canada, or both, or even three provinces may be involved once in a while. This change means that the board can look at measures taken or not taken in whatever province it finds relevant. Again, as Maritime Electric told us, even if Parliament expresses itself clearly, differences in interpretation of legislation will occur. That means if Parliament does not express itself clearly, differences and disputes are almost certain to arise.

• (1650)

For all the reasons stated above, I urge the House to adopt this third motion.

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, I rise again to speak on the third grouping of amendments to Bill C–23, the act to gut the National Energy Board and unduly politicize electricity exports, and to make a few comments before our hour of adjournment.

We on this side of the House have already expressed concern about the independence of the National Energy Board, or how it is threatened by this legislation, because it is going to allow cabinet to overrule the NEB on energy projects and power lines. The same point has to be made in relation to electricity exports. The energy future of Canada demands that our consideration of proposals for the export of electricity continues to be characterized by impartiality and prudence. By allowing cabinet to override the NEB in order to increase exports,

this bill politicizes that process and thereby threatens the national interest.

As I mentioned earlier, my colleague for Edmonton East, our energy critic, made this point on many occasions in committee. Unfortunately the government did not see fit to adopt some of the amendments that he proposed. We rise today to support the amendments presented by the member for Malpeque. They appear to be not necessarily aimed specifically at the problem, but do happen to have the effect of helping to maintain the independence of the NEB and we support that.

My colleagues and I pointed out during debate at second reading of this bill that the government was putting in place a mechanism that would make public hearings on export proposals very rare. In fact, under this bill the granting of export permits will be routine and public hearings for the vast majority of export applications will not be held. We pointed that there was no good evidence that the existing process was overly burdensome. In fact, evidence at the committee hearings show that this was the case. We pointed out that a closed process seldom serves the public purpose well. We have heard other examples of that today, VIA Rail being one, especially when dealing with such an important strategic resource like electricity. Once again, my colleague proposed in committee that a public hearing on major export proposals be held by someone at either the provincial or the federal level. This very sensible suggestion was turned down.

The main focus of this set of amendments, the third grouping, is to allow the NEB to refer proposals to export electricity to the Federal Environmental Assessment Review Office. We understand that the spirit of the Brundtland Commission demands that the effect of public policy on the environment should be considered in all sectors of government. That means all departments and all agencies of government. It means that the NEB itself will be charged with conducting the basic environmental assessments of its decisions. Bill C-23 makes some progress in that regard. Under the proposal envisioned in this amendment, FEARO, the Environmental Assessment Review Office would be used as the "environmental protector of last resort to make assessments of those export proposals the NEB feels that it cannot handle adequately itself." That sounds like an entirely sensible idea and something that the prudent member for Edmonton East would recommend.

Let us take a look at how some of these amendments affect the most important free trade agreement as it now impacts between our country and the United States. My colleague, the energy critic, the member for Edmonton East, pursued this bill in some detail when it was in committee, and he offered a number of amendments. In effect, by signing the energy provisions of the free trade deal, the government has placed a boa constrictor around our neck. Under the trade deal, exports of energy to the United States will never decrease in relative terms, but will much more likely increase and increase. Article 904 of the FTA states:

> Either Party may maintain or introduce a restriction—with respect to the export of an energy good—only if:
>
> a) the restriction does not reduce the proportion of the total export shipments of a specific energy good made available to the other Party relative to the total supply of that good of the Party maintaining the restriction compared to the proportion prevailing in the most recent 36-month period—

Now that makes a lot of sense. This proportionality clause is like a ratchet that gets tighter and tighter. It is like a boa constricter, squeezing its prey and it never lets up. That is why it is so dangerous for Canada's energy future.

The point that has been missed in all of this, when it comes to electricity exports, a kilowatt hour is a kilowatt hour is a kilowatt hour. A buck is a buck is a buck. It does not matter if an export consists of a long-term firm contract or merely supplies of interruptable power, every kilowatt hour of power that we export defines the amount that we must offer the United States in following years. It will not be a one-off deal. If that amount is more than we usually send, the ratchet, that boa constricter will tighten. The proportion that we will have to offer the U.S. will continue to increase and we will have lost forever that degree of energy flexibility that we talked about so proudly before in this House.

We know that this government, this party delivered the free trade deal for its friends in big business. We know that they are not even proud enough to tell us where their donations were from. Members in this House have

to do that. I only expect that from those people who bought all of those ads during the election campaign.

In the meantime, the least we can do is ensure that the National Energy Board takes the ratchet effect, that boa constricter again, into account in every one of its decisions respecting electricity exports. That is prudent. It is simple common sense. It is something we hope this government will follow.

The Deputy Speaker: In this grouping, a vote on Motion 11 will apply to Motion Nos. 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion shall stand deferred.

Pursuant to Standing Order 45.5(a), I have been requested by a representative of the chief government whip to defer the division until a later time. Accordingly, the divisions on the questions now before the House shall stand deferred until tomorrow at 3 o'clock, at which time the bells to call in the members will be sounded for not more than 15 minutes.

[*Translation*]

It being five o'clock, the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

AGRICULTURE

WESTERN GRAIN STABILIZATION ACT

The House resumed from Tuesday, October 17, consideration of the motion of Mr. Althouse:

> That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of introducing measures to amend the Western Grain Stabilization Act to include coverage for producers who feed their own grain to their livestock; and on the amendment of Mr. Funk:
>
> That the motion be amended by adding immediately after the words "Western Grain Stabilization Act" the following:
>
> 'and Agricultural Stabilization Act'.

Mr. Doug Fee (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to continue my speech on this motion and the record of safety net programs such as the Western Grain Stabilization Program and the Agricultural Stabilization Program.

In recent years, world grain subsidy battles, heavy debt loads and drought have combined to place Canada's grains industry under tremendous pressure. Changes in the world trade environment have led to a re-examination of the role of government support programs. Many of us from this House have joined hundreds of producers and others concerned in the agricultural industry at the minister's agri-food conference today at the Congress Centre. They are there to initiate the most thorough review of agriculture undertaken in this country for many years. Government support programs are going to be part of that review.

Programs like the Western Grain Stabilization Act and the Agriculture Stabilization Act have been doing the job that they were designed to do, protecting producers from the impact of a sudden drop in cash flow because of disruptions in markets or production costs.

The WGSA was set up in 1976 to stabilize farm incomes when grain prices dropped below a five-year average. The program has done just that. Since the 1985-86 crop year the Western Grain Stabilization Act has paid out over $3.2 billion to participants in the Prairie provinces.

A farmer who had been enrolled since the beginning of the program will have received $6 in benefit payments for every dollar of levy contributed. Over the same period the Agricultural Stabilization Act has also made substantial payments to grain and oilseed producers in eastern Canada and to producers whose products are not included under the Western Grain Stabilization Program. These programs are working but that does not mean that they cannot be improved.

Since 1984 the government has been working with producers and their organizations to make the Western Grain Stabilization Act more responsive to the needs of those producers.

In February of 1985, the Western Grain Stabilization Act was amended so that in years when a substantial pay-out was evident, interim payments would be made before the end of the crop year. This provided farmers with cash when they needed it most in time for spring seeding.

The program was further improved in 1988. Amendments were made to encourage participation, extend crop coverage and put the program on a sound financial footing. A 10 per cent penalty for producers rejoining the program was removed, and the deadline for non-participating producers to join the Western Grain Stabilization Act was extended.

Nine additional crops were made eligible for payments. These included buckwheat, peas, lentils, fababeans, canary seed, mixed grain, sunflower and safflower seeds.

Amendments were also passed to raise levies in the joint government-producer funded program. The federal government now pays 6 per cent, instead of 3 per cent, of eligible grain sale receipts while producer levies increased from 1 per cent to 4 per cent. This combined with a write-down of $750 million of the stabilization fund deficit put the program on a sounder financial basis. Without this write-down, the future of the program was in doubt.

The 1988 amendments provided immediate benefits to producers for the 1987-88 crop year. Producers rejoining the program received about 70 per cent of the payment that a full participant with the same level of grain sales received. The payment level increased to 85 per cent for the 1988-89 crop year. Without the amendments, producers rejoining the program would have received only 30 per cent of the full payment.

The success of these improvements is in the statistics. Participation has increased 8 per cent since the latest amendments, to the highest level since the program began. It now stands at 90 per cent of eligible Wheat Board permit book holders. The total number of participating producers is over 129,000, up from 113,000 in the 1986-87 crop year, an increase of 12 per cent.

This government is willing to consider further amendments to improve safety net programs for farmers. Today, we are being asked to consider the inclusion of farm-fed grain in the Western Grain Stabilization Program.

The issue is not new. The present program provides protection to farmers based on grain sales receipts. However, it does not cover farm-fed grain. Producers who feed a large portion of the grain they grow to livestock are not included.

Since this issue and motion was first discussed in the House, I had the occasion to discuss it with a number of my farmers. Many of these people would benefit from the program if it were extended. They asked me point blank why I was not promoting and actively supporting this. I have assured them that the government is taking a very broad look at the issue. The farm sector clearly needs assistance to improve its long term financial stability.

In recent years we have relied on *ad hoc* government support programs such as the 1986 and 1987 Special Canadian Grains Program, which paid out $2.1 billion to producers, and the 1988 Canadian Crop Drought Assistance Program, which paid producers another $850 million. But designing a special program for each crisis situation is not the answer.

Farmers also agree that whatever we do must be consistent with international efforts to reform agricultural subsidies.

Last April in Geneva ministers from countries involved in talks under GATT agreed that the long term objective of the negotiations is to establish a fair and market oriented agricultural trading system. The short term agreement provides that current support and protection levels in the agricultural sector will not be increased during the period of the negotiations. Countries have agreed not to change policies in a manner which would further restrict access to markets.

The government is now involved in an extensive review of Canadian agricultural policies. The review was launched in the summer of 1988 and grain stabilization is part of that total review. Government representatives met with farm leaders across the country to determine options for a national stabilization program. These options were developed by Agriculture Canada's National Grains Bureau in Winnipeg and presented to a meeting of farm leaders. Discussions have continued and right now a national conference discussing policy directions for the future is under way at the Congress Centre.

The issue of farm-fed grain will likely be raised at that conference but will be examined in the light of a need for a stabilization program, but one which treats Canadian farmers in an equitable way.

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words on Motion No. 310 which requests the government to consider doing something about the effect of paying stabilization on grain that is sold commercially but not paying stabilization on farm fed grain.

At present most people involved in the production of grain recognize that the terms of the Western Grain Stabilization Act and the Agricultural Stabilization Act do not treat those who produce the grain and sell it on the commercial market in the same way as those farmers who grow the grain and then feed it to their own livestock. The process is very clear.

I was reviewing the remarks made by the member from Brandon—Souris and wondered why the government is being somewhat dense on this in the sense that it does not seem to recognize that there is a detrimental effect upon the rural communities because of the forced separation, to a great extent, of the meat sector in farming from that of the grain producing sector.

The Stabilization Act kicks in when farmers growing and selling their grain on the commercial market get a low market price. Otherwise stabilization acts would not become effective. The stabilization payment they get brings them somewhat closer to the cost of production.

The farmer who grows that grain and feeds it to his own livestock does not get that stabilization payment. Even if he is on the stabilization for one of the hog programs or one of the beef programs, the cost of that cheap grain is factored in. In other words, the stabilization payment is lost to that particular farmer. He does not get it as part of his income for that year.

This has had the effect of forcing families to separate their feeding operations from their growing operations to the point where, in some cases, they quit one of them entirely and sell the grain to the neighbour when, if farm-fed grains were treated the same way as commercial grains as far as stabilization was concerned, those farmers would continue to produce cattle and hogs.

• (1710)

The Pork Marketing Council makes a very good case. It suggests that this different treatment of people who grow their grain and feed it to their livestock and those who sell it on the commercial market is so detrimental that it is forcing some farmers to leave the production of hogs and go entirely into the production of grain in those years when make very much money producing either the feed or the hogs. Consequently, the need for the stabilization becomes very obvious.

This Motion No. 310 asks the government to deal with this discrimination in some way. It does not suggest that we eliminate either one or the other of the programs. It suggests that in the process of dealing with this, one has to look at the differentiation, recognize that there is a differentiation and then do something about it.

That was the recommendation made to the Department of Agriculture by Daryl Kraft a number of years ago. And it is the recommendation made by a good number of farm organizations which have had the opportunity to make presentations to the government. Daryl Kraft included the recommendation, when he made his report, that farm-fed grains be made eligible for stabilization coverage. He gave two alternatives that the government could consider in order to close that gap. The government has taken no action on this recommendation at all.

The pork producers go on to suggest that there should be no difference in the treatment of grain that is fed to the livestock operation on the same farm on which it is is grown and grains sold through commercial channels. If there were no difference between the two, we would not have the situation that is negatively affecting rural

communities with mixed farms that have small numbers of livestock. Rather, farmers would specialize.

Not so long ago, a lot of our policies were established with the idea of getting people to produce more grain or more hogs. Now, under the present circumstances of the economy of agriculture, we need to take a look at those things and make sure that one of the programs does not detrimentally affect another, and that is all that is being asked here in Motion No. 310.

Mr. Arnold Malone (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, I take pleasure in entering into this debate today. I might say to the hon. member who introduced the motion that it is not a motion void of merit. Certainly, it is one that commands our attention and reflection. And for those of us who live in agricultural communities, it is a fact that this motion is very much on the minds of those who are involved in a combination of both feeding and raising grains. The important point to underscore at the moment, however, is one that I am sure the hon. member for Mackenzie will appreciate. We have in Ottawa at the moment one of the largest collections of farm leaders from across Canada who are disposed in part with this very question.

Because they are undertaking to look at and review the nature of feeding farm grains and the relationship that ought to be with the whole question of grain support programs, it would seem to me that it would be an important consideration to wait until they have had the opportunity, as farm leaders, to reflect upon this matter. They can give us the value and the wisdom of their good counsel before we, as members, make a precipitous motion that might put us into a position which subsequently might lock us on to a direction for which the farm community itself might want to go with some variance or in some slightly different direction.

The Western Grain Stabilization Program and the Agricultural Stabilization Programs provide supports to producers when grain prices drop below the five-year average. However, livestock producers in both eastern and western Canada have expressed concern that farm-fed grain is not included in the two stabilization programs. In some livestock support programs the price of grain is included in the formula for triggering these programs. So, when grain prices rise, support prices for livestock rise. But livestock support programs do not account for the cost of producing farm-fed grain. If the price of grain is unchanged but grain production costs increase, this is not reflected in the payments through livestock support programs.

This is an important issue but it should not be considered in isolation. Including farm-fed grain in stabilization programs is an issue which must be looked at in the broad context of all agricultural stabilization programs. Including farm-fed grain in the Western Grain Stabilization Act and the ASA seems like a simple way to provide additional protection to producers who feed grain to their livestock. It really is not. Including farm-fed grain in these programs would create a whole new set of issues.

First, some stabilization programs, such as the dairy program, already include a portion of the cost of producing farm-fed grains. If farm-fed grains were included in the Western Grain Stabilization and the ASA some producers would receive compensation twice on the same grain. Second, including farm-fed grain in the Western Grain Stabilization and the ASA would change these programs completely. Both programs would be based on production rather than on commercial sales. This has a number of implications. Both the Western Grain Stabilization Act and the ASA were based on production. Good yield data would be essential. Individual yield data would likely not be available in all cases and the program would have to be administered on the basis of regional yield averages.

Farmers will not be getting payments based on individual data and that could raise some questions of inequity. Producers with yields below the regional average would be overpaid and those with higher yields would, unfortunately, be underpaid.

Including farm-fed grain in the Western Grain Stabilization Act and the ASA may give livestock producers more protection. But taking this step would remove the protection which the grain producers have from being unable to market their grain.

• (1720)

Right now if producers cannot make deliveries, that is reflected in the reduced sales and the Western Grain Stabilization Act payment can be triggered. If the West-

ern Grain Stabilization Act were based on production, payments under both programs would not be triggered because of reduced deliveries.

Finally, including farm-fed grain in the Western Grain Stabilization Act and the ASA, would make both programs more expensive. In the case of the Western Grain Stabilization Act, farmers would share those increased costs along with the government.

Farm-fed grain plays a significant role in our agricultural economy. About half of the cereal crops produced in Canada, excluding wheat, are fed to livestock. In the Maritimes, the proportion of farm-fed grain is even higher. Even when wheat is included, about 30 per cent of cereal crops are fed on farms. The federal government realizes the significance of farm-fed grain in our agricultural economy. We have talked with producers and their organizations about including farm-fed grain in the stabilization programs.

Most recently, in the summer of 1988, this issue was raised at a series of regional meetings with the Minister of Grains and Oilseeds held with farm organizations to discuss farm safety nets. Farm-fed grain was an issue raised at all of those meetings and it is an issue that was raised again in January, 1989 on farm safety nets held in Winnipeg.

The Standing Committee on Agriculture also looked into the issue of farm-fed grain in its January, 1986 report on the Western Grain Stabilization Act. This is what the committee concluded on the issue of farm-fed grain.

> It should be only for the final products marketed that the producer receives market risk protection under the Western Grain Stabilization Act, or the ASA. In the case of livestock producers, they face the livestock market, but not the grain market risks. Treating livestock producers as grain producers means that the grain may be covered in the raw form and again as it goes into the final product.

That, I hasten to mention, was a recommendation of an all-party committee of this Parliament.

The federal government is about to undertake an agricultural policy review. One of the topics we will be discussing with producers and their organizations is how farm-fed grain should be dealt with under the grain income stabilization program. A number of suggestions have already been put forward for discussion. We have been debating just one of those options, including farm-fed grain in grain income stabilization programs.

Another option is including the cost of grain production in the formulas for calculating support under meat and poultry stabilization programs. This type of system is already in place for the dairy program. One drawback to this option is that livestock support prices would go up when the cost of grain production goes up, but not when actual grain prices rise. This would mean less protection for producers who buy feed rather than grow it themselves.

Another option is a program which would stabilize income for both livestock and grains. This option would be targeted toward the profitability of the producer's over-all operation. Livestock and grain incomes would not be considered then in isolation. The program would have to be operated at individual farm levels to take into account how significant livestock and grain receipts are to each operation.

The federal government is currently undertaking a review of all farm safety-net programs and the issue of farm-fed grain will be included in that policy review. The goal of the policy review is to work with industry and with the producers to knock out a national policy for Canadian agriculture.

The Minister of Agriculture has set out four principles as the basis for a national agricultural policy. They include market responses, self-reliance, sustainable and regional sensitivity. I would like to address the issue of market responsiveness and how it relates to the Western Grain Stabilization Act—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I regret to interrupt the member but his time has expired. The only way to continue would be through unanimous consent. Is the House ready to give a couple of minutes more to the member to complete his speech?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member for Crowfoot has the unanimous consent of the House.

Mr. Malone: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the House for giving me an extension of time. I appreciate it very much.

I would like to address the issue of market responsiveness and how it relates to the Western Grain Stabilizatin Act and the ASA for a moment. Concern has been expressed that the two programs discourage the use of grain on farms as feed, and promote off-farm sales instead. The livestock sector represents a major opportu-

nity for value-added and diversification in the agriculture sector.

Here is what "The Road Not Taken", a study done by producers through the National Grains Bureau, "Grains 2000"program states about the opportunities for value-added activities in the meat sector:

> The livestock sector serves as the principal feed stock to an expanded food processing sector. The meat processing sector represents the third largest industry in Canada with annual sales exceeding $8 billion. It employs 31,000 people with a payroll of $764 million and purchases almost $7 billion worth of goods and services a year. More importantly, it is almost totally a value-added industry. Properly managed, it could provide the main engine to a much more diversified and substantially better stabilized Canadian agriculture.

We are willing to work with industry to develop programs which will encourage value-added activities and diversification. But simply tinkering with the Western Grain Stabilization Act or the ASA will not be enough.

As I have pointed out, including farm-fed grains in these programs would bring a new set of inequities. We have to take a much more comprehensive approach. That is why the federal government is reviewing all agricultural programs, including the Western Grain Stabilization Act and the ASA. We want to find out how these programs affect market signals, the decisions producers make about their operations, the environment and the region, and we will be working with industry to come up with better policies and programs which will be more in tune with the needs of the industry.

With that, again, Mr. Speaker, I extend my appreciation to the House for the extended time that was allowed me to complete those comments.

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this debate today, a debate about the extension of the Western Grain Stabilization program to the livestock producers who grow their own grain, as well as the amendment that extends the coverage under the Agriculture Stabilization Act to those same producers in other parts of the country.

I have to commend my colleague for bringing in a motion like this because I think it is time well spent, not only to look at the current issues but in consideration of the projected farm income figures for the coming year. We find that the incomes are going to be dropping drastically. In Ontario, incomes will be down by 8 per cent; in Manitoba, 87 per cent; in Alberta, 54 per cent, and in Saskatchewan by 101 per cent. While these incomes to the producers are dropping like this, we see in the documents prepared for the conference today and in the news release they expect that pork prices will decline moderately in the next year even though beef prices may go up slightly.

• (1730)

Because we have the supply management systems in place for both dairy and poultry, they are not going to be hit as hard unless the government continues on its trend to pull away the underpinnings of these national supply marketing systems. Then, of course, there will be a return to the law of the jungle, disaster for all those involved and a massive take-over of those markets by the huge corporate farms to the south of us.

When you stop and look at the rationale behind the motion, you have to realize that those producers who grow their own grain always hit the same cycle. When the prices of grain are low, the livestock prices are similarly low as well. Even though they may qualify for tripartite stabilization on the livestock they are producing, at the same time that is only a break-even price and they have already suffered the same production losses. Those are the losses in their cost of production per acre on the grains they used to raise that livestock.

I am very concerned as I speak today because we have already seen many of our farm programs changed in the way of legislation. Most recently was the change in the Crop Insurance Act for the producer to be required to pay a full 50 per cent. Yet the federal government is going to get off the hook for 25 per cent of what the costs have been to it in the past, even though the provinces will be expected to pick up part of the balance of the costs.

I think it would have been much more prudent on behalf of the federal government when we have the forecast losses in the coming year to have put forward a bill that would have brought about a system of tripartite crop insurance.

I also have to think back on Bill C-36, the farm crop cash advances with the interest-free loans and how the government delayed from late in April when the budget was brought down until legislation was finally introduced in Parliament some five months later. Then it was brought through the House of Commons at second reading and into committee and out again. Then there

was a further delay of three weeks before it finally got third reading.

Also, we have to look at the At and East program that will impact dramatically on those in Atlantic Canada and on the availability of grain to them at reasonable prices. That is being removed at the present time under proposed legislation. I have to remind the government that this was an initial market for western grain that could now very well be filled by offshore grains and deprive our Canadian farmers in western Canada of yet another good market.

When I look at these various programs that are being phased out by this government, I wonder where all these ideas are coming from. Certainly they are not all cost cutting in terms of savings they are going to give to us. When we rob Peter to pay Paul, Canadians are still going to suffer.

In terms of farm crop cash advances, as I indicated when I spoke in that debate, the increase in taxes from tobacco and alcoholic beverages alone amounted to approximately $475 million in the last budget. Yet this total program only cost $27 million in terms of the crop advances. The rationale does not hold up that they are cutting some programs in an effort to control the deficit when, in fact, they raised the taxes on the same commodities that benefit from those programs by $475 million.

I have to reflect back to a speech made in the Senate committee on agriculture in Washington on April 19, 1989, a statement by Clayton Yeutter, the Secretary of Agriculture. At the top of page 7 he states that if the GATT negotiations are successful, we will be writing a segment of the European Community's 1991 farm bill in Geneva rather than in Brussels.

The Secretary of Agriculture in the United States is going to write the farm bills for these other countries in Europe. He goes on to state that this is obviously one of our objectives. Then he says that the U.S. will also be writing a major segment of the farm bills of Canada, Brazil, Argentina, Australia and several other countries in Geneva.

Here we have a U.S. Secretary of Agriculture writing farm bills for Canada. We see the proof of the pudding when we see these programs cancelled in the budget that came down in the House of Commons in the last few days of April, a leaked budget, I should add. Then we see these programs brought in to be gutted or cancelled in the House of Commons.

I think it is deplorable that any nation such as this should have to dance to the tune played by a fiddler in Washington who openly admits he is going to write the farm policies for this country when a policy is desperately needed to provide more help to the farmers in Canada.

I received a letter from the Canadian Pork Council dated December 7, 1989, asking us to support this bill because it is desperately needed. Many of the pork producers grow their own grains but they too have been hit hard, not only by the disastrously low grain prices we have had since this Tory government came to power but also the fact that we have had three drought years. Particularly in my area, there have been droughts in 1985, 1987 and 1988.

I look at what has happened in western Canada, particularly in the province of Saskatchewan. Some areas of that province were hit equally hard this year as they were in the previous two years. Now is not the time to be cancelling some of these programs but rather it is the time to be adding to and broadening that support we have had in the past to cover the grain fed to livestock.

It is a sad commentary when I look at what is happening across this nation, particularly at a time just before Christmas when we have heard a lot of talk here about how many people have become unemployed during the last few weeks as the various plants laid off workers or announced closures. It is equally sad to see the plight of some of the farm people across this nation in the provinces. I am referring particularly to Saskatchewan. One man who called me this morning suggested that there would be as many as 8,000 farmers forced off their land this winter in Saskatchewan.

I call upon the government at this point to stop and take a look at what it is doing.

An Hon. Member: Eight thousand?

Mr. Ferguson: Up to 8,000. Those are the figures he gave me. I am not talking about Farm Credit Corporation, I am talking about the whole group regardless of where they are financed. There could be up to 8,000 forced off their land in Saskatchewan this winter. I heard that from a reasonably good authority, perhaps someone closer to it than a lot of members in this House. He is

involved with some church groups that are trying to find a way to help these people.

I think it is tragic that we find ourselves in a situation like this at this time of year before the Christmas season. It is tragic that we find ourselves in a situation where a province that is noted as being the bread-basket of the world is now forced into a position where its farmers cannot even make a break-even living, where they have to find outside employment, not only for the husband but for the wife, in order to carry on their operation.

• (1740)

This area has been neglected too long and I would have to suggest to this government that it is by the strengthening and building on the programs that are already there, rather than taking them away, that this problem will be resolved. It is with proposals such as the one we have here today that we will be able to maintain a strong livestock sector across this nation, rather than see the decline we have had in the last few years and the hardships inflicted upon these people.

I wholeheartedly support the proposal that is before the House this afternoon. I hope it will move forward for consideration into committee.

Mr. Brian White (Dauphin—Swan River): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to participate in the debate on Motion No. 310 standing in the name of the member for Mackenzie, and its amendment.

I am tempted to address some of the comments made by the previous speaker, the member for Lambton—Middlesex, but I will resist that temptation and restrict my comments to the motion before us.

Motion No. 310 supports the inclusion of farm-fed grain into the existing stabilization programs for marketed grain. Including farm-fed grain in the grain stabilization framework is an issue we have heard brought up before by producers. It has been raised many times in previous years. In particular, the Prairie Pools, for example, have made the proposal recently.

The Western Grain Stabilization Program and the Agricultural Stabilization Act provide protection to farmers based on grain marketings. Farmers who do not market their grain, but instead feed it on their own farms to livestock have argued that they need similar protection.

About half of the cereals other than wheat grown in Canada are fed to livestock on farms where the grain was grown. This is the case across most of the country, except in the maritimes where the proportion of farm-fed grain is higher. If we include wheat, about 30 per cent of the grain is fed on the farm.

Producers in western Canada feed slightly less of their grain production to livestock than is the case in eastern Canada. Amending either the WGSA or the ASA to include farm-fed grain would involve major changes in the structures of these programs. It would involve basing the calculations used to determine support levels on grain production instead of on grain sales.

A production-based program would rely on good yield data which may be very difficult to get. Using yield averages for different regions could penalize producers with higher yields while benefiting those with lower yields.

As we can see, the issue is a very complicated one. If changes are made to those programs, the result could well be stabilization programs which create more inequities than presently exist among regions and types of farm operations.

In addition, we can see this issue as one which involves producers in all regions. One of the earlier speakers, the member for Crowfoot, mentioned the 1986 report of the agriculture committee, and without mentioning some of the specifics that he mentioned, I would mention recommendation No. 10 of the committee in 1986. It was that undesignated sales remain ineligible under the Western Grain Stabilization Act. The two major reasons for this were that first of all it would be very difficult administratively because levy collection in the case of undocumented sales would create extreme difficulties and the second major reason was that the Western Grain Stabilization protection should only be for the final products marketed. In this case, the final product is the beef or hog production as the case may be.

Some protection for farm-fed grain does exist in the form of livestock support programs, but for the most part, those programs use market price for grain in support calculations rather than the cost of producing the grain. When grain prices fall, livestock support prices fall. For the producer who buys grain to feed his livestock, lower support prices reflect lower costs, but for

the producer who grows his own grain to use as feed, there is no reduction in costs to offset the reduced support price.

However, some dairy producers are at least partially protected as the cost of grain production is factored into the price support formula. To include the cost of producing grain into the price support calculations for all livestock programs would cause the reverse of the situation I have just explained. That is, when the costs of producing grain increase, the livestock support prices will increase. That is fair for the producer who grows his own feed, but protection is reduced for the farmer who has to buy his feed.

There are still inequities. This clearly indicates the importance of dealing with stabilization in a broader context. We must consider the impact that making changes to any stabilization program will have on other programs or other sectors of the industry.

This is why grain stabilization is a major component in the agricultural policy review now under way by the federal government. This comprehensive review is being undertaken to prepare Canada's agricultural industry to keep pace with the changing and increasingly globalized market-place. Our agriculture industry must be prepared for the next century, and a solid foundation for agriculture must be built now.

One of the more important considerations in this extensive review is the issue of safety nets. This is very timely because tomorrow morning, in fact, as part of the conference entitled "Growing Together", the agri-food conference being held in Ottawa this week, there is a major session on safety nets. This session is being chaired jointly by the Ministers of Agriculture for Manitoba and Newfoundland.

The federal government is attempting, through conferences like the one being held this week, with the help of the industry, to develop a safety net system to assist producers in managing risk better. At the same time, it is essential that these safety nets do not interfere with the way in which farmers make their management decisions, nor hamper Canada in marketing our agricultural products abroad.

I think it is important to mention briefly the four basic principles of the foundation of the agriculture policy review. First, national agricultural policies must be market responsive. Our agriculture industry must be able to respond to market signals and demands, both in Canada and abroad. Opportunities for value-added production and diversification must be pursued.

Second, the industry must be self-reliant. This means federal policies and programs must nurture a climate of opportunity, without undermining the independence of the industry. Third, agriculture in this country must be sustainable. The long-term economic health of the industry depends to a large degree on a clean, healthy environment. Sustainable agricultural production must be economically viable.

Finally, a national agricultural strategy must be sensitive to the regional differences in this country. It must build on regional strengths and resources.

A vital part of the development of a national strategy for Canadian agriculture is consultation with the industry. The federal government is seeking input from farmers and from industry representatives from across Canada representing the many sectors of Canadian agriculture.

In closing, I would like to stress that we cannot look at stabilization of farm-fed grain in isolation from other agricultural policies and programs.

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in favour of the motion which is before the House today. I think that the views which have been expressed in this House have been to the point, particularly in respect of this bill. However, I think that there is a broader issue that must be discussed when looking at this issue and, in fact, when looking at other issues in respect of agriculture.

All agricultural programs must be discussed with some broader objectives in mind. We must ask ourselves the question, what future do we want for agriculture in this country. That is a question that in the past has not been addressed properly or with any real sincerity. The basic question with respect to agriculture is, of course, do we wish to maintain viable family farming units or do we wish to move to the industrial corporate farming model.

Since World War II, the programs and policies that have been implemented by various Liberal and Conservative governments through the years have not had any underlying foundation or any underlying base to them. Often we found programs and policies that have been divergent, that have not accomplished the tasks which

they set out to accomplish. It is important that we address our attention to this fundamental issue.

• (1750)

The government has put together a paper *Growing Together*, and there is a conference that is presently taking place. There are four pillars which have been suggested and which have been recounted by the government a number of times. Just to review them very briefly, they are calling for more market responsiveness, greater self-reliance, a national policy which recognizes diversity and increased environmental sustainability.

Those are very general concepts which can be supported in the abstract. The question, of course, is how will these translate into actual government policy. I think it is clear from attending the conference today that the direction this government is going in is a direction that is not considering the future viability of family farms. It is encouraging and moving toward the industrial corporate model and that is the direction that this government has chosen to take and I believe will be submitting policies with respect to that end.

This is a good opportunity to discuss agricultural issues but it is unfortunate that the government will be taking that direction. The government does state that it is a government of consultation. It is a government that desires to maintain a family farm model. But the evidence is not there. Certainly other bills that have recently been passed do not project that. Certainly the bill on advance payments which was recently passed increased the amount of advance payments to a limit of $250,000. I do not know how many small producers, even medium producers, can take advantage of a $250,000 loan. That is a large amount of money. It is simply passing that legislation to the detriment of the family farmer in this country.

The idea of consultation that the government says it is entering into is certainly not clear from its handling of the oats issue. There was an outcry across this country when the government announced that it was going to remove oats from the Canadian Wheat Board. I and my colleagues have been in this House every day introducing petition after petition calling for the government to maintain oats under the Canadian Wheat Board. In fact, I just received today an answer to one of those petitions which says after careful consideration of the unique market potential for Canadian oats and in consideration of how that market could best be served, a decision was made to have the industry market oats. This change was made solely in the best interests of the Canadian oats producer.

The Canadian oats producers do not want that. In fact, it is very clear that over two-thirds of producers in western Canada would prefer oats to remain under the Canadian Wheat Board. There is not consultation in the general sense of the word. There is simply consultation with those groups that agree with the government's position. That is unfortunate for the government. It is unfortunate for the producers and it is unfortunate for the people of this country.

There is also a broader issue that deals with rural Canada. We have to address the future of agriculture. We have to address the future of rural Canada generally. That includes small business, seniors and young people.

Across this country, many of the issues that are of concern to rural Saskatchewan are also the same concerns that exist in rural Nova Scotia, rural Prince Edward Island, rural Quebec or rural Ontario. The fact is that the rural infrastructure in this country is collapsing. Unless something is done to change that trend, rural Canada is in very severe trouble.

Certainly the small business people are closing their doors. Seniors are not remaining in communities where they grew up because of the lack of health care and transportation services and the lack of other amenities. Young families are not moving there for the same reason.

There needs to be a viable economic base in those communities in rural Canada in order to help maintain those areas. Certainly the recent projections for farm income reveal that fact. While farm income is projected to be down by 50 per cent across Canada, western Canada is severely hit. In the province of Saskatchewan, it is expected that people will have a negative net income next year, something that I find quite remarkable. Manitoba will be down by 87 per cent and Alberta by 54 per cent.

The producers in this country are in a severe financial situation. In my home province of Saskatchewan, we have something like over 39,000 farms which have an acreage of less than 1,000 acres and only 14,000 with acreages above 1,000 acres. The programs that are being developed and the way this government is talking is not looking at those smaller producers. Those producers, if they maintain themselves on the land, are the ones going into the general stores and buying the goods. They are the ones who are supporting the local pharmacies, doctors and dentists. If those people are gone, then there

is severe economic hardship for the community as a whole.

On this particular motion, I would like to make a couple of very short comments before my time runs out. The motion is really designed to help provide some equity and to help provide some fairness in the farming industry. If the goal is to encourage viable mixed farms in this country, then this motion should be supported by the government. We have the odd situation where a producer in times of low prices, instead of feeding the grain to his livestock which he would normally do, because of the situation is encouraged to deliver the grain to market. He is going to get a higher price for it because of the stabilization payment.

We have an irony here in that we have a free enterprise government which is hampering a farmer's ability to make some market decisions. What we want is to have some equity and some fairness in this program so that farmers can make those decisions and so that the farming economy will progress in a fashion that will be best for the local producers and allow them to make those decisions to maintain some viability.

We would ask that this bill be supported.

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think you will find that there is consent among the three parties that we suspend the sitting of the House to the call of the Chair for the purposes of considering a special order later in the day.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That would be all right at six o'clock. At six o'clock, the Chair would suspend the sitting of the House for a few minutes. Is there agreement?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It is now 5.58 p.m. In the meantime, on debate, I recognize the member for Wild Rose.

Mrs. Louise Feltham (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to say a few words about the Western Grain Stabilization Program and the Agricultural Stabilization Program.

All agriculture programs, including WGSA and ASA, are currently under review. The federal government has released a discussion paper to bring producers and their organizations into the policy review process. This paper is the focal point for discussion at the national agri–food policy conference being held at the Congress Centre today and tomorrow.

It is clear that our policies and programs need to change. We have worked with producers and their organizations to improve these programs in the past. The Western Grain Stabilization Program was amended in 1985 to improve the timing of issuing payments to producers. The act was amended so that producers would receive an interim payment in the spring during crop years when calculations indicated that there would be a substantial program payout. This amendment put cash in the hands of producers right before spring seeding when they needed it most.

In 1988 the Western Grain Stabilization Act was amended again.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It being six o'clock, I regret to interrupt the hon. member. The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired.

Pursuant to Standing Order 93 the order is dropped to the bottom of the list of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

SITTING SUSPENDED

Mr. Deputy Speaker: According to the order previously passed by the House, this sitting is suspended to the call of the Chair.

The sitting of the House was suspended at 6:01 p.m.

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 7 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On a point of order, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy House Leader.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to inform the House that we have been unable to come to an agreement among the three parties in spite of our best intentions, so we ask that you simply adjourn the House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until 11 a.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 7.01 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, December 12, 1989

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government responses to 161 petitions.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

* * *

PETITIONS

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I have the duty to table today 25 petitions signed by people of the riding of Ottawa—Vanier, people who object strongly to this government's proposal to impose a goods and services tax, whether it is 9 per cent, 7 per cent or any per cent.

The federal Conservative government wants to impose this tax, which will be hidden from Canadians and applied to just about everything they buy.

In the petition, these constituents insist, that the imposition of this new general goods and services tax will cause serious and unfair hardship to low and middle income Canadians and that the tax will create an onerous burden on small business.

On behalf of these Canadians who strongly oppose this new goods and services tax which, in their opinion, is an unprecedented tax grab from their pockets and will hit them not only with higher taxes but with higher inflation, higher interest rates and higher unemployment, the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon Parliament to reject this proposed goods and services tax.

[*Translation*]

OPPOSITION TO TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS ON TAX BENEFITS FOR NORTHERN AND ISOLATED AREAS

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, it is my privilege today to present a petition rejecting the recommendations of the Task Force on Tax Benefits for Northern and Isolated Areas. Your petitioners, who represent the isolated community of Lebel-sur-Quévillon in Abitibi, are concerned about the recommendations in this report which may cause many workers to leave these isolated communities. They believe that the Government of Canada has refused to consider the fact that people in the north live in a harsh and isolated environment and that the cost of living is high.

Mr. Speaker, according to the disparity index for 84 isolated communities in Quebec in 1989, Lebel-sur-Quévillon ranks 70th and Fermont 81st.

OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX AND REQUEST FOR EXEMPTION OF SKATING LESSONS AND RELATED COSTS

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, I have one more petition. Today it is my privilege, pursuant to Standing Order 36, to present a petition rejecting the proposed goods and services tax, especially on skating expenses. Your petitioners, who represent the communities of Malartic and Rivière Héva, are concerned about the heavy financial burden that the proposed tax will put on the families of young athletes, and they ask Parliament to designate skating lessons as an educational service and thus exempt related costs from the proposed goods and services tax.

[*English*]

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Douglas Young (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 and on behalf of hundreds of British Columbians, I wish to present a petition signed mainly by citizens of Port Alberni, British Columbia, and collected during our visits to British Columbia, explaining to Canadians what exactly the goods and services tax is all about, a hidden tax on virtually everything they use, everything they buy, a tax that whether it comes in at 3

per cent, 5 per cent, 7 per cent or 9 per cent, will undoubtedly go the route of the same tax that was introduced in New Zealand at 10 per cent and went to 12.5 per cent.

• (1110)

On behalf of British Columbians who oppose the goods and services tax, I want to present this petition to the House.

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I rise today under Standing Order 36 to present petitions to this House. I have three petitions from my constituents who strenuously object to the proposed goods and services tax and call upon this House to reject this unfair burden.

CANADA POST CORPORATION

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I have another petition to table on behalf of the residents of Hyde Park, Ontario, who avail themselves of their ancient and undoubted right to present a common grievance in the certain assurance this honourable House will therefore provide a remedy.

Mr. Speaker, 270 people signed this petition and they call upon this Parliament to instruct Canada Post to continue to maintain the Hyde Park post office as a federally operated post office and reappoint a permanent postmaster to this position.

I present this petition on behalf of these people who are concerned that the government plans to privatize the post offices across Canada which will effectively close down and destroy the small towns and villages of this nation.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to Standing Order 36 to present a petition signed by 32 petitioners from Lumsden in the northern part of my riding.

These constituents are concerned that the Government of Canada is proposing to dramatically cut unemployment insurance benefits by making it more difficult to qualify, and reducing the number of weeks covered. They are also concerned about the negative effect this is going to have on job development strategy and the community infrastructure in their riding. They are concerned that the Government of Canada is proposing to withdraw a contribution of $2.9 billion to the unemployment insurance fund.

These petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to reject these cuts in the unemployment insurance system.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, I rise to give wholehearted support to a petition against the goods and services tax. These petitioners from Grand Bank, Lamaline and Red Cove and many other communities in Burin—St. George's now join the hundreds of thousands of people who have already signed petitions on this issue.

The prayer of the petitioners is that Parliament will reject the proposed goods and services tax. I wholeheartedly support it and ask members to give heed.

SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, I rise under the provisions of Standing Order 36 to present a petition signed by a total of 409 Canadians, almost all of whom are resident in Alberta and many of whom are resident in Edmonton.

The petitioners believe that the clawback action might well be unconstitutional, that it is unfair as those with similar income are taxed differently. It is discriminatory on the basis of age and marital status and it destroys the credibility and trust that Canadians have in their government. The petitioners pray that the budget proposal to claw back payments under the social programs, old age security and family allowances be withdrawn.

With these 409 names added to the literally thousands I have presented before, it brings the total to over 11,000 names against the clawback I have presented in petition to this House.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour and duty to present petitions on behalf of petitioners from Prud'homme, Alvena, Biggar and Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, who call upon the government to reject the current proposed goods and services tax. The petitioners point out that they want the government to ensure that if and when there is a broad public consensus on the sales tax measure to replace the manufacturing sales tax, this reform should not be an opportunity for the government to impose a massive tax grab. They call upon the government to not proceed with the goods and services tax.

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present to Parliament a number of petitions duly signed and certified pursuant to Standing Order 36. Thousands of the residents of Aurora, King City, Richmond Hill and Vaughn, workers, senior citizens, students, businesspersons, people I meet in factories, shopping centres, train stations, schools and at town hall meetings strongly oppose the proposed 9 per cent goods and services tax.

The residents of York North are against this tax that will bring about higher inflation, increased unemployment, higher interest rates and will be a nightmare to administer.

On their behalf, I urge this Parliament to reject the proposed goods and services tax.

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today to present three petitions from my constituency of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke dealing with the 9 per cent goods and services tax. These petitioners are from Pembroke, Petawawa and other communities throughout eastern Ontario. I also have another petition covering a good many communities in New Brunswick.

The petitioners ask the government not to introduce the 9 per cent goods and services tax. They feel that with the 31 increases in taxes which this government has brought in already, and this being a major one, the thirty-second one, that enough is enough. As well, they feel that this is going to be a great burden on small businesses to administer and indeed it will, so they are petitioning the government not to go ahead with this tax and to take a second look at its policies.

FORESTRY

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise pursuant to Standing Order 36 with two petitions signed by some 56 persons from the constituency of Kootenay West—Revelstoke. The petitioners reside in Revelstoke, Trail, Castlegar and also other parts of British Columbia, such as Golden, Victoria and Kamloops.

They point out that the forests of Canada sustain an industry which employs, directly and indirectly, more Canadians than any other industry. They also point out the valuable work that has been done during the term of the present agreement and encourage the Parliament of Canada to renew this important agreement with British Columbia, thereby providing for a renewed commitment to restocking our forest land, advancing forestry research, promoting silviculture and assisting the forest industry in developing the new products and markets that will provide us with forestry jobs in the future.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Jack Whittaker (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege today to present, pursuant to Standing Order 36, six petitions on behalf of residents of Grand Forks, Christina Lake, Greenwood, Midway and Beaverdell in the riding of Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt. These petitions contain 878 names.

The petitioners call on the government to take another look at the goods and services tax, ensure that if and when there is broad public consensus on a sales tax measure to replace the manufacturers' sales tax, that the government should not use this as an opportunity to impose a massive tax grab. They ask the government to cease with a proposal which will shift the tax burden on to ordinary Canadians through a regressive consumption tax instead of through real tax reform.

ROUGE RIVER VALLEY

Mrs. Pauline Browes (Scarborough Centre): Mr. Speaker, I enthusiastically present to the House today a petition that is entitled "Help Save the Rouge".

The Rouge Valley is 5,000 acres of beautiful wilderness land in metro Toronto. A very important point about this valley is that there is a component of farmland within it that some of the members have not heard about recently. This farmland needs to be preserved because it contains the headwaters of the river itself. So its preservation is very much a part of preserving the valley.

The petitioners are calling upon the Government of Canada, which has already committed $10 million to this project, to work with the province of Ontario to establish a Canadian heritage land or a provincial park in the Rouge Valley system in Scarborough.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

Mr. Speaker: Shall all questions stand?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

DISPOSITION OF BILL C-49

The House resumed from Monday, December 11, consideration of the motion of Mr. Lewis:

That, notwithstanding any Standing or Special Order or practice of the House, for the purposes of consideration and disposition of Bill C-49, An Act to provide for the resumption of certain government services:

1) there shall be, following the adoption of this Order, one day for the report stage and one day for the third reading stage of the Bill;

2) on each of the said days, at 15 minutes before the time normally provided as the conclusion of Government Orders, the Speaker shall interrupt any proceeding then under way and shall put forthwith, successively and without further amendment or debate, every question necessary to dispose of the said stage of the Bill; provided that if any such day be a Monday, Tuesday, Thursday or Friday, Private Members' Business shall commence, and continue for one hour, immediately following such proceedings; and

3) following such hour of Private Members' Business or, on other days at the conclusion of proceedings on Bill C-49, as the case may be, the Speaker shall adjourn the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Call in the members.

The House divided on the motion which was agreed to on the following division:

(*Division No. 142*)

YEAS

Members

Anderson	Andre
Atkinson	Attewell
Beatty	Belsher
Bernier	Bertrand
Bjornson	Blais
Bosley	Bouchard (Roberval)
Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)	Boyer
Brightwell	Browes
Cadieux	Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Cardiff	Casey
Chadwick	Champagne (Champlain)
Chartrand	Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cole	Collins
Cooper	Corbeil
Corbett	Côté
Couture	Crosby (Halifax West)
Darling	DeBlois
de Cotret	Desjardins
Dick	Dobbie
Domm	Dorin
Duplessis	Edwards
Epp	Fee
Feltham	Ferland
Fontaine	Fretz
Friesen	Gérin
Greene	Guilbault
Gustafson	Halliday
Harvey (Chicoutimi)	Hawkes
Hicks	Hockin
Hogue	Holtmann
Horning	Hudon
Hughes	Jelinek
Johnson	Jourdenais
Kempling	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kindy	Koury
Langlois	Larrivée
Layton	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lewis	Littlechild
Lopez	MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacDougall (Timiskaming)	MacKay
Malone	Marin
Martin (Lincoln)	Masse
Mayer	Mazankowski
McCreath	McDermid
McDougall (St. Paul's)	McKnight
Monteith	Moore
Nicholson	Oberle
O'Kurley	Plamondon
Plourde	Porter
Redway	Reid

Reimer	Ricard
Robitaille	Roy-Arcelin
St-Julien	Schneider
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)	Shields
Siddon	Sobeski
Soetens	Sparrow
Stevenson	Tardif
Tétreault	Thacker
Thompson	Tremblay (Rosemont)
Tremblay (Québec-Est)	Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Turner (Halton—Peel)	Valcourt
Van de Walle	Vankoughnet
Venne	Vincent
Weiner	White
Wilbee	Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)	Winegard
Worthy—133	

NAYS

Members

Allmand	Althouse
Anawak	Angus
Assad	Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Baker	Barrett
Bélair	Bellemare
Bevilacqua	Blackburn (Brant)
Blaikie	Boudria
Brewin	Butland
Caccia	Campbell (South West Nova)
Catterall	Crawford
de Jong	Dingwall
Duhamel	Ferguson
Finestone	Fisher
Flis	Gaffney
Gardiner	Gauthier
Gray (Windsor West)	Harb
Harvard	Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hopkins	Hovdebo
Hunter	Jordan
Kaplan	Keyes
Kristiansen	Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
Laporte	LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
Lee	MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacLaren	Manley
Marleau	McCurdy
Mifflin	Milliken
Mills	Mitchell
Murphy	Nault
Nunziata	Nystrom
Pagtakhan	Parker
Peterson	Pickard
Proud	Rideout
Robichaud	Rodriguez
Simmons	Stupich
Taylor	Tobin
Vanclief	Volpe
Walker	Whittaker
Wood	Young (Gloucester)—76

• (1200)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I declare the motion carried.

[*English*]

Mr. Richardson: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry, I was late getting from committee into the House for the vote.

Had I been in the House I would have voted in favour of the motion.

NORDION AND THERATRONICS DIVESTITURE AUTHORIZATION ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed from Monday, December 4, consideration of Bill C-13, an act to authorize the divestiture of Nordion International Inc. and Theratronics International Limited, as reported (without amendment) from a legislative committee; and Motion No. 1.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please. The hon. member for Burin—St. George's had the floor on debate. I would like to recognize the hon. member for Burin—St. George's on the great speech I know we are going to have this afternoon, but it is pretty difficult with members still holding conversations in the chamber.

Would members holding conversations please go behind the curtain.

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, as I was saying when I was interrupted some days ago, this particular resolution, this amendment by my colleague—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please. Will hon. members who are having conversations please move behind the curtains. Order, please. The hon. member for Burin—St. George's.

Mr. Simmons: Mr. Speaker, my good friend from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke put down a number of motions and of course this particular one would have us change the legislation so that some royalties would be collected from the two companies to be privatized, Nordion International Inc. and Theratronics International Limited, and that those royalties would be directed back to AECL.

There is a very good reason for that amendment. The people of Canada, the people who own those two companies through AECL which nurtured them in the early years before they improved their bottom line, ought to be the benefactors during some of the good times.

My colleague and I, and all my colleagues here in this caucus, do not think it is fair ball now to take those two companies and put them into the private sector without, in the process, providing some return to the people of Canada on the investment that they put into these two companies over the years. AECL could do with the

royalties and it could continue, in turn, to do the kind of work that it has been doing so well over the years.

There is another issue that needs to be addressed while we are talking about the old matter of privatization of those two companies. It is an issue that has come up in pretty well every legislative committee that we have had in this particular session of Parliament. That issue is the government's determination not to hear opposing views on the legislation.

My colleague and I, together with one member from the NDP and several from the Tory side, sat as a legislative committee on Bill C–13. It is a bill which has many ramifications. In its simplest form it would just privatize two companies, but that says it much too simply.

In the process it would put in private hands matters relating to food irradiation, for example. Across this country there are many people who have very legitimate concerns about the issue of food irradiation. We on the committee from this side of the House wanted to call some people who could enlighten the committee in terms of their concerns about food irradiation. My colleague and I had taken the step of being in contact with many people who wanted to appear before the legislative committee on Bill C–13.

• (1210)

They wanted to come and tell us, those who represent the people of Canada here in this place, some of their concerns: their safety concerns, their health concerns. People from the Canadian Cancer Society wanted to come and talk to us about the nuclear medicine issue which arises from this particular subject, for example. Do you know what the Tories did in that particular case? They did what they are doing in every single case without exception.

This is the same crowd which back in 1984 brought in some new rules to give members of this House a fuller opportunity in committee to ensure that legislation would be properly scrutinized. It would give a greater role for individual members from all across this country, yes, but in the process it would give the committees a greater role and, more to the point, it would better serve the Canadian people by ensuring that the legislation proposed in this place which receives first and second reading is properly scrutinized in detail, clause by clause, before it comes to third reading and passage in this chamber.

That was the theory but something went wrong along the way. The government lost its commitment on this issue or, more to the point, decided it did not need the niceties of a committee procedure. So it now sends to committees its mobile gang, its group of parliamentary terrorists, almost, who come in every day with plugs in their ears and shut down the committees one by one, whether it is the committee addressing the question of clawing back seniors' pensions, the committee on Nordion, or any other committee for that matter.

I realize my time has run out so quickly, but there will be other opportunities. I appeal to all members of the House to do in this chamber what we were not allowed to do in committee because of the Tory majority: to say our piece, to express our concerns about nuclear medicine, about food irradiation and the other issues I would have got into had there been time.

Later in the day when we get to other amendments we will be up again, as I hope will every member of this chamber who shares these concerns.

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Privatization and Regulatory Affairs)): Mr. Speaker, briefly on the amendment introduced by my friend from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, there has been a number of things raised in the comments on his amendment, the first being that we are trying to rush things through.

On March 4, 1988, almost two years ago, it was announced that Nordion and Theratronics would be divested from AECL and privatized. For the next year the work was done on these two companies to get them in shape for privatization. I had the privilege of introducing the legislation in this House on May 4, 1989.

At that time we had first reading. We went into second reading in June. The bill sat over summer, of course, and got into committee in October. I appeared before the committee and spent a considerable amount of time with my colleagues in committee answering their questions. I understand there were then motions in committee to put a time limit on the debate.

We are opposing this particular amendment, as my friend knows. I have chatted with him privately in this regard. AECL's future and its future funding is not related to the sale of Nordion and Theratronics in any way. I want to make it very clear that Nordion provided a very minor amount, I believe it was less than 5 per cent, of the funding for AECL. That is a separate issue that the minister of energy will address and is addressing at the present time, both the research and the development end of the Candu III, which we have heard a lot about and so on. Those statements will come from the minister of energy at another time and will be separate from what we are talking about here.

I must also comment on a couple of things that were said by my friends in opposition. One was that privatization is a Conservative ideology, that the Conservatives are hell-bent for election on privatization, and that it is strictly a Conservative bent.

If people look at what is going on in the world today they will see that communist countries are privatizing, socialist countries are privatizing, Liberal governments and countries governed by Liberals, God bless them, are privatizing, and Conservative governments are privatizing.

It is obvious that these various types of governments around the world have realized the benefits of corporations being held in private hands and run by the private sector, that in many instances these corporations can be better run and have better opportunities.

I wanted to make that point. I also wanted to point out that Nordion and Theratronics, being successful companies, will now be paying taxes to the federal coffers. We expect them to do extremely well in the private sector, so we would have to oppose this particular motion because AECL's funding requirements are not going to be solved by Nordion and Theratronics.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The question is on Motion No. 1, standing in the name of the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those in favour the motion will please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke) moved:

Motion No. 2.

That Bill C-13 be amended in Clause 5 by

(a) striking out line 20 at page 2 and substituting the following therefor:

"5.(1) Nordion and Theratronics shall prepare articles of"

(b) striking out line 27 at page 2 and substituting the following therefor:

"subsection (1), Nordion and Theratronics shall send the ".

Motion No. 3.

That Bill C-13 be amended in Clause 6 by

(a) striking out line 35 at page 2 and substituting the following therefor:

"dion and Theratronics shall contain provisions imposing con-"

(b) striking out line 38 at page 2 and substituting the following therefor:

"Nordion and Theratronics to prevent non-residents, together"

(c) striking out line 2 at page 3 and substituting the following therefor:

"elect the directors of Nordion and Theratronics."

(d) striking out line 7 at page 3 and substituting the following therefor:

"Nordion and Theratronics as if the constraints imposed pursu-"

(e) striking out line 38 at page 3 and substituting the following therefor:

"that relates to voting shares of Nordion and Theratronics;"

(f) striking out line 43 at page 3 and substituting the following therefor:

"Nordion and Theratronics; or"

(g) striking out line 10 at page 4 and substituting the following therefor:

"shares of Nordion and Theratronics held or to be held by the"

(h) striking out line 26 at page 4 and substituting the following therefor:

"securities register of Nordion and Theratronics that any"

(i) striking out line 32 at page 4 and substituting the following therefor:

"Nordion and Theratronics and two thousand such votes, that".

Motion No. 4.

That Bill C-13 be amended in Clause 7 by striking out line 5 at page 6 and substituting the following therefor:

"7. Nordion and Theratronics and their shareholders and direc-".

He said: Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious debate that we are having on these two Crown corporations being privatized. The minister said that the sale of Nordion International and Theratronics International is not going to solve AECL's financial problems because I believe Nordion has been directing only 5 per cent of its revenue toward AECL in the immediate past.

• (1220)

I want to point out to the House and to all Canadians that that is 5 per cent more than this government has been willing to give. I also want to point out that Theratronics and Nordion together have had for 45 years taxpayers' money invested in them. The minister says that these companies are going to make a return to the taxation department of Canada because when they are privatized they will be paying taxes to the Government of Canada. That is nothing new. Every other company that starts from scratch pays taxes into the public Treasury of Canada.

But where are these two companies starting from? They have their factory in place. They have their sources of material in place. They have their marketing in place out there in the world. They have their technicians already in their plant. They have their engineers. They have their specialists. They are starting from an ongoing successful operation.

The minister says that if we do not do this we are not going to give anything in return to the taxpayers of Canada. Both of these companies are predicted to grow considerably in the next few years.

The minister just said that everybody around the world is privatizing. Privatizing is one thing; the method of privatizing is another.

A large source of isotopes have been coming from the NRU reactor and the Chalk River nuclear laboratories. That NRU reactor is ageing. It will require repairs and indeed replacement. The Maple X reactor for the production of isotopes is still not on stream, and we do not know the time frame of when it will be coming on stream.

These amendments dealing with Theratronics were moved because there are no foreign control guarantees built into this bill. Nordion has a protection in this bill from foreign control. Theratronics has nothing. They have left it wide open because they want it to be flexible for investors.

We in this House all know what is going on today under the free trade agreement. We know what is going on in this particular case. If you are not going to put any controls on, then you must be looking for foreign investors. Are we going to stand idly by and allow this government to sell a Crown corporation off without any foreign controls on it after the taxpayers of Canada have brought that company to where it is today? There is an obligation here to deal with the taxpayers of Canada.

We hear often that when people buy things under privatization they have a right to profit, and that is quite true. Otherwise they cannot operate. If the taxpayers of Canada have an investment, should they not also have a return the same as any business?

The money for the sale of these two companies will be paid directly, as came out in the committee hearings, to AECL; but there is no guarantee that money is going to be left with Atomic Energy of Canada Limited. The government has already shown its hand. It has cut research and development by 50 per cent or $100 million in the 1985 budget of the Mulroney government. They lifted $70 million out of the reserve fund of Atomic Energy of Canada Limited.

When these companies are sold and the money paid to Atomic Energy of Canada Limited there is absolutely no guarantee—and this was said before our committee—that that money is going to remain there. They can lift it out and put it into the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Canada, and heaven knows where it goes from there. We are into the ways and means of doing things here. The taxpayers of Canada are the ones who are going to be the losers.

AECL has had many years of research and development since 1952 on cancer research, Theratronics deals with the cobalt therapy unit for the treatment of cancer and all other related equipment. After 45 years of research, how can we tell a Crown corporation as large as Atomic Energy of Canada Limited today that it is going to be sold?

At a time when we are criss-crossing this country asking Canadians to donate money to the Canadian Cancer Society, we are going to sell off this program which has developed so much specialized treatment, R and D for cancer, to private enterprise with no return whatsoever to the parent organization. We say that this is wrong.

What is going to happen if Theratronics cannot be brought together under a Canadian ownership umbrella? "We are going to have a very flexible agreement or arrangement" says the government "in order to provide funds and provide buyers for Theratronics". Flexibility can mean that any American company, British company and so on can move in, buy up this Canadian taxpayer sponsored company and either stop production or take what they need to add to their own specialized product and Canadians no longer have control of it. There has to be control factors in here on both these operations.

That is the purposes of Motions Nos. 2, 3 and 4. Your Honour will notice that there is a whole host of changes in the bill. It simply means that wherever Nordion is mentioned in the bill—and there is protection built in for Nordion—we have applied through these amendments the same protection for Theratronics International on the production of cancer therapy units and related cancer equipment as we have in the Nordion company which produces the medical radio isotopes and irradiation for the industrial community. We feel very strongly about this point.

I want to make one comment before I sit down. I was very anxious to have the Canadian Cancer Society before the committee, but we all know what happened. Without even having one witness, not a single witness outside the presidents of the companies, the two unions of the companies, this government with its majority members in the committee and with the Minister of State for Privatization's legislative assistant sitting behind those members in the committee room, they moved a motion that witnesses not be heard and that we move clause by clause on the bill and report the bill back to the House. This government did not want the people of Canada to know what asset it was selling off. It did not want them to know that it is selling off and privatizing two companies which have done more for the treatment of cancer in this country than any other government agency, and at a time when we are asking people to donate to the Cancer Society of Canada.

I resent the fact that the government has run roughshod over the committee system in the House of Commons. This is only one example of it. Members of the government say that they are getting a hard time with this bill on the floor of the House. What can they expect if they are not going to let Canadians have their say before the committee and if they are not going to have any input from the members of parliament concerning the witnesses whom they want to appear before the committee? It is a good educational matter for all members of parliament and for the Canadian public to know what this government is selling off, to know what assets of ours it is selling off to private enterprise. It is not like any other company paying taxes. This company has all its organization in place from square one and it just takes off and buys a profit-making company.

• (1230)

Meanwhile the parent organization, Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, will probably end up getting no return for the 45 years of research that has gone into that company. At the same time this government is saying to that Crown corporation, AECL: "You pay your own way because we are not going to give you any more money. You pay your own way, AECL, but we are going to sell off all your profitable assets". What kind of arithmetic and what kind of business planning is that? That is not business planning at all. That is selling off to your friends

and looking for support. You are killing R and D in this country by doing this.

To say that privatization is the only way to go—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret to interrupt the hon. member. I have given him an extra couple of minutes. Is there unanimous consent to give him extra time?

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, I would like to move a subamendment to Motion No. 3, section (b), which would strike out lines 38 to 43 and add the following:

> "with the associates thereof, from holding, beneficially owning or controlling, directly or indirectly, otherwise than by way of security only, in the aggregate voting shares to which are attached more than 25 per cent in the case of Nordion and more than 49 per cent in the case of Theratronics."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I will take the subamendment under advisement. We will continue with the intervention of the hon. member for Essex—Windsor.

Mr. Langdon: Mr. Speaker, I think that the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke has very clearly put before the House a serious gap which exists in this piece of legislation as it presently stands.

The logic of the government tells it with respect to Nordion to move ahead and put a 25 per cent restriction with respect to foreign ownership on this company. There is, however, absolutely no restriction with respect to Theratronics.

Theratronics is, in my view, in a slightly different category than Nordion. Nordion is a company which has shown an expansion over recent years which is quite dramatic. It is in a field in which the products which it produces are moving ahead with an ever-widening market evident before it. To talk about a 25 per cent restriction is sensible. It is very much consistent with what this government claims to be its commitment to Canadianization.

However, this commitment to Canadianization is equally important to recognize with respect to Theratronics. Theratronics is not a company which has as completely a rosy future as Nordion appears to have. Theratronics is a company which, frankly, operates with a technology which is not as close to the frontier, one which faces therefore a more difficult future. I think in a case like this it is proper to look for an arrangement which stresses the Canadianization principle with somewhat less force than is true with Nordion. It is for that reason that I suggested the 49 per cent level.

Nevertheless, it seems to me that if one is prepared to take the principle of Canadianization and to put that principle into effect with one of these companies as it is privatized, then it is equally important to put that same principle into effect with the other company.

I agree that it is important to allow somewhat more flexibility, but to do so is one thing. To ignore the principle entirely, as this present piece of legislation does, is simply not to my mind a reflection of either government policy as it has been enunciated or of the logic which has been applied to Nordion in this very bill. Nor do I believe that it is consistent with the generally held views of most people across this country. While they may or may not be in favour of seeing the first case of a company in the nuclear industry being privatized, they certainly are not in favour of seeing us put this company into a position where it is possible for it to be lost to the Canadian people who have invested in the company and for it to become a privately foreign-owned firm. My subamendment provides sufficient scope to the employees of Theratronics to be able to work out some sort of a partnership if they feel that is necessary. That partnership will nevertheless be a partnership which remains under Canadian control. That is something which is extremely important, certainly to my mind.

• (1240)

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to say a few words on the subject.

I must admit that I have been following this issue perhaps not as closely as some other issues, but there is a logic with which I am concerned. It is a genuine concern. I am delighted that I have the opportunity to voice my concern. I am speaking on the amendments put forward by the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

Before we get to that, I do have to express my concern, which I think has been expressed by some of my other colleagues, about the general feeling about privatization of our nuclear industry. It is something I have always held dear, and I am certainly familiar with the background of atomic energy in Canada and the business of Canadians being in on the ground floor of this very important and key industry for the country. I was very

surprised when I saw that measures were being taken to privatize this key industry in Canada.

On the issue of this particular amendment put forward by my honourable colleague, I have a problem in following the logic put forward. I believe it is safe to say that Canadians watching this debate are wondering what on earth the members of Parliament are talking about What is the issue at stake here? What is being discussed?

What is being discussed is a sense of logic and certain inconsistencies that do not seem to have any reason or any basis. I think it is worth while to look at and to review the similarities between the two companies being privatized and what they do.

Both Nordion and Theratronics go back 45 years. They were created as divisions of Eldorado Mining and Refining. In the early 1950s they were transferred to Atomic Energy of Canada Limited.

On September 30, 1988, Nordion was incorporated and transferred to CIDC in anticipation of privatization. Nordion is primarily a radio chemical company and has two main lines of business, isotope products and industrial radiation.

Theratronics on the other hand does have the same background in the sense that it commenced operations in 1946 as part of Eldorado Mining and Refining, was transferred to Atomic Energy of Canada Limited in 1952 and, similarly, on September 30 of last year was incorporated as Theratronics International and transferred to the CDIC in anticipation of privatization. But Theratronics is an organization that is concerned primarily with medical products. I think a lot of Canadians know and appreciate that Theratronics was a pioneer in cancer treatment. It was responsible for designing the world's first cobalt therapy machine in 1951 just before its transfer to Atomic Energy of Canada Limited.

The point made previously by my hon. colleague for Essex—Windsor was that there are some dissimilarities between the companies. The one he was concerned about primarily, and I share his concern, was that Nordion because of its product and the way it is, and because of its gross sales and the number of people it employs shows some expansion possibilities. It shows possibilities that would lend itself to one set of conditions. On the other hand, my understanding is that Theratronics for a number of reasons is not considered at this point in time to be on the cutting edge of technology. The general belief is that maybe the future is not as rosy as it is for Nordion. There is therefore a requirement for a Canadianization factor here.

Listening to my colleagues I was given to believe that there was some mechanical difficulty, or that there was some question of not co-operating, or maybe even a fluke of the committee system, but the Canadianization aspect of one company was not made as important as it was for the other. I am at a loss to really comprehend why this is so.

I look at the amendment that was put forward by my colleague for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke and, as I understand it, Motions Nos. 2, 3 and 4 relate to the several provisions to the sale of Nordion with regard to foreign ownership. These same provisions are not applied to Theratronics. I cannot understand why. I believe it should be so.

It is my firm belief that we should go forward in this regard and do whatever is necessary, whether it is a voting procedure, work of the committee, a deal that we can make behind closed doors, or some other way to deal with the Canadianization of this one company—indeed, the one that I believe needs Canadianization more than the other. We should move forward to approve these amendments to make sure this aspect is included in the consideration of this bill.

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak in favour of the amendments proposed by my colleague to Bill C-13, an act to authorize the divestiture of Nordion International Inc. and Theratronics International Limited.

It is known that both companies were, until recently, unincorporated divisions of Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, but that after incorporation the two companies were transferred to the Canada Development Investment Corporation as a prelude to privatization.

In May 1988 the president of Atomic Energy of Canada Limited stated that AECL should realize some benefits from the sale of the two companies. These two companies have been seen as valuable properties. AECL had hoped the sale of both companies would help Atomic Energy of Canada Limited through a number of difficult years. The process occurred more slowly than

expected and is no longer controlled by Atomic Energy of Canada Limited.

The president was worried that AECL would be deprived of the cash flow of these companies and would not receive any compensation from the sales. I think on that basis the rationale for Motion No. 1 was proposed, which rationale I support.

For the past 45 years the federal government, and therefore the Canadian people, have invested a large amount of money into funding, research and development of Atomic Energy of Canada Limited. The two companies we are discussing today have provided very profitable divisions for Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, and provided it with a cash flow which will be lost when these two companies are sold, unless we have guarantees of safety for the Canadian people.

In addressing Motions Nos. 2, 3 and 4, I would like the same type of conditions to be imposed on the sale of Theratronics as would be on Nordion. Canadian control is desirable if we are to retain control of their policy. If these institutions have to be used as instruments of public policy, we have to ensure that ownership by Canadians to a great extent is retained. No similar restriction is evident in the current bill on the future ownership of Theratronics, hence my support for the amendments proposed by my colleague. In this way we can ensure that ownership is not transferred beyond Canadian hands.

• (1250)

The medical products division of Theratronics International Limited has the technological leadership in the design, installation and application of cobalt therapy equipment. Because it is involved with this type of therapy equipment it is essential that we maintain that ability to control policies so far as this company is concerned. If we were to leave it purely to the grace of foreign hands it may in fact threaten our ability to deliver essential medical therapy to patients with cancer in this country. That we must safeguard with all our might.

Theratronics, when separated from Nordion some three years ago, was earning some $40 million in revenue. The vice-president of the Medical Products Division says it could have a 30 per cent to 40 per cent growth in revenue in the next five years. We would not like to surrender profit. We would like it to remain in Canadian hands.

Theratronics' employees have been offered a priority opportunity to purchase the company. That would seem to be a welcome message. However, if the conditions thereafter are not clear in terms of being retained within Canadian control then this seemingly welcome sale of first opportunity to the employees would lose meaning in the future. If our will is to see to it that it remains in Canadian control then we must prescribe it in the bill through amendments as proposed by my colleague.

The other aspect that I would like to indicate to the House is that Theratronics' manufacturers are involved with the process of irradiation of food. Since there is a continuing debate as to the safety or non-safety of this process, I think we first have to settle that issue before we relinquish this to foreign hands and thereby lose control over this policy question. If there was a loss of regulatory control over these companies, foreign private buyers could take irradiation technology and impose irradiated food on Canadians or, in fact, citizens of the Third World beyond our control.

Canada has to play a moral leadership role on health care for the whole world and ensure that citizens of Third World countries may not be allowed to be guinea pigs in the future.

In conclusion, I support the amendments proposed by my colleague to protect the interests of Canadians who have contributed through our tax system to the development of the company in question; to ensure the viability of Atomic Energy Canada Limited and in fact prevent a continuing loss on the part of that institution; and to ensure that use and research and development of nuclear technology remain within Canadian control and therefore properly use this institution as an instrument of Canadian public policy.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Before I recognize the hon. minister I would like to rule on the subamendment of the hon. member for Essex—Windsor.

The amendment which the hon. member from Essex—Windsor would propose to move would in fact add a new proposition not relevant to Motion No. 3. It should stand by itself as an independent motion, notice of which should have been given before the start of the report stage pursuant to Standing Order 76(2).

I also refer the hon. member to Citation 437 of *Beauchesne's* fifth edition. Therefore I must rule the amendment out of order.

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Privatization and Regulatory Affairs)): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to speak on the amendments before the House presented by my friend from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke and also the arguments that were presented in the amendment that was presented by my colleague from Essex—Windsor. The government has listened to the arguments for restriction of non-resident ownership of Theratronics. While it is our desire to sell Theratronics, hopefully to its employees with the fewest restrictions possible, it now believes that it would be in the interests of the company and Canadians to put some restrictions on the non-resident ownership of Theratronics' voting shares and to ensure that Canadian control is maintained.

It believes, however, that in order for the company to prosper in the future Theratronics will need to search for new technologies and new product lines. This may involve joint venturing or allowing a prospective partner to acquire an ownership interest in Theratronics. Therefore we have decided that limiting non-resident ownership to a maximum of 49 per cent of the company's voting shares would be appropriate.

I am prepared to introduce an amendment to that effect, if I have the unanimous consent of the House, and if my colleague from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke with whom we have had discussions is prepared to withdraw his amendments.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is there unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. McDermid: I move:

That Bill C-13 be amended

(a) by adding, immediately after line 12 on page 6, the following:

THERATRONICS

8. Sections 5 to 7 apply to Theratronics as if

(a) the references therein to "Nordion" were references to "Theratronics"; and

(b) the reference in subsection 6(1) to "twenty-five per cent" were a reference to "forty-nine percent."

(b) by renumbering the subsequent clauses and the cross-references thereto accordingly.

Mr. Hopkins: Mr. Speaker I have one all-encompassing question to ask the minister for clarification. We have not had time to look through all of these clauses. He knows that with my Motions Nos. 2, 3 and 4, there are a whole host of amendments contained therein to make the foreign control protection of Theratronics the same as it is for Nordion.

I would like to have him give his guarantee in the House that this new amendment which will retain 51 per cent Canadian control and no more than 49 per cent foreign control is applicable to every clause and every subclause in every part of the bill. Will he give us that undertaking?

Mr. McDermid: Mr. Speaker, yes, of course I would give that undertaking. We have designed our amendment a little differently from that of the hon. member. Rather than going through and doubling, if you will, the legislation, we have just applied Theratronics to Nordion with the one exception, that is, the percentage of foreign ownership. As the hon. member knows it is 25 per cent for Nordion. It will be 49 per cent for Theratronics. But all other conditions that apply to Nordion also apply now to Theratronics.

Mr. Hopkins: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for that clarification. I want to say that it pays to put motions down on the Order Paper around here and to put these amendments forward. I say that because we have had a lot of input from this side of the House. It is very important that these companies be sold with Canadian control on them. I am glad this has been done. I think we now have half a loaf instead of a whole one, but sometimes that is better than none.

• (1300)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Before I call upon the hon. member for Essex—Windsor—we will not see the clock—but I would like to ask the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke if it is agreed by him to withdraw Motions Nos. 2, 3 and 4.

Mr. Hopkins: Mr. Speaker, we agree to withdraw Motions Nos. 2, 3 and 4 dealing with the foreign control measure on Theratronics in return for the 51–49 protection that has been offered.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is there agreement by the House not to see the clock?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The Hon. Member for Kingston and the Islands, and then I will recognize the hon. member for Essex—Windsor.

Mr. Milliken: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. There have been discussions between the parties and I think there would be agreement to continue the sitting from now until no later than 2 p.m. and that at 2 p.m. there would be an understanding that the proceedings on this bill would be interrupted and the question put on third reading of the bill. I believe you will find there is a disposition to deal with the divisions at report stage during the next hour, if it takes that long, in a way that allows them to be either passed or defeated according to the majority, but on division.

At two o'clock the proceedings would be interrupted, the question put on third reading of this bill, and any division demanded at that time would be deferred until 3 p.m., and I think it would be deemed to be demanded at that time and deferred until 3 p.m. so the division can be held at that time. I think that is the understanding reached between the parties.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): We really cannot go to third reading until we defer Motion No. 1.

Mr. Milliken: Motion No. 1 has been deferred. I believe it will be dealt with on division at the appropriate time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I would like to call upon the hon. member for Essex—Windsor on a point of order.

Mr. Langdon: Mr. Speaker, my two colleagues have made some brief comments on something which is perhaps rarer than it should be in the House of Commons, but I am certainly very pleased to see a degree of co-operation which has made it possible to achieve a double objective which all of us sought, an objective of ownership restrictions to keep Theratronics in Canadian hands, plus an objective to see as much latitude within that constraint as possible for this company which has somewhat more difficult prospects than Nordion in the private sector.

I would simply like to add my support to the arrangement which has been worked out and to say that I hope it is not just a sign of Christmas cheer, but a sign of better things in the future in terms of co-operation across the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Motions Nos. 2, 3 and 4 are to be withdrawn. Is it agreed with unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion Nos. 2, 3, and 4 withdrawn.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member for Ottawa-Vanier on a point of order.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, as an interested member, I just thought I would try to capsulize what my understanding of the agreement would be. There is an amendment before the House, Motion No. 1. That amendment has to be disposed of before we can proceed to any debate on third reading. We would be agreeable right now to dispose of that motion at this stage and then proceed to third reading after that by unanimous consent.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The question has already been put on Motion No. 1 and has been deferred pursuant to the Standing Order for a deferred division.

First, is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion standing in the name of Mr. McDermid?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Normally, the House should now proceed to taking the deferred division at report stage, particularly on Motion No. 1 of the bill before this House. Shall we take that on division?

Mr. Gauthier: We will see, Mr. Speaker. Put the motion and we will dispose of it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It has been put. The hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier knows it has been put. But I will naturally put it again for the hon. member.

We are moving so fast here. It is just wonderful to see such Christmas spirit.

Motion No. 1.

That Bill C-13 be amended by adding immediately after line 19 at page 2 the following new clause:

"5. There shall be paid to the Crown corporation Atomic Energy of Canada Limited by Nordion and Theratronics an annual royalty on any profits of these corporations that exceed the sum of ten thousand dollars during any calendar year, and Nordion and Theratronics shall pay the Crown corporation an annual royalty as follows:

(a) on annual profits in excess of ten thousand dollars and up to one million dollars, three per cent;

(b) on the excess above one million dollars up to five million dollars, five per cent;

(c) on the excess above five million dollars up to ten million dollars, six per cent; and

(d) on the excess above ten million dollars, a proportional increase of one per cent for each additional five million dollars."

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the nays have it.

Some Hon. Members: On division.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): On division.

Motion negatived.

Hon. John McDermid moved that Bill C-13, an act to authorize the divestiture of Nordion International Inc. and Theratronics International Limited, be concurred in.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: On division.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): When shall the bill be read a third time?

Some Hon. Members: Now, by leave.

Hon. John McDermid moved that Bill C-13 be read the third time and passed.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am going to lead off the debate on third reading by first thanking my colleagues in the House, the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing, my hon. friend from Essex—Windsor, and also my colleague for Kingston and the Islands for their co-operation today in facilitating the minister in moving ahead on this very important bill. I do thank my colleague from Essex—Windsor, with whom I have had some very interesting times over the last few years, what with the free trade agreement and after being appointed a minister of the Crown, I found out that he is critic and I enjoy working with him very much. As he says, sometimes it is a little tense, but we do work well together. I want to thank them all for their co-operation.

We are at third reading of Bill C-13 which authorizes the divestiture of Nordion International and Theratronics. These former subsidiaries of Atomic Energy have made an impressive contribution to the advancement of medical science. Products and services provided by them are helping people around the world to live longer, healthier lives.

Nordion is a leading international supplier of industrial sterilization systems and medical diagnostic products. In addition, it is a major producer of radio isotopes and finished radio pharmaceuticals for international markets.

Theratronics produces and sells two main groups of products to radio-therapy clinics, Cobalt radio-therapy treatment and computerized treatment-planning equipment.

Both of these companies are export-oriented world-class companies in the vanguard of the nuclear medicine field. The new technologies pioneered by them have created sizeable market niches around the world for their products. To stay on the leading edge, however, they needed flexibility to respond or, better, anticipate a rapidly changing market-place. Transferring Nordion

and Theratronics to the private sector will help make them stronger, more flexible, and more competitive. It will give them access to new capital and the freedom to pursue new synergistic relationships that contribute to the long-term growth and stability. Nordion and Theratronics already have a private sector operating philosophy. They will benefit by the opportunity to exercise it freely.

• (1310)

I had the pleasure of visiting both these companies and of talking to the employees. They are very excited about this privatization and look forward to participating actively in it. Strengthening these companies will benefit the employees because, as has been said many times in this Chamber, the best guarantee of jobs and future prospects for employees is a dynamic and growing company. As well, a stronger Nordion and Theratronics benefits the country as a whole because their exports are important to our future economic development.

No valid reason exists that justifies continuing government ownership of either Nordion or Theratronics. The companies serve no public policy purpose. As for concerns about safety, a strict regulatory regime controlling all aspects of manufacturing, handling and transportation of radioactive material is in place in Canada. This will not change one iota with privatization.

The legislation we are considering today sets out certain conditions under which the divestiture will take place. These conditions are designed to protect employees' interests and to maximize the benefits to the company and to the Canadian public.

Nordion and Theratronics are different companies with different strengths. Because of this, it is our intention to proceed with a method of sale unique to each company.

In the case of Nordion, we intend to offer the company for sale to a third party. Our financial advisers have recommended this approach because it provides maximum benefits to the company in terms of stability of operations, access to new capital, the opening of additional markets through the purchaser, and the synergy of relationship if the purchaser is in a similar or complementary business.

Theratronics is smaller and its market value is less than Nordion. It is as a result an appropriate candidate for an employee buy-out. To assist employees in developing a purchase proposal the government has offered to provide them with the necessary funding to hire financial advisers. It is our plan also to give their proposal priority before the company is offered to corporate purchasers.

I must point out that Nordion employees have also expressed an interest in purchasing an ownership interest in their company. They have similarly been assisted with funding to cover the cost of hiring advisers. They will, in addition, be given a 10 per cent discount on the purchase of a minority interest.

Since 1984 my government has worked hard to build a strong new foundation on which Canadians would achieve their economic potential. A number of structural policies and reforms have been introduced that have raised the prospects for growth and higher living standards for Canadians. Privatization is one of them. By transferring Nordion and Theratronics to the private sector, we are building for the future. I am proud to say that Canadians like what we are doing. Since 1984 our economy has expanded faster than most other industrialized countries, as a matter of fact, second only to Japan. More than 1.5 million jobs have been created, some 200,000 this year alone. Our economic strategy is obviously working. To assure that we continue to make economic progress, we must be steadfast in our goals in the face of those who prefer the *status quo*.

Nordion and Theratronics have the right stuff to become world leaders in the private sector. Bill C-13 gives them the chance to succeed. I want to wish both companies, their executives and, most importantly, their employees my best wishes for the future. I think they have an exciting future and Bill C-13 will help to guarantee that.

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, it is rather interesting to have listened to the Minister who did not really at any stage talk about what these two companies actually do. I was wondering why he did not get into talking about the cancer therapy units, the medical radioisotopes and so on.

Mr. McDermid: I did.

Mr. Hopkins: You did on that one? All right, I thank you for that, but it was not really a blazing advertisement that I heard from over here.

The next question in all this, of course, is the future source of medical radioisotopes and the isotope market in general. The NR reactor at Chalk River is an old reactor and it produces our supply of isotopes today. It is rather scary that AECL is not being provided with a budget by this government to maintain the NRU reactor for this purpose. There are repairs going to be needed to it because it is becoming an older facility but we also have in the making a Maple X reactor which will be used exclusively for the production of isotopes. The original estimate of the cost of building the Maple X was $10 million five years ago, and the government has since updated that. Today it is going to cost about $35 million alone for that facility.

There has been an arrangement between Atomic Energy of Canada Limited and Nordion International for the ongoing receipt from AECL of isotopes for the next 22 years. There is also a condition built into that which is the inclusion in this agreement of a provision that calls for Nordion to contribute $17 million through 1991 for new isotope production facilities.

The problem with the ageing NRU reactor has been identified. But my understanding is, and I have heard this talked about considerably, that the agreement signed between Nordion's previous personnel and Atomic Energy of Canada relating to this 22 years of guarantee of isotope production was done under pressure from the government because it wanted to sell these two profitable parts of the Atomic Energy Crown Corporation.

As a result, the agreement would show on the face of it that AECL will be losing money on that agreement for every one of those years. This is something that I would like the Minister to answer to. Is AECL going to continue to lose money every year on this agreement which now exists between Nordion and AECL for the production of isotopes and the receipt of them by Nordion? That is a 22-year guarantee.

If Atomic Energy of Canada is going to lose money on that agreement that was brought about under pressure from the government to sign it, then this again drains funds away from the parent company, Atomic Energy of Canada Limited. Then the government's devastating program becomes two-fold. Number one, it says it is no longer going to finance AECL for R and D, that is must pay its way; and then is there indeed a loss of money each year for AECL on the agreement between Nordion International and Atomic Energy of Canada Limited? Those are the questions that the minister should answer today before the closing of this debate. He should state whether or not the government will revise that agreement to make sure that the user pays. The theory of this government is that the user must pay. So, since Nordion will now be the user of AECL, will the government make sure that it pays for that isotope production? The whole facility is in place throughout, the staff, factory and markets. It would be totally unfair to walk away and leave the parent Crown corporation with a loss in its own markets each year of that 22-year agreement.

• (1320)

Will the minister state to us today that he will see to it that Atomic Energy does, in fact, make money on that production when it sells or supplies isotopes to Nordion International? That is a very fair question because the government is after Ontario Hydro for greater contributions to the Crown corporation. So any products sold to any other organization or company in or outside of Canada should also more than pay its own way because it is obvious that this Crown corporation must have an income in the years to come.

It should be pointed out that Nordion has shown steady growth over the past four years and is projecting this trend to continue. It always had a good product to sell and has done very well. It has done well because it had an outstanding research and development facility on which to base its operations, namely the parent AECL operation.

The government says incorporation and transfer to the CDIC has had a positive effect on Theratronics, but it turned up in evidence in committee that Theratronics was making a profit before it was turned over to the Crown corporation CDIC. That should be pointed out because the government is trying to make people believe that this particular Crown corporation only became profitable after it had changed its status. That is not correct and there is no evidence to support it.

The amendment from the government today protecting Theratronics from foreign ownership and retaining ownership in Canadian hands is a big achievement.

In opposition you put forward your points and put motions on the *Order Paper*. With this majority government you know where you are going to end up. You are lucky if you get anything out of it. But in this particular deal a number of opposition members have taken up the cudgel and debated this bill very well. I want to congratulate my colleagues on the way they talked about this particular bill. I do not think the significance of the sale of Nordion International and Theratronics International, or what those two Crown corporations even stood for would have been known to many Canadians if this debate had not taken place.

Then, of course, we have that great theory in Canada projected by people who want to say that everything nuclear is bad. They try to relate it to nuclear weapons but there is no relation between the peaceful uses of the nuclear industry and war-time use. We must get that fact straight here in the House.

The reason I put forward the amendments on this bill and the reason we tried to highlight it becomes very obvious. It is time that we tried to educate everybody to the fact that if it was not for the CANDU reactors that have been produced by Atomic Energy of Canada over the years, there would be far more acid rain in the atmosphere than there is today.

You have heard me say it before, but I will repeat it for greater emphasis. This country would have had to spend more than $8 billion to buy coal from Pennsylvania to fire coal furnaces in this country to produce the same amount of hydro electric power in the Province of Ontario alone as has been produced over those years by the CANDU reactor. The CANDU reactor is indeed the safest one in the world. There is no relationship whatsoever to the structure of the one at Chernobyl. Of course, when there is an accident or someone who is not following the safety rules properly, it reflects on the whole industry.

It is the same thing in politics, Mr. Speaker, and I am sure you have seen a few occasions over the years when one politician gets into trouble and every politician becomes condemned.

When one nuclear plant gets into trouble because people have neglected to do the right things and neglected looking after it properly or maybe the design was wrong in the first place, then every nuclear reactor becomes suspect. That is wrong and it is bad.

We have here in Canada this great base of technology in the CANDU reactor and in nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. In this Canada of ours, we have one of the greatest foundations to continue to build this nation industrially. And as there is the energy to supply factories, jobs are produced. Without energy, jobs cannot be produced. As well, we have the capacity to continue the growth of that industrial and commercial base and, indeed, the tourism base and all others, including agriculture. With this we will have the jobs that are coming on stream for the future, but more than that, and this is something that is not very often talked about, is the fact that there is the industrial base, the taxation income for government to help it control its finances, if it is capable of controlling them in the first place, and to pay for those very valuable social programs for senior citizens, veterans and for those other Canadians who cannot look after themselves. Surely, that is the social conscience of our nation.

I am very disappointed that the government did not relinquish some ground on the royalties issue, because the income coming back into the major corporation, AECL, is really what is going to continue that in depth research down the road. That is needed because a great research company such as this is not one that can be judged simply in dollars and cents. It produces a great variety of activity out there. These two companies are a perfect example of it. Then, of course, Ontario Hydro has adopted the nuclear energy route and has certainly shown how great the corporation can really be.

I am disappointed that no further income has come into AECL's treasury via royalties from these two companies. I would have to say to the Minister of Privatization that I hope he will sincerely support the Minister of Energy in this House, in Cabinet, to make sure that the parent corporation is funded and that that great research and development, of which we have seen the results over a period of 47 years since the founding of the AECL Corporation in 1952, be continued as a thriving operation and continue to produce companies and great works and world famous products for Canada.

• (1330)

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate and thank the science community who, over the years, have contributed so much in the 45 years to research that has gone on in these two companies and the great work that it has done in combating one of the worst diseases we have in our society today, that being cancer. I would only encourage them to continue to do more.

I hope that the Minister of Energy, the Minister of State for Privatization, the Prime Minister and others will come to grips with the fact that this Crown corporation has got to continue. It has to be the parent company that is going to produce many more products and companies and be a great asset to Canada, not only for the revenue but for the social economic good of the entire country.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): I think this small bill in fact raises some major issues. It is a bill which has not, as with many bills which go through the House of Commons, received a great deal of public attention. In fact, it is a bill which raises in quite a dramatic way a number of important points which are quite significant for the future of our country and, to some degree, the future of our parliamentary system.

The first question is whether active parts of the nuclear industry should be privatized. I suspect that most people across this country would share my sense of unease at the privatization of parts of the nuclear industry. The president of the union at Nordion who was speaking on behalf of his workers said:

> On the issue of health and safety, the membership is concerned that under privatization the major concern of the new company would be high profit versus safety. The high cost of fail-proof safety systems might be more than the new company will be willing to install and maintain.

He went on to say:

> It is our membership's belief that a government-owned establishment is more responsible to its employees' needs in health and safety.

As well, he said:

> —a government-owned nuclear industry must be responsible to the public and respect the public's views of the unknown in the nuclear industry. A private company is only responsible to its shareholders and its customers.

That was Mr. Frank Amyot, the president of Local 70367 of the Public Service Alliance of Canada who is president of the largest group of employees of Nordion International. That is a person who represents workers in this company. Mr. Eades, president of Local 70367 of Theratronics, made the point that:

> Given the choice, most employees would prefer to remain a Crown corporation because of the disruption to our pensions, possible changes in working conditions and the apprehension of whether the business is viable at the present time as a private company.

I think this may be simply a misguided sense of nuclear power within our society. But, part of it has to reflect the realities of recent years within our world such as the accident at Chernobyl which only recently we have come to understand was much greater in terms of the negative impact on people and the environment than we were given to understand at that time. So there is a concern across this country with respect to the nuclear industry.

I would have to say were I a government minister searching industries for firms to privatize, the privatization of the nuclear industry would not spring to mind as something that most Canadians would feel comfortable with and strongly support. I think most Canadians, if they look south to the United States, would receive some further support for their scepticism.

The nuclear industry in the United States is by and large in private hands and because of that has been an industry which has created serious fears right across the United States. My constituents live nine miles from a major United States nuclear plant which has been identified as one of the least reliable and one of the most mistake-ridden of any nuclear power plant in the United States.

My constituents ask, why is this the case? They have come to the conclusion that a big reason for the mistake is the pressure of powerful private sector individuals and corporations who are behind this particular power plant, Fermi II, who have pushed it ahead without sufficient attention to safety and the health, not just of workers in that plant, but to the safety and health of communities on the U.S. and Canadian sides of the border.

The previous Liberal member who spoke I think made a valid point when he stated that we have a different kind of nuclear technology in this country. It is a kind of nuclear technology which nevertheless leaves us with

tremendous waste products. We have not yet found a solution on how to get rid those waste products.

• (1340)

I believe, as someone who worries about the environmental future of our country, that it is simply inexcusable that we should continue to produce nuclear waste which we do not know how to get rid of, despite the fact that we have produced those nuclear wastes now for probably 30 to 40 years in this country.

I think there is a significant question which needs to be asked about whether it makes sense to privatize the nuclear industry. Most of us on this side of the House, certainly in the New Democratic Party, have very severe concerns about the privatization of two parts of the nuclear industry for the first time, and it is for that reason that we will not be able to support this privatization.

We also think, however, that there are some very important questions which need to be asked about the whole privatization thrust of this government. Much of it is a reflection of an ideological commitment, rather than the application of any kind of common sense, the application of an economic analysis, or an environmental analysis of what should be taking place in our country.

It seems to us that this is especially the case with respect to this particular set of privatizations. With Nordion and Theratronics, the minister and his officials have tried to paint for us a picture of these firms as somehow separate from the Atomic Energy of Canada Limited. It seems to me that in reality Nordion and Theratronics were in the past and continue to be very tightly integrated into AECL's operations. They depend on AECL for their nuclear material. In so far as they do not depend on AECL, they depend on Ontario Hydro which is yet another public enterprise in this country.

It seems to me that to artificially take these two enterprises and to privatize them when they are caught in an excess of public enterprises is simply to a make gesture for the sake of ideology, which makes no sense from any practical perspective. I could continue to talk about the principles which are involved with respect to privatizations. I think it is perhaps especially unfortunate that this government has never at any stage given us any principles by which it intends to assess whether a company should or should not become privatized.

It seems to me that one must have some logical principles from which to begin before one can perceive and make sensible decisions with respect to privatization. I urge this government at some stage to make a statement with respect to its principles in thinking about privatization.

I am pleased that we have at least been able to maintain another important principle, the principle that high tech industries which Canadian taxpayers have paid to build in this country should have to remain in Canadian hands.

We have maintained the principle of Canadianization. With respect to Nordion it has been maintained at 25 per cent. In return for certain agreements on our side, the government has conceded that it would accept a constraint of 49 per cent with respect to Theratronics, so far as Canadian control is concerned.

I have to congratulate the government for accepting the need to listen occasionally to the opposition, and the need to see in this case the logic of applying Canadianization principles to both companies.

I have to finish with some final words of regret. I have been occupied elsewhere as some in the House have noted. I have to say in looking back over the committee proceedings at the legislative committee stage for this bill—and I know the minister shares my view with respect to this—there was a very vast and very sad effort on the part of the Conservative members of that committee to rush this bill through legislative committee.

Legislative committee, as members across this House have seen it, is a stage that permits members of the public to express their questions, concerns and uncertainties; to have them cleared up and in some cases accepted, and in other cases rejected. It is an important part of the new approach to the development and consideration of legislation which the House of Commons has adopted in recent years. I am therefore very disappointed that the legislative committee in this case did not even give consideration to the suggested witnesses from the opposition, neither from the Liberal party nor from ourselves in the New Democratic Party. I hope that this will never happen again in the future.

I would conclude on a non-partisan note by simply quoting one of the Conservative members of that committee, a member known to the speaker himself, the member from Edmonton—Strathcona. I think the whole House should take his words very seriously for the future. He said:

> I would agree with the two opposition members. Having gone to all that work, as you have done, and having phoned those witnesses, it is unfair on our side not to have notified you. It is my understanding that the government would like this through, and that is why we are proceeding.
>
> As a member of Parliament who sits on the Elections, Privileges, Procedures and Private Members' Business Committee, I think this does a great disservice to the process of legislative committees. I would just like to sympathize with you. I understand your concern.

• (1350)

I would hope in the future that we would see not just an understanding of the concern of the opposition that legislative committees operate successfully and fairly, but that these committees operate with a sense of fairness for everybody throughout this House of Commons.

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I too am pleased to speak again on Bill C-13, an act to authorize the divestiture of Nordion International Incorporated and Theratronics International Limited.

In the spirit of co-operation that the government through its minister has shown in addressing one major concern raised by the official opposition and the other opposition, that of safeguarding the majority control of shares by Canadians and thereby safeguarding the interests of Canadians, I would like to give credit to the government.

Speaking of credit, I would like to compliment my colleague for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke for his dutiful and careful study of the bill, for the detailed amendments placed on the Order Paper and for sensitizing the government to the need to guarantee majority Canadian ownership of these two companies and thereby use these companies properly as instruments of public policy.

A year ago in December when I entered Parliament I recall having said that Parliament is an institution not only for the government, but for the Canadian people. It is a forum for reconciliation of competing ideas. Today we have shown that the opposition truly has a significant and important role in our parliamentary system, if only the government would from time to time and hopefully more frequently, listen to the opposition.

The bill, as amended, now allows the companies to be used as instruments of public policy. What do I mean by that? We will be able, by the continuing Canadian ownership of these companies, to use these companies as sources of revenues to finance and to allow jobs for Canadians; to ensure that research and development are undertaken on Canadian soil; to fund our many social programs such as medicare which is a program for all citizens; and to ensure the health and safety of Canadians, both consumers and employees.

Also Canadian ownership will allow us to set standards for health safety for other citizens of the world just as we do for Canadians. We will ensure that the availability of necessary nuclear technology for medical health, like cobalt therapy, will be ensured at reasonable cost and that last but not least, we will have the ability to impose environmental standards agreeable to the Canadian philosophy.

Speaking of philosophy, it should be a Canadian philosophy of approach insofar as nuclear technology and its development and use are concerned that we ought to always control it. It is so sensitive an area that we cannot let it go and pass to foreign hands.

In conclusion, the bill was amended by the government largely due I would say to the sensitization brought about by the opposition. I thank my colleague again. With the government having listened once at least, we will ensure a "Canadians first" policy. On behalf of Winnipeg North, my constituents in that riding, I welcome this amended bill and support it. Again, in the spirit of Christmas, I would like to see more of this happening for the interest of all Canadians.

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, as you will know, by prior agreement we have decided to cut off the debate on this issue in about four minutes. I shall now proceed to give one of my famous short speeches. It may be my shortest speech of all. You may decide whether it is famous when I am finished, Mr. Speaker.

First I want to congratulate my friend for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke. I tell the minister that I take pride in holding the record for another speech in another House.

Mr. McDermid: I remember it.

Mr. Simmons: That one, too. But in the Newfoundland House of Assembly it only went 16 hours and 42 minutes. The member is lucky we have a limit today. I congratulate my good friend for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke because he has done so much work on this bill and he has finally beaten some sense into the minister and the government.

I harken back to what my friend for Essex—Windsor was saying a minute ago about the committee process. I hope the government has learned another lesson. We have made the point during debate, and there is not time to make it at any length right now, but I believe members in the chamber know exactly what I am talking about. The government tried a particular ploy. It must admit that ploy is in disarray. Sending in the parliamentary goons to shut down the committee did not work. It worked in the short term because might is right in that situation. It had the numbers to shut down the committee.

Upon reflection, what we have done here in the last two or three days in the House could easily be done in an hour. The minister knows that and I know that. The reason it took several days is because we did not get an opportunity to do it in committee. We give notice again that we are going to have our say on those matters.

I would hope we can have our say in committee. I would also hope we can allow other people to come before the committee to have their say on matters of concern to them. But if the government keeps shutting us down in committee, we give notice we will take the time it requires to do it right here on the floor of the House.

We would rather it be in committee because that is where we can bring other people, people who are not elected members of the House but nevertheless have concerns about whether the nuclear industry ought to be privatized, concerns about food irradiation, concerns about nuclear medicine and I could go on. I make an appeal again that the committee process be respected by the government.

Finally, let me comment on the question of research and development. This debate has been very revealing in that particular regard. The government figures have been very revealing.

I saw the Minister of State for Forestry here a little while ago. I remember when he was in opposition and I was on the government side, he eloquently stated that when the Tories came to power there would be a great increase in the amount of dollars devoted to R and D. Well, he ought to look at the figures today. He will find that people are realizing from coast to coast that this government has not put its money where its mouth is on research and development. More and more of our research is being conducted outside the country, and we are the losers in many respects.

There are many other things I would like to say, but my time is up. I thank you for your usual tolerance.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): According to the understanding reached earlier, the question on the motion for third reading of Bill C–13 is now deemed to be put, a recorded division deemed demanded and deferred until later today at 3 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*Translation*]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Guy St–Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the federal Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Mazankowski) signed an agreement with his provincial counterparts, which provides for reducing obstacles to interprovincial trade in food and agricultural products.

The diligent efforts of the Minister of State for Agriculture and hon. member for Bellechasse were also instrumental in helping this agreement materialize. This is a major step towards reducing or eliminating altogether about 170 interprovincial barriers that prevent Canada's agri–food industry from operating at full capacity. The agreement should also result in supermarket savings for Canadian consumers.

Mr. Speaker, one thing that is not working very well for Canadian farmers at the present time is the situation on the St. Lawrence Seaway and especially the fact that NDP members here in Parliament are getting their instructions from the unions.

• (1400)

[*English*]

INCOME TAX

Mr. Jack Whittaker (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Mr. Speaker, yesterday amendments to the Income Tax Act dealing with tax assistance for retirement savings were tabled in the House of Commons. By increasing the limit on the amount of retirement savings eligible for tax assistance, these amendments are largely to the benefit of high income earners; those who can afford to take advantage of the increased limits and shelter a larger proportion of their income in RRSPs.

At the same time that all Canadians are being asked to tighten their belts and pay the goods and services tax, high income Canadians are being provided with greater tax deductions for RRSPs at an estimated cost of $300 million.

Further, the principle of universality is being undermined by the clawback on old age security pensions. Our retirement income system is being privatized through tax incentives for individual retirement savings plans.

If the government were truly serious about fairness in Canada's retirement income system, it would strengthen the Canada Pension Plan. An expanded Canada pension plan would benefit all Canadians, and not just those wealthy enough to afford to purchase RRSPs.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, my statement is of particular interest to the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

On December 4, I wrote to the minister concerning the case of Candace James who died within 12 hours after beginning her participation in a study of Volmax, a new asthma drug. I was careful not to suggest that there was a correlation between the death and the study.

Last night I sent by fax new information to the minister which indicated that a similar incident had occurred in British Columbia in January of this year, in which another individual, Mr. Gary Bizzo, almost died within 12 hours of his participation in what appears to be a very similar study.

Will the minister indicate whether there is any relation between the two cases, whether the study has been stopped, and whether he has any further information to share with the House concerning these events?

Will the minister put an end to this study until the reasons for these events have been determined and made public? If necessary, will the minister put in place additional safeguards to protect future participants in such studies?

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE OF CANADA

Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, today most of the statements from this side of the House will be devoted to one very serious issue. That issue is the back to work legislation before the House.

This strike threatens Canada's reputation as an exporting nation. It puts vessels and seamen at risk for serious accidents. It penalizes Canadian farmers and businesses.

I understand that yesterday all three parties came to an agreement to move this legislation through the House, but it appears that in consultation with unions or others the new leadership of the New Democratic Party apparently bowed to their wishes.

This signals what we can expect from the new NDP leadership, that is, that the real decisions of the NDP will not be made by the party nor its members in this House but rather by others, perhaps by the big unions of this country.

Could it be true that sadly within the first month of the new leadership of the NDP, the mantle of that leadership has been subordinated to others?

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, while the Prime Minister and the Minister of the Environment proclaim their endorsement of sustainable development and repeat promises to put it into practice, the reality is very different.

Take the proposed massive James Bay II hydroelectric project. It would flood 5,000 square kilometres of land, contaminate water and fish with mercury, affect marine mammals and migratory birds, and damage the economy and lifestyle of Cree and Inuit people in northern Quebec. Yet the Minister of the Environment hesitates to make a firm commitment to hold independent public hearings to study the environmental and social impacts of James Bay II.

To put it bluntly, the Prime Minister and the Minister of the Environment are afraid of the Government of Quebec. If they mean what they say on sustainable development, they should exercise Ottawa's powers and hold public hearings before it is too late.

This government must start practising what it preaches on sustainable development.

* * *

SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, it is a trite old adage that haste makes waste, but however archaic this government, in particular the Department of Finance, has given this expression new life.

It seems that after closure on second reading and the desire to ram the bill through before Christmas, the government has run into a terrible snag on Bill C-28, the infamous clawback bill.

We now know that all 125, I repeat 125, government amendments on a 60-clause bill have been deemed out of order. "No problem" says the government "we will pass the flawed bill now and tidy up the mess with a new bill in the New Year".

We cannot proceed this way. The amendments were flawed; therefore the bill is flawed without them. I call upon the government to halt this process now, admit its grievous error and start all over again. This time listen to Canadians who say no to clawback and no to the end of universality.

NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Girve Fretz (Erie): Mr. Speaker, who is running the NDP? Who in the NDP cares about the economy of our country? Who in the NDP speaks for the agricultural industry?

Does the NDP care about the dozens of ships tied up in the seaway system, ships that carry Canadian grain to foreign markets? Some 45 per cent of all products transported into, out of, or within Canada are moved by ship; 55 per cent of Canada's international trade is shipborne.

Is Shirley Carr the new NDP leader, or is it Bob White? Who in the NDP speaks for all of Canada?

The House needs to move quickly to pass Bill C-49.

* * *

LAND CLAIMS

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiaq): Mr. Speaker, late last week, federal and Inuit negotiators reached an agreement in principle on the largest aboriginal land claim in Canada. This is the claim of the first inhabitants of the central and eastern Arctic to the lands and waters of the territory which Inuit call Nunavut, our land.

Inuit first brought their proposals for political self-determination to the federal government in 1976. Congratulations are due to the Inuit negotiators who have persevered over the last 10 years or more to achieve an agreement which recognizes the rights and aspirations of the Inuit people. They persevered under different governments, different ministers and changing rules. Throughout this long and complex process, the Inuit people have displayed extraordinary patience and goodwill. Their long and patient wait deserves our recognition.

While several steps remain to be taken before a final agreement is ratified, with this agreement in principle Inuit are closer to their goal of controlling their political, social and economic destiny.

[*Translation*]

TRAGEDY IN MONTREAL

Mrs. Marie Gibeau (Bourassa): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to ask those so-called feminists to respect the sorrow of all Canadians who were moved by the tragic events at the École Polytechnique in Montreal and keep quiet.

I think it is disgraceful that people should use these events to vent their anger, justify their feelings of rancour and put the blame on all men, indiscriminately.

Yes, there is violence in our society. Yes, there are violent men and there are women who suffer at their hands, just as there are children and men who are victimized in certain ways. But I do not think our male population, which was deeply moved and was very sensitive to what happened should be made to pay for the behaviour of an emotionally scarred individual.

Women who use this tragedy to blame everybody they can without considering their own responsibility, do not speak on my behalf nor, as far as I know, on behalf of the majority of the women in Montreal north.

I ask real feminists to remain silent so that this time of national mourning can be experienced with dignity.

This is a time for compassion and solidarity.

* * *

[*English*]

PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE OF CANADA

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina—Lumsden): Mr. Speaker, I would like to hear from the President of the Treasury Board trying to justify the government's behaviour during the current strike of hospital service workers in the Public Service, a strike which the government intends to end with back to work legislation when it could have negotiated a settlement.

Last Friday in this House I quoted figures the government has not yet contradicted which show how anxious the Conservatives are to avoid dealing fairly with hospital services workers, most of them women, who work for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

• (1410)

At Ste. Anne de Bellevue on the Isle of Montreal, the government is now paying $840,000 a week in overtime costs, paying $250,000 a week in catering costs, and paying its friends at Pinkerton Detective Agency $165,000 a week for extra security.

The normal wage bill at Ste. Anne de Bellevue is $385,000 a week. In an effort to break the strike, the government is paying $1,633,000 per week.

Why is the government which prides itself on its meanness throwing money away like this? Why does the government not authorize in the case of Ste. Anne de Bellevue alone an open-ended, strike breaking budget of at least $10 million?

Why is the government so anxious to spend millions bringing in Department of Veterans Affairs employees to act as scabs? Would it not be a lot cheaper to comply with the Canadian Human Rights Commission and give these hospital services workers pay equity plus a better pay raise than has been offered?

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE OF CANADA

Mr. Doug Fee (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, like many of my colleagues I too have a concern over this serious issue of the back to work legislation which is before this House.

I am concerned over reports that pickets are impeding the access of patients to the Department of National Defence Hospital by stopping cabs. I am also concerned, along with western Canadian farmers, about the very real possibility that Canadian grain shipments could become trapped in the seaway. We cannot afford to let this happen.

We need to act, and we need to act quickly. I am very disappointed that the leader of the New Democratic Party has allowed union leaders to dictate and overrule the advice of her parliamentary caucus.

* * *

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are shocked to learn of the forced repatriation of about 40,000 Vietnamese boat people

from Hong Kong back to Hanoi as a result of an agreement struck between Great Britain and the Vietnamese government.

Not only are these Vietnamese refugees being forcibly removed and returned to Vietnam, but the British government is paying $620 to the Vietnamese government for every person returned. In addition, the international press has reported a threat from Hanoi that an unnumbered quantity of future refugees are criminals who "will now be forced to suffer the penalty".

Just this past October at the Commonwealth meetings the leaders asserted their belief "in the liberty of the individual" and affirmed that all human rights and fundamental freedoms must be protected. The government's passive and non-committal response to this matter has demonstrated that the Canadian Government is not serious about its commitments in Kuala Lumpur.

Will the government try to redeem itself by, first, raising this infringement of rights immediately with the UN Human Rights Commission and by, second, taking a leadership role in addressing the international problem of refugees with the international community?

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE COAST GUARD

Mr. Charles A. Langlois (Manicouagan): Mr. Speaker, once again I would like to draw the attention of the House and of all Canadians to the urgent need for putting an end to the work stoppage by Coast Guard employees.

Mr. Speaker, at this very moment, shipments of iron ore from the ports of Havre Saint-Pierre, Sept-Îles, Pointe-Noire and Port Cartier are unable to reach their ports of destination on the Great Lakes.

The grain terminals at Port Cartier and Baie Comeau are losing money every day because the work stoppage is holding up grain shipments from the Great Lakes.

Ocean-going vessels have been tied up for days at Port Cartier and Baie Comeau, waiting for grain shipments that are being held up on the Great Lakes.

Something must be done about the situation as soon as possible to prevent many workers on the North Shore from being laid off.

Mr. Speaker, I want to appeal to the new Leader of the NDP to listen to reason, not to the unions, and convince her colleagues of the fact that they should support the back-to-work legislation now before the House.

* * *

[*English*]

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENTS

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, eight and a half months have passed since the last energy ERDA between Ottawa and the Government of Prince Edward Island expired.

This eight and a half month delay and Ottawa's late decision even to participate in this agreement has caused a great deal of uncertainty in the local alternative energy industry in Prince Edward Island.

This agreement promotes clean burning fuel, so it is environmentally friendly. It also creates local jobs. I would urge the minister to take immediate steps to see that this agreement is signed at once.

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NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Geoff Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, the St. Lawrence Seaway shutdown is costing Canadian farmers millions of dollars in demurrage and lost sales.

This back to work legislation exposes the duplicity of the NDP who pretends in the west to be the farmer's friend but who, all the while, is obstructing the legislation. Why? It is because it is 100 per cent beholden to the big eastern labour unions.

Organized labour and prairie agriculture—what an unholy alliance. When the crunch comes and the choice has to be made between big labour and the Prairie farmer, the NDP goes with labour every time.

Canadians had hoped the new NDP leader might have had a mind of her own. It is now crystal clear that she, like her predecessors, takes her policy direction from the Public Service Alliance and the Canadian Labour Congress.

When the union bosses say "jump", members of the NDP ask: "How high?" The trouble is they are jumping up and down on Canadian farmers.

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PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE OF CANADA

Mr. Howard Crosby (Halifax West): Mr. Speaker, the question of pay equality between government workers on the east coast and the west coast has plagued labour–management relations for several decades. Earlier Liberal governments have justified this practice.

People like my colleague from Annapolis Valley—Hants have pressed for equal pay for government dockyard workers and ships' crews. Bill C–49 provided a unique opportunity to achieve pay equity for east coast ships' crews.

What happened? The opposition stood in this House and blocked any arrangement to pass that bill and bring about pay equity for east coast workers.

Let the blood be on their hands, the Liberals and the NDP.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

FISHERIES

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

The plant closures announced yesterday by National Sea Products are a cruel blow to fish plant workers in St. John's and North Sydney, but nowhere will the decision be more devastating than in the town of Canso and in the surrounding communities of eastern Nova Scotia which face the direct loss of 750 jobs and many more as a result of the closure of the Canso plant.

Cansonians have been fishing for 400 years. No community has a more legitimate claim to the fisheries resource and, by virtue of Canso's location, no community is more dependent on this industry. As a shareholder in National Sea and by virtue of its disastrous management of the Atlantic fishery, the federal government is an accomplice to the closure of this community.

Why has the Prime Minister allowed Canso to be written off? Why are the people of Canso being asked to bear the brunt of this government's colossal mismanagement of the Atlantic fishery?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, as we indicated in the House yesterday, no member of the House could appreciate and fully fathom the distress that the people of Canso and other communities affected by these unfortunate decisions must feel today.

That is why the special committee of cabinet, under the chairmanship of the Secretary of State for Externals Affairs and involving the participation of the Minister of Public Works, the Minister for International Trade and the Minister of Employment and Immigration, has been working on a package of response measures, both immediate response measures to help these workers when their jobs end early in the new year, as well as a larger package of economic initiatives amounting to many millions of dollars, with a view to economic enhancement and diversification in communities such as Canso.

[*Translation*]

Mr. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, the only answer the people of Canso want to hear is that their plant will stay open. My supplementary is directed to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, who sets fish quotas and who ought to know that the plant closing in Canso will utterly destroy this community. Will the minister commit himself today to doing the only thing that can save the community of Canso and that is set aside a certain quantity of fish in his 1990 management plan for the port of Canso so that the plant can stay open? Will the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans make that commitment today?

• (1420)

[*English*]

Mr. Siddon: Mr. Speaker, what we are dealing with here is an attempt to manage the resource which is diminishing in terms of certain stocks, to manage the fishery resource of Atlantic Canada on a sustainable economic basis.

It is a fact, as officials of National Sea and provincial governments of Atlantic Canada recognize, that we have overcapacity in the processing sector and the harvesting sector. We have a downturn of world demand and the

price for the fish. All of these factors are leading us to this current and very unfortunate situation.

When we establish quotas we do not assign them to specific plants, but I am personally looking at the possibility of the underutilized species, which amount to over 100,000 metric tons of special species, being made available to some communities such as Canso if they can come forward with a viable economic plan.

Mr. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, I repeat my question. Will the Minister undertake to reserve a quantity of fish for the poor of Canso so that the Canso plant can stay open? That is what they want.

Mr. Siddon: Mr. Speaker, I have said and have always said, as has been the policy of the government for many years, that we do not identify specific quotas with specific communities. The hon. member knows that. If we did when we have such overcapacity, all plants would be running at such a low production volume that they would be economically non-viable. That is why, while we regret these difficult decisions that have been made, we are going to devote every effort to assisting the rebuilding of the economies of these communities.

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. As he will know, the European Community has once again thumbed its nose at Canada. Today it proposed fish catches for 1990 off Newfoundland which would be more than three times the quotas suggested and assigned by NAFO.

I ask the Prime Minister: Does he now accept the obvious, that his belated campaign, after sitting on the issue for four years, to educate the European Community has been a total flop?

Does he not agree that the time has come to stand up to the European Community, particularly Spain and Portugal? I want to ask him what steps he has in mind to stop the rape of our fish stocks while there is still some fish left to catch out there.

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that this government has taken unprecedented steps to remove foreign fishing efforts from within the 200-mile economic zone and to bring various sanctions and forms of international diplomatic and political pressure to bear upon the members of the European Community that seem to defend the unacceptable practices of two members, Spain and Portugal in particular, that have been fishing vastly in excess of these quotas.

As of coming to this House an hour ago, I was not advised that the EEC had embraced any quotas for 1990. In fact I have been advised that that information will not be forthcoming for another week.

Mr. Simmons: Mr. Speaker, let me advise the minister of the following, and I read to him: "The European Community, fuelling a long running dispute with quotas with Canada overfishing off the coast of Newfoundland, proposed Tuesday quotas for 1990 more than three times higher than those suggested".

I say to the minister by way of supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, that these are the facts. I heard his answer. I respect his answer, but my point to him is that that is not working. All the minister has said has resulted in one big fat zero.

Now that that is a failure, what does the minister propose to get these Spaniards and Portuguese off our backs while there is still a few fish out there?

Mr. Siddon: Mr. Speaker, of course we have achieved significant progress since 1986 when the level of foreign overfishing by these countries reached an all-time peak. We have seen that level of overfishing decrease persistently these past three years, but it is still vastly in excess of the quotas that the NAPO scientific panel has been recommending.

We will continue to work. We have appointed a special ambassador on marine conservation, Ambassador Alan Beesley, and ministers are working in all of the international fora, including the Prime Minister and other ministers of this government, to bring the appropriate pressure to bear and to point out that these are not practices consistent with good international conservationism.

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. Yesterday Atlantic Canadians were shocked to discover just how bad fisheries are getting in their area and how unprepared this government has been, even though it knew that this has been coming.

More than 1,500 employees of National Sea will be losing their jobs in communities such as Canso and St. John's. We know that Fishery Products International may be announcing another 1,200 lay-offs later this week in Newfoundland.

This past June, the Secretary of State for External Affairs indicated that it would be premature for the federal government to institute some kind of aid package for the Atlantic fishery similar to what it had done about the western drought for western farmers.

When is this government going to do something to save this industry, to save Atlantic communities, and when will the government commit itself to assisting the fishery and commit those millions of dollars that the minister referred to yesterday?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I think this is exactly what the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the Minister for International Trade and I have been talking about in the last two or three days. We are focusing very closely on the workers and on the communities. We have been developing a package that includes our existing programs which are there to help people in the short term, while we at the same time work toward some long-term solutions.

Until the announcements are made, of course, it is not possible to know which communities will be affected. Each one will be treated individually depending on what are the particular needs of that community. We will be there for those communities and for those workers.

Ms. McLaughlin: I have a supplementary question, again directed to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Mr. Speaker, but I would like to say that the unemployment insurance cuts this government instituted certainly were not designed to help the people in Newfoundland.

Atlantic Canada is a region already hit hard by the actions of this government. At the First Ministers' Conference on November 9, the Prime Minister was warned that Newfoundland could lose up to 6,000 jobs in the fisheries related industry. If we transferred that to Ontario, that would be something like 115,000 jobs.

I ask the minister of fisheries again: When will the government stop reacting to disasters and do something to prevent the devastating collapse in Atlantic Canada?

Mr. Siddon: In fact, Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in the House yesterday, because of the market circumstances and the situation of declining quotas, new tougher management measures will be required and will be introduced in the 1990 Atlantic groundfish management plan.

If the hon. leader of the NDP is asking when the government will act to deal with the dilemma of these 1,500 workers who became the victims of very unfortunate decisions yesterday, we have already acted and we will continue to act in major ways in the days ahead.

Ms. McLaughlin: My supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, is directed to the Prime Minister. This government is showing that it is continually reaction, reaction, reaction. The people of Atlantic Canada want some action on what is happening there in the fisheries industry.

Over the past four years, fishing fleets of the European Community have overfished the area adjacent to Canada's 200-mile limit by some 600 per cent. We heard today that the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has not heard that there are new quotas, but the Conservative member for South Shore claims that while he was in Europe he was told there was an understanding reached among members of the European Community that in exchange for not fishing in European waters, particularly Spain and Portugal could fish in the Grand Banks off Canada.

Is the Prime Minister aware of such an understanding, and will he now tell the House what the government plans to do about the overfishing off our east coast?

• (1430)

Mr. Siddon: Mr. Speaker, I believe the hon. leader of the New Democratic Party understands that Canada has been a member of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization since 1978 and that quotas are established in the areas beyond our territorial sea by international consent, that quotas of what are called non-surplus stocks are made on a first priority basis available to Canadian fishermen and we make none of those quotas available to foreign vessels which would be able to harvest such stocks within our waters.

When those countries fish on the areas known as the nose and tail of the Grand Banks, beyond our 200-mile economic limit, we have to resort to various kinds of international pressure; sanctions such as the closures of

ports and representation in the various fora of the international community such as the OECD, Commonwealth and other fora.

The Prime Minister and members of this cabinet have taken such initiatives, including making such representation to members of the community of nations and we will continue to do so.

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the right hon. Prime Minister. It concerns the incident yesterday in which Her Majesty's Canadian destroyer *Saguenay*, on patrol off George's Bank, was repeatedly and aggressively rammed by a U.S. scallop dragger, the *Concordia*, out of New Bedford, Massachusetts, after being ordered to stop for inspection for fishing illegally in Canadian waters.

In view of the overwhelming difficulties our country, and Atlantic Canada in particular, is experiencing due to overfishing and the grave national concern this is causing right now as indicated by the questions we have just heard, particularly from the Member for Cape Breton—Highlands—Canso, can the Prime Minister say what positive action has been taken by the Canadian government in response to this incident?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the incident that the hon. member refers to was caused by the need for the use of ship days by the Department of National Defence for the Department of Fisheries to provide fisheries surveillance to that department.

As the hon. member knows well, probably better than anyone in this House, there are rules of engagement. It is not the practice of the Canadian navy to jeopardize civilian lives. Every effort was made in this instance to have the scallop trawler turn around. The opportunities were given to the trawler by American coast guard officials who recommended that they surrender. The actions that were taken by the captain, on directions, were appropriate but at no time, and I am sure the hon. member would agree, should HMCS *Saguenay* have risked the lives of those men on that ship who indeed were breaking Canadian law.

The difficulty, as he knows, is to use force without causing the loss of life to civilians and that is the appropriate action that was taken yesterday.

Mr. Mifflin: I thank the hon. minister for his answer to my question and, yes, I am very familiar with the rules for engagement. In fact, I have had to use them occasionally.

The name of the game with rules for engagement is minimum force required to do what it is you have to do. I would remind the House of an action taken by HMCS *Athabaskan* in 1985 when two Spanish vessels were arrested by armed boarding parties that were sent on board. A Canadian crew was put on board and they were towed back to St. John's, Newfoundland in Canadian waters.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mifflin: It is very obvious that *Saguenay* was in hot pursuit of the *Concordia*, and by that I mean she was detected in Canadian waters and followed outside into international waters. On the basis that HMCS *Saguenay* has a top speed of 28 knots, why could our warship not overtake—which she could do—this particular vessel, stop it, board it, arrest it and take it back to Canadian waters and charge it, and not let it return to home port where it was going to get a much smaller penalty?

Mr. Siddon: Mr. Speaker, my colleague has pointed out that the rules of engagement involving violations of Canada's fishing laws also require a degree of prudence in terms of the forms of escalation that are used in these matters.

I might tell the House that had we the co-operation of the opposition parties so that our patrol vessels could be used to their full capacity by the return of fisheries patrol vessels and others to service, we might not have this kind of problem today.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Siddon: If the opposition would permit an answer to the question that has been raised, I want to advise that External Affairs delivered a note to the State Department in Washington.

An Hon. Member: Oh, oh.

An Hon. Member: Did the Prime Minister phone him after?

An Hon. Member: Was it signed "Love, Brian"?

Mr. Siddon: Mr. Speaker, as a result of the onset of dusk last evening, it was not possible to continue the pursuit with a view to boarding, in dangerous conditions, this vessel. Therefore, when it entered the U.S. territorial sea, a note of protest to the U.S. Government, to the State Department in Washington, asked that appropriate prosecutions be initiated against the U.S. fishing vessel *Concordia*.

Today, officials of External Affairs have again met with officials of the U.S. embassy to ensure and secure the co-operation of U.S. authorities in this matter. The U.S. Ambassador has given his personal commitment to co-operate and ensure that such measures are taken.

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HUMAN RIGHTS

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, it is Human Rights Week in the world, but here in Canada our government offends all human rights sensibility by introducing yet more policy to widen the gap between the rich and the poor. One million children in this country are living below the poverty line, basic rights deprived, yet the government imposes regressive taxes and policies, the burden of which are felt most heavily by the poor.

My question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. On November 20, Canada symbolically signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child at the United Nations. What is Canada doing to ensure immediate ratification of this convention by the provinces and the federal government and to establish publicly available and measurable instruments to assess our convention achievements, or better still, the lack thereof?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the federal government has indeed indicated its support for this convention. We are taking it up with the provinces very aggressively and are seeking their compliance to ensure that the provinces, which have the responsibility for the delivery of most of these services, are on side on this. It is our intention to move ahead as quickly as possible.

I am also able to give the hon. member some statistics which I think will bring her some pleasure. On December 4 of this year, Statistics Canada released new income statistics for 1988. It showed that the proportion of poor persons in Canada fell to 13.1 per cent in 1988 from 14.1 in 1987. Since 1984, almost 760,000 persons have escaped poverty.

As it relates to children, the figures are these: the proportion of poor children fell from 16.9 per cent to 15.4 per cent, a decline of some 80,000 children.

Mr. Peterson: It's still disgraceful.

Mrs. Stewart: Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that that is still 920,000 too many poor children in this country.

My supplementary question is directed to the right hon. Prime Minister. The physical violence perpetrated against women students at the University of Montreal last week is symbolic of the institutionalized violations of women's basic rights in this country. Last Friday the Secretary of State promised an exciting announcement addressing human rights issues in this country. Instead, we get more talk.

• (1440)

When will this government commit itself to meeting women's known rights and needs, such as freedom from fear, pay equity, adequate child care, pension reform and financial recognition of women's and men's important role as parents caring for their children at home?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I do not think that there is any government which has taken more concrete measures than this government has in terms of both violence and women. I can mention the $40 million that we committed in terms of family violence, the actions that we have taken around child abuse, the actions that we have taken to ensure that maintenance support orders are kept, the actions that we have taken around pension reform and the actions we have taken around employment equity on which the report will be tabled tomorrow. The action that we have taken and the special initiatives on child care alone is directed specifically to those most in need; native children, minority children and immigrant children.

We have been working constantly for five years on things that help women and to deal with some of the violence and some of the undercurrents in our society. There is no government that can claim anything better.

Oral Questions

SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. He is well aware that Bill C-28, the notorious clawback bill, is before committee for speedy consideration after closure at second reading. It was suggested by committee members that they want to rush it through as a Christmas present for seniors and families across this country. I am sorry, Mr. Minister, but the present has come unwrapped. He is also painfully aware that—

Mr. Speaker: I ask the hon. member to put his question.

Mr. Butland: He is aware that 125 amendments of his department have been withdrawn.

Explain how the bill can proceed without the 125 amendments and if the amendments were unnecessary, why were they proposed in the first place?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is correct, there were a number of amendments, primarily technical in nature. These are going to be handled through the technical bill that we will be putting into the House some time in the new year. There are a couple of elements that are more pressing than that and they will be introduced through new legislation at an earlier date.

Mr. Butland: May I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that one or two amendments is housekeeping and small business, but this is 125 amendments. I think this is a sign of flawed legislation. It should be withdrawn and the government should go back to the drawing board.

Will the minister withdraw the legislation and come back when it is improved?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, as I said, these are technical amendments. They have nothing to do with the thrust of the legislation to which the hon. member is referring.

I think he understands the position we have taken on this legislation. A very small number of upper-income senior citizens and families are affected by it. It is done because we have a serious deficit problem. As we said in the budget itself, we do not think that in this current situation it is appropriate to continue to subsidize upper-income people but that we should be more concerned and are more concerned with those in lower-income brackets.

Mr. Speaker, if I might just make a comment, it surprises me that the NDP are going to bat for the upper-income people in this country. It is quite out of keeping with their normal responsibilities.

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[*Translation*]

FINANCE

Mr. Douglas Young (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, considering the finance minister's comments yesterday about the lack of agreement on the finance committee, I would like to ask him the following question. Is the minister of Finance prepared to accept the committee's unanimous recommendation to reduce immediately the Bank of Canada rate and bring it down to a level that is in keeping with the historic spread between Canadian and American interest rates? Furthermore, does the minister intend to let the value of the Canadian dollar go down, to protect the thousands of jobs that have been created in our primary industries and the export sector?

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I understand the concern that the hon. member is expressing about the level of interest rates in this country. It is something that has been expressed on a number of occasions.

As I said as recently as yesterday in the House, certainly last week, we do have some very real concerns about elements of the inflationary pressures that are in our economy. I think it is very important that we get these out of the economy as quickly as we can. Once we have been able to do that we can see lower rates. Until we get confidence up and we have dealt with the inflation problem once and for all, I think it would be wrong to move precipitously.

I just draw the hon. member's attention to the fact that in the late 1970s governments did ignore the inflation problem and that led us to the mess of 1981-82, and I am sure the hon. member does not want to repeat that.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, we cannot get the interest rates down and we cannot get the dollar down, but that non-criminal leak that resulted in Canadians finding out that the goods and services tax would

be introduced at 7 per cent has not really changed Canadians' minds about this tax grab.

Will the Minister of Finance advise the House if the government has entered into another agreement with Tom D'Aquino and his friends in the Business Council on National Issues to see if they can sell the GST as well as they sold the free trade deal to Canada?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member was on the finance committee. He knows the number of people who came before that committee and said that it was very important that we scrap the existing federal sales tax and move to a new type of consumption tax.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): The Government of Canada has put forward a proposal. The proposal was the subject of extensive hearings across the country. The Conservative members of that committee put forward some very worth-while suggestions and we got zip from the Liberal Party of Canada. They do not have an idea in their head as to how we should deal with this pressing problem, a problem that has been before this Parliament since 1940. We get a great big zip from the Liberal Party.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Jerry Pickard (Essex—Kent): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance as well. Just two months ago, Mr. Speaker, you issued a concise critique on the government's abuse of parliamentary procedures in spending $850,000 in GST advertisements.

Last week we learned that Revenue Canada is preparing a GST proposal. An advertising blitz has been reported today. Project managers for the GST started to be hired this week. Yet the bill has not been introduced to this House. What financial and human resources have been earmarked for the sales pitch?

Hon. Otto Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, every government has not only the right but indeed the obligation to prepare for any upcoming legislation. That is a long-standing parliamentary procedure, from a standpoint of both parliamentary precedents and justice and legal precedents.

So far, as I have pointed out quite openly on a number of occasions both in public fora, outside this House and inside this House, the preparations that are taking place are to reach out to the business community, particularly the small business community, to assist them with technical information in the preparation to adjust for a smooth launch.

If we were not moving in that direction we could be classified as irresponsible. We are not irresponsible. We are doing what the Auditor General recommended we do. We are doing what parliamentary precedents recommend that we do, and we are doing what is good for Canada and good for small business. That is why we are doing it.

Mr. Pickard: It appears, Mr. Speaker, we get our information from leaks from the press, not from that side of the House.

• (1450)

Small Canadian businesses continue to battle high interest rates and high taxation. Fifty-one per cent of Canadian businesses cite high taxes as their number one problem. A GST, regardless of its rate, will not relieve the administrative burden, the time-consuming reporting, the cost of up to $2,000 per business to participate.

Will the Minister admit that the proposed GST initiative fails the small business community? Stop this needless attack. Take their concerns seriously and introduce tax reform that will—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. minister.

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to remind the hon. member that Canada has the lowest rate of corporate tax of any country in the OECD and we are continuing with that. We have in fact an unemployment insurance program that helps small business. We have a medicare system that helps small business.

We do not have, though, as the Liberal government of Ontario has introduced, a payroll tax. We do not have a concentration tax for big cities which the Ontario government introduced. We are not adding that burden to

the small business community. We are helping the small business community.

* * *

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Prime Minister. The Prime Minister is reported as having made a decision that there be cutbacks of over $1 billion in spending in order to drop the GST to around 7 per cent. There are also reports that the government wants to set an example by cutbacks on jets and limousines.

A story that came from access to information documents last week shows spending on jets to be up many times over the estimates. Can the Prime Minister tell the people of Canada the extent of the cutback that he is willing to make in terms of spending on government jets? Can he tell the people of this country the extent of the sacrifice that cabinet is going to make?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I do not have the figures for my hon. friend but I will be happy to ask the government to get them ready and provide them.

My information is that the utilization by government officials of executive aircraft is down very considerably from the previous Liberal government of five years ago, and remains at that low level. In other words, it is still down from 1984 levels.

Even with that, clearly it is the obligation of all of us, members of parliament, members of cabinet, to spend the public's money as efficiently and as effectively as is humanly possible. We will take that injunction very clearly into account in respect of all spending programs including the question of aircraft even though, as I pointed out, the utilization by this government is down very considerably from the previous government.

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Prime Minister or the Minister of Finance and is in terms of another suggestion whereby the government can save money.

It is our understanding now that big business is talking about another advertising campaign similar to the free trade advertising campaign of last year. Last year, when they spent millions of dollars to advertise during the free trade debate, they were able to write off those advertising expenditures in terms of their income tax and thus save millions of dollars.

Would the Prime Minister instruct the Minister of Finance to bring in legislation that would disallow the advertising write-off of political messages by corporations in this country? In other words, will he bring in legislation to disallow the write-off of advertising costs for third parties in this country which is not fair to ordinary people in Canada?

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, I will take my friend's question as a representation. I know that he would want to apply that very stringent rule to corporations, unions, to assistance of all kinds that comes from outside interests. I will take that as a representation and examine very carefully what my hon. friend has said.

In respect of the first question which he raised with regard to flights, I have been provided with the information. From September 1988 to August 1989 there were 257 flights taken by members of this government. From September 1983 to August 1984, the last year of the Liberal Government, there were 677.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

* * *

REVENUE

Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance. It has long been a fundamental principle of our parliamentary system that all government revenues are received in a consolidated manner and are not designated for specific purposes except through the annual budgetary process.

Recently we have seen some modest departures from this principle. For example, in the plant breeders' rights legislation certain royalties have been redirected for specific plant research, and in New Brunswick the provincial government has imposed a new fuel tax which is directly dedicated to highway construction.

In our environment committee, Mr. Speaker, we have had several proposals recently for a so-called carbon tax to provide funds for environmental research on atmospheric pollution or, as some would urge, to be used for Trans-Canada Highway improvements.

Is the government willing to reconsider the principles of revenue consolidation for dedicated funding purposes or user fee concepts? If not, are there other effective existing ways to direct government revenues from specific sources to specific purposes?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the government has, over the last few years, been dedicating quite a bit of effort to user fee concepts so that people who are using a service of the government are asked to pay for that fee through some form of user fee or other charge.

Moving from there to the broader concept of what the hon. member has asked about, whether there can be dedicated taxes, these are a good deal more complex and more difficult to achieve. It is something that I have not a closed mind on by any means, but I would caution him that there are difficulties in doing so and in recent years governments have been trying to move away from this type of approach rather than moving toward it in a broader sense. This is something on which, as I said, we have an open mind on.

* * *

[*Translation*]

RAILWAY ACCIDENTS

Mr. Jean-Guy Guilbault (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. I was very disturbed to hear just now about the derailment of a CN train with 40 cars, four of which contained chlorine, at Saint-Léonard d'Aston in my riding. As a result of this catastrophe, people will have to be evacuated. Will the minister give the population and farmers of the area who are attending a congress here in Ottawa some assurances as to measures that will be taken immediately to minimize the impact of this accident?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, just before Question Period I was informed a CN 40-car train had derailed near Drummondville, and that the whole population of one village had to be evacuated because several cars contained hazardous substances including chlorine, soda and other products. We have a number of teams, including the department's hazardous materials team, teams from the private sector and others that are now on the spot. I think I can give the people in the Drummondville area, especially the villages concerned, the asurance that we have covered all aspects of the accident at the present time. I believe that everything is under control and that there is no reason to panic, because, I repeat we have everything under control.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister and concerns the press release he issued at noon about the Public Service Commission and a restructuring of the entire Public Service in this country. Could the Prime Minister, considering this government's reputation for patronage, give the House and Canadians the assurance that the changes he announced this morning will maintain the Public Service Commission's traditional role, its parliamentary role, which is to safeguard the hiring process by applying the merit principle?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, of course we will maintain the merit principle throughout the system. I think it is faintly ridiculous for a federal liberal to accuse anyone of dealing in patronage. They practically invented the system at the federal level and should at least have the guts to stop making these accusations——

• (1500)

[*English*]

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I could quote the Prime Minister in several statements he has made over the years concerning the intention of his party to get them to the trough, but I will avoid that and just ask him the following.

In the statement and the release put out by himself this morning we read that, "—hiring, firing, promotions and demotions will be decentralized and delegated to departments—". How does this government intend to protect the public interest and ensure that people get hired because of what they can do and not because of who they know? Will he give us the assurance that, indeed, his whole reform, so-called, will not be destroying the Public Service Commission by reducing it to nothing?

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, as my hon. friend knows, the object of the entire exercise which has been worked out very carefully with very responsible career public servants is to improve the efficiency and the effectiveness of the Public Service of Canada, which I think most people in this House already regard as one of the finest

to serve a Parliament anywhere in the industrialized world.

What we are trying to do is to further improve the conditions under which public servants function, their remuneration, their incentives to be better, more skilled managers, and to be able to exercise within their spheres of managerial responsibility greater personal leadership. We want to increase the productivity in the Public Service and its quality. I know my hon. friend would agree with that as well.

When he made, I am sure inadvertently, the reference to the intention of my political party regarding the quota—the trough as he says—it is true that I did make a reference to the trough, but in the national interest. It was on behalf of all Canadians to get the Liberal snout out of the trough. It had been there much too long.

Mr. Speaker: I have a question of privilege from the hon. member for South West Nova.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

FISHERIES COMMITTEE

Mrs. Coline Campbell (South West Nova): Mr. Speaker, I feel that my rights as a Member of Parliament and those of other members will be directly affected if the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans does not allow the Atlantic Groundfish Advisory Committee to appear before the committee.

We have been trying to get this group before the fisheries committee for a month. The new 1990 groundfish management plan will become effective in January, 1990. We have not been allowed to see the Atlantic Groundfish Advisory Committee before the committee on fisheries.

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to intervene and press the Minister of Fisheries to allow his officials to come before the committee. Everybody else has been heard by the fisheries committee except representatives of the advisory committee.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for South West Nova has raised a matter which is important and which is very much a matter on which she has spoken in the past. However, the matter is a complaint.

The matter lies with a committee. I do not think it is appropriate for the Speaker under the circumstances to intervene.

I suggest that perhaps a conversation between herself and some colleagues on the other side might bring about a reasonable resolution of the difficulty. It is not a question of privilege; it is a complaint. It is, of course, a serious matter.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It being 3.05 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(a) the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred divisions of the report stage motions of Bill C-23.

Call in the members.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1530)

[*English*]

NATIONAL ENERGY BOARD ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed from Monday, December 11, consideration of Bill C-23, an act to amend the National Energy Board Act and to repeal certain enactments in consequence thereof, as reported (with amendments) from a legislative committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred divisions on Bill C-23, an act to amend the National Energy Board Act and to repeal certain enactments in consequence thereof.

The first vote will be on Motion No. 1. This motion also applies to Motions Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5 and 9.

The house divided on the Motion No. 1, which was negatived on the following division:

(*Division No. 143*)

YEAS

Members

Althouse	Angus
Assad	Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bélair	Bellemare
Benjamin	Bevilacqua
Blackburn (Brant)	Blondin
Boudria	Brewin
Butland	Caccia
Callbeck	Campbell (South West Nova)
Catterall	Crawford
de Jong	Duhamel
Ferguson	Finestone
Fisher	Flis
Fontana	Foster
Gaffney	Gardiner

Gauthier	Gray (Windsor West)
Harb	Harvard
Harvey (Edmonton East)	Hopkins
Hovdebo	Jordan
Kaplan	Keyes
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)	Kristiansen
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)	Laporte
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)	MacAulay
MacLaren	Manley
Marchi	Marleau
McCurdy	McGuire
Mifflin	Milliken
Mills	Mitchell
Murphy	Nault
Nunziata	Nystrom
Ouellet	Pagtakhan
Parent	Parker
Peterson	Pickard
Proud	Rideout
Robichaud	Rocheleau
Simmons	Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Stewart	Stupich
Taylor	Tobin
Vanclief	Volpe
Walker	Wappel
Whittaker	Wood
Young (Gloucester)	Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—82

NAYS

Members

Anderson	Andre
Atkinson	Attewell
Beatty	Belsher
Bernier	Bertrand
Bird	Bjornson
Blackburn (Jonquière)	Bosley
Bouchard (Roberval)	Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Bourgault	Boyer
Brightwell	Browes
Cadieux	Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Cardiff	Casey
Chadwick	Champagne (Champlain)
Chartrand	Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cole	Collins
Cooper	Corbeil
Corbett	Côté
Crosby (Halifax West)	Darling
DeBlois	de Cotret
Desjardins	Dick
Dobbie	Domm
Dorin	Duplessis
Edwards	Epp
Fee	Feltham
Ferland	Fontaine
Fretz	Friesen
Gérin	Gibeau
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	Greene
Guilbault	Gustafson
Halliday	Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hawkes	Hicks
Hockin	Hogue
Holtmann	Horning
Hudon	Hughes
James	Jelinek
Johnson	Jourdenais
Kempling	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kindy	Koury
Langlois	Larrivée
Layton	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lewis	Littlechild
Loiselle	Lopez
MacDonald (Rosedale)	MacDougall (Timiskaming)
MacKay	Malone
Marin	Martin (Lincoln)
Masse	McCreath
McDermid	McDougall (St. Paul's)
McKnight	Monteith
Moore	Nicholson
Nowlan	Oberle
O'Kurley	Plamondon
Plourde	Porter
Redway	Reid
Ricard	Richardson
Robitaille	Roy-Arcelin
St-Julien	Schneider
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)	Shields
Siddon	Sobeski
Soetens	Sparrow
Stevenson	Tardif
Thacker	Thompson
Tremblay (Rosemont)	Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Tremblay (Lotbinière)	Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van de Walle	Vankoughnet
Venne	Vincent
Weiner	White
Wilbee	Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)	Winegard
Worthy—135	

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I declare the motion lost.

Therefore, Motions Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5 and 9 are negatived.

The next question is on Motion No. 6. The vote on Motion No. 6 also applies to Motions Nos. 7, 8 and 10.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I think you will find that there would be unanimous consent to apply the vote just taken on Motion No. 1 to Motion No. 6.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, I was not present for the first vote but certainly if my vote were recorded for subsequent votes we would be in agreement.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Does the House agree that the divisions just taken be recorded as applying to Motions Nos. 6 and 11?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

The House divided on the Motion No. 6, which was negatived on the following division:

(*Division No. 144*)

YEAS

Members

Althouse	Angus
Assad	Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bélair	Bellemare
Benjamin	Bevilacqua
Blackburn (Brant)	Blondin
Boudria	Brewin
Butland	Caccia
Callbeck	Campbell (South West Nova)
Catterall	Crawford
de Jong	Duhamel
Ferguson	Finestone
Fisher	Flis
Fontana	Foster
Gaffney	Gardiner
Gauthier	Gray (Windsor West)
Harb	Harvard
Harvey (Edmonton East)	Hopkins
Hovdebo	Jordan
Kaplan	Keyes
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)	Kristiansen
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)	Laporte

LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacLaren
Marchi
McCurdy
Mifflin
Mills
Murphy
Nunziata
Ouellet
Parent
Peterson
Proud
Robichaud
Rocheleau
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Stupich
Tobin
Volpe
Wappel
Wood
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—83

MacAulay
Manley
Marleau
McGuire
Milliken
Mitchell
Nault
Nystrom
Pagtakhan
Parker
Pickard
Rideout
Robinson
Simmons
Stewart
Taylor
Vanclief
Walker
Whittaker
Young (Gloucester)

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Beatty
Bernier
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bouchard (Roberval)
Bourgault
Brightwell
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Chartrand
Cole
Cooper
Corbett
Crosby (Halifax West)
DeBlois
Desjardins
Dobbie
Dorin
Edwards
Fee
Ferland
Fretz
Gérin
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Guilbault
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Holtmann
Hudon
James
Johnson
Kempling
Kindy
Langlois
Layton
Lewis
Loiselle
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacKay
Marin
Masse
McDermid
McKnight
Moore
Nowlan
O'Kurley
Plourde
Redway
Ricard

Andre
Attewell
Belsher
Bertrand
Bjornson
Bosley
Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Boyer
Browes
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbeil
Côté
Darling
de Cotret
Dick
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Feltham
Fontaine
Friesen
Gibeau
Greene
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Hogue
Horning
Hughes
Jelinek
Jourdenais
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Koury
Larrivée
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Littlechild
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Malone
Martin (Lincoln)
McCreath
McDougall (St. Paul's)
Monteith
Nicholson
Oberle
Plamondon
Porter
Reid
Richardson
Robitaille
St-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Thacker
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Van de Walle
Venne
Weiner
Wilbee
Assiniboia)
Winegard

Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vankoughnet
Vincent
White
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)
Worthy—135

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I declare the motion lost. Therefore motions Nos. 7, 8 and 10 are negatived.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I thought you were dealing with Motion No. 6 which does, indeed, apply to Motions Nos. 7, 8 and 10. I had not mentioned Motion No. 11, yet. If you want to put that motion and anticipate the vote, then there will be unanimous consent on this side.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I am sorry. I did anticipate, since it is the season to be jolly. Ho, ho!

Does the House agree that the division just taken apply to Motion No. 11?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

The House divided on the Motion No. 11, which was negatived on the following division:

(*Division No. 145*)

YEAS

Members

Althouse
Assad
Bélair
Benjamin
Blackburn (Brant)
Boudria
Butland
Callbeck
Catterall
de Jong
Ferguson
Fisher
Fontana
Gaffney
Gauthier
Harb
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Kaplan
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacLaren
Marchi
McCurdy
Mifflin
Mills
Murphy
Nunziata
Ouellet
Parent

Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bellemare
Bevilacqua
Blondin
Brewin
Caccia
Campbell (South West Nova)
Crawford
Duhamel
Finestone
Flis
Foster
Gardiner
Gray (Windsor West)
Harvard
Hopkins
Jordan
Keyes
Kristiansen
Laporte
MacAulay
Manley
Marleau
McGuire
Milliken
Mitchell
Nault
Nystrom
Pagtakhan
Parker

Peterson
Proud
Robichaud
Rocheleau
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Stupich
Tobin
Volpe
Wappel
Wood
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—83

Pickard
Rideout
Robinson
Simmons
Stewart
Taylor
Vanclief
Walker
Whittaker
Young (Gloucester)

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Beatty
Bernier
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bouchard (Roberval)
Bourgault
Brightwell
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Chartrand
Cole
Cooper
Corbett
Crosby (Halifax West)
DeBlois
Desjardins
Dobbie
Dorin
Edwards
Fee
Ferland
Fretz
Gérin
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Guilbault
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Holtmann
Hudon
James
Johnson
Kempling
Kindy
Langlois
Layton
Lewis
Loiselle
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacKay
Marin
Masse
McDermid
McKnight
Moore
Nowlan
O'Kurley
Plourde
Redway
Ricard
Robitaille
St-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Thacker
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Van de Walle

Andre
Attewell
Belsher
Bertrand
Bjornson
Bosley
Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Boyer
Browes
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbeil
Côté
Darling
de Cotret
Dick
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Feltham
Fontaine
Friesen
Gibeau
Greene
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Hogue
Horning
Hughes
Jelinek
Jourdenais
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Koury
Larrivée
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Littlechild
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Malone
Martin (Lincoln)
McCreath
McDougall (St. Paul's)
Monteith
Nicholson
Oberle
Plamondon
Porter
Reid
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vankoughnet

Venne
Weiner
Wilbee
Assiniboia)
Winegard

Vincent
White
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)
Worthy—135

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I declare the motion lost.

Therefore, I declare Motions Nos. 12 to 16 inclusive negatived.

Hon. Jake Epp moved that Bill C-23, an act to amend the National Energy Board Act and to repeal certain enactments in consequence thereof (as amended) be concurred in.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the yeas have it.

Is it agreed that the division just taken be applied in reverse to the motion for concurrence?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

The House divided on the motion which was agreed to on the following division:

(Division No. 146)

YEAS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Beatty
Bernier
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bouchard (Roberval)
Bourgault
Brightwell
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Chartrand
Cole
Cooper
Corbett
Crosby (Halifax West)
DeBlois
Desjardins
Dobbie
Dorin
Edwards

Andre
Attewell
Belsher
Bertrand
Bjornson
Bosley
Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Boyer
Browes
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Corbeil
Côté
Darling
de Cotret
Dick
Domm
Duplessis
Epp

Fee
Ferland
Fretz
Gérin
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Guilbault
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Holtmann
Hudon
James
Johnson
Kempling
Kindy
Langlois
Layton
Lewis
Loiselle
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacKay
Marin
Masse
McDermid
McKnight
Moore
Nowlan
O'Kurley
Plourde
Redway
Ricard
Robitaille
St-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Thacker
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Van de Walle
Venne
Weiner
Wilbee
Assiniboia)
Winegard
Feltham
Fontaine
Friesen
Gibeau
Greene
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Hogue
Horning
Hughes
Jelinek
Jourdenais
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Koury
Larrivée
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Littlechild
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Malone
Martin (Lincoln)
McCreath
McDougall (St. Paul's)
Monteith
Nicholson
Oberle
Plamondon
Porter
Reid
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vankoughnet
Vincent
White
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)
Worthy—135

NAYS

Members

Althouse
Assad
Bélair
Benjamin
Blackburn (Brant)
Boudria
Butland
Callbeck
Catterall
de Jong
Ferguson
Fisher
Fontana
Gaffney
Gauthier
Harb
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Kaplan
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacLaren
Marchi
McCurdy
Mifflin
Mills
Murphy
Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bellemare
Bevilacqua
Blondin
Brewin
Caccia
Campbell (South West Nova)
Crawford
Duhamel
Finestone
Flis
Foster
Gardiner
Gray (Windsor West)
Harvard
Hopkins
Jordan
Keyes
Kristiansen
Laporte
MacAulay
Manley
Marleau
McGuire
Milliken
Mitchell
Nault
Nunziata
Ouellet
Parent
Peterson
Proud
Robichaud
Rocheleau
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Stupich
Tobin
Volpe
Wappel
Wood
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—83
Nystrom
Pagtakhan
Parker
Pickard
Rideout
Robinson
Simmons
Stewart
Taylor
Vanclief
Walker
Whittaker
Young (Gloucester)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

• (1540)

NORDION AND THERATRONICS DIVESTITURE AUTHORIZATION ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. McDermid that Bill C-13, an act to authorize the divestiture of Nordion International Inc. and Theratronics International Limited be read the third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to an agreement reached earlier this day the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred division on the motion for third reading of Bill C-13, an act to authorize the diverstiture of Nordion International Inc. and Theratronics International Limited.

Shall I dispense with the ringing of the bells?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I think you would find a good disposition on the part of the House to apply the results of the recent votes taken to the motion for third reading of Bill C-13.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it so agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

The House divided on the motion which was agreed to on the following division:

(*Division No. 147*)

YEAS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Beatty
Bernier
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bouchard (Roberval)
Andre
Attewell
Belsher
Bertrand
Bjornson
Bosley
Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)

Bourgault	Boyer
Brightwell	Browes
Cadieux	Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Cardiff	Casey
Chadwick	Champagne (Champlain)
Chartrand	Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cole	Collins
Cooper	Corbeil
Corbett	Côté
Crosby (Halifax West)	Darling
DeBlois	de Cotret
Desjardins	Dick
Dobbie	Domm
Dorin	Duplessis
Edwards	Epp
Fee	Feltham
Ferland	Fontaine
Fretz	Friesen
Gérin	Gibeau
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	Greene
Guilbault	Gustafson
Halliday	Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hawkes	Hicks
Hockin	Hogue
Holtmann	Horning
Hudon	Hughes
James	Jelinek
Johnson	Jourdenais
Kempling	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kindy	Koury
Langlois	Larrivée
Layton	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lewis	Littlechild
Loiselle	Lopez
MacDonald (Rosedale)	MacDougall (Timiskaming)
MacKay	Malone
Marin	Martin (Lincoln)
Masse	McCreath
McDermid	McDougall (St. Paul's)
McKnight	Monteith
Moore	Nicholson
Nowlan	Oberle
O'Kurley	Plamondon
Plourde	Porter
Redway	Reid
Ricard	Richardson
Robitaille	Roy-Arcelin
St-Julien	Schneider
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)	Shields
Siddon	Sobeski
Soetens	Sparrow
Stevenson	Tardif
Thacker	Thompson
Tremblay (Rosemont)	Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Tremblay (Lotbinière)	Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van de Walle	Vankoughnet
Venne	Vincent
Weiner	White
Wilbee	Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Winegard	Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)
	Worthy—135

NAYS

Members

Althouse	Angus
Assad	Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bélair	Bellemare
Benjamin	Bevilacqua
Blackburn (Brant)	Blondin
Boudria	Brewin
Butland	Caccia
Callbeck	Campbell (South West Nova)
Catterall	Crawford
deJong	Duhamel
Ferguson	Finestone
Fisher	Flis
Fontana	Foster
Gaffney	Gardiner
Gauthier	Gray (Windsor West)
Harb	Harvard
Harvey (Edmonton East)	Hopkins
Hovdebo	Jordan
Kaplan	Keyes
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)	Kristiansen
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)	Laporte
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)	MacAulay
MacLaren	Manley
Marchi	Marleau
McCurdy	McGuire
Mifflin	Milliken
Mills	Mitchell
Murphy	Nault
Nunziata	Nystrom
Ouellet	Pagtakhan
Parent	Parker
Peterson	Pickard
Proud	Rideout
Robichaud	Robinson
Rocheleau	Simmons
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)	Stewart
Stupich	Taylor
Tobin	Vanclief
Volpe	Walker
Wappel	Whittaker
Wood	Young (Gloucester)
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—83	

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I declare the motion carried.

Bill read the third time and passed.

* * *

WAYS AND MEANS

INCOME TAX ACT AND RELATED ACTS

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Privatization and Regulatory Affairs)) moved that a Ways and Means motion to amend the Income Tax Act and related Acts, laid upon the table on Monday, December 11, 1989, be concurred in.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: On division.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I declare the motion carried on division.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and I understand that the Liberal Party was in agreement with the concept I am about to describe and that the NDP wanted to check, once more, with higher authorities.

I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order, following the adoption of this Order, but, in any case, no later than 4 p.m. today, the House will commence report stage consideration of Bill C–49, with the Speaker allowing debate on each of five motions to amend the said bill, such motions to be tabled by the President of the Treasury Board; and that, the report stage of debate continue until completed but, in any case, no later than 6 p.m., with all questions thereon to be deemed carried on division; and that, third reading debate on the said bill then be called forthwith, with at least one speaker per party to be heard, and at no later than 7 p.m. the Speaker shall interrupt and shall put the question on the motion for third reading of the said bill, and on any amendments thereto, forthwith and without further debate. Bells shall be rung for 15 minutes; and that, following such disposition of third reading, the Speaker shall adjourn the House until 2 p.m. on Wednesday, December 13, 1989.

There may now be unanimous consent, Mr. Speaker, for the motion to be put and voted on immediately.

Mrs. Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

There indeed have been discussions. This consent order refers to five motions. Members of the Official Opposition have not seen those five motions, nor another document that was discussed.

Despite every effort to assist the government, while not agreeing with its motion, there is no consent from the Official Opposition.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, we do not give unanimous consent. As the Minister of Justice, the government House leader, knows from earlier conversations today, he had indicated that he would not be proceeding with this type of an attempt to extend the hours in return for the vote that we allowed earlier. I do not know why there is this back-tracking by the government.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I understand that the motions in question are the very same motions that were discussed last night between my hon. friend opposite and the President of the Treasury Board. In any event, that can be cleared up in the 15 minutes between now and 4 p.m. We would be pleased to shorten the time for debate. If my hon. friends in the NDP would like to check with higher authorities, perhaps we could wrap this up today in the interest of the Canadian people, the ships that are in the seaway and the veterans.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I guess there is no consent.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, since the government House leader was allowed to have some editorial comment, if the government is now willing to change the Public Service Staff Relations Act to allow reclassification to go to an arbitration board, as it is under the Canada Labour Code, then we would agree to his proposal.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The House has voted on the report stage amendments and concurrence in Bill C–23. There have been discussions among the three parties and I am sure that you will find that there is consent to proceed with third reading stage of Bill C–23 at which time there will be one speaker from each party and then the vote. If there is a vote required at the end of the remarks of those three speakers, then it would be deferred until some time on Thursday.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

* * *

NATIONAL ENERGY BOARD ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources) moved that Bill C–23, an act to amend the National Energy Board Act and to repeal certain enactments in consequence thereof be read the third time and passed.

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, you have already heard a description of Bill C–23 and its objectives. I would like to outline the consideration which guided the government to introduce certain amendments.

The committee of this House which examined the bill heard numerous and very competent witnesses. The government has paid heed to the substantive concerns those witnesses raised. Our amendments responded to those concerns. But I would like to point out that the amendments are consistent with the policy announced by the minister last fall.

In the original version of the bill, if the Governor in Council designated an application for a full review by the

National Energy Board, it would specify issues to be examined during the review. In other words, the Governor in Council would say to the board, "Along with whatever else you deem to be relevant, be sure you examine these areas." This measure was intended simply to let applicants and interested parties know why an application was being designated for public hearings.

• (1550)

However, some utilities which appeared before the committee had reservations. They were concerned that this provision could result in arbitrary criteria being imposed upon a particular applicant. In light of these comments, we have removed the provisions allowing the Governor in Council to specify concerns about an individual application.

The original bill provided that if the board approved a proposal without hearings, the Governor in Council, within six months, could order a review which would include hearings. Witnesses before the committee said six months is too long to delay an export or the start of construction of an international power line. The very publicly visible process entailed in this bill gives interested parties ample time and opportunity to formulate and submit their views before the board makes a decision. Therefore, should a difficulty arise after a board decision, it will come to the attention of the minister and the Governor in Council in short order. The government has reduced the time period in question to 45 days.

I would also like to comment upon the submission to the committee by the Grand Council of the Crees of Quebec. The Cree are concerned that there be a thorough public review process for proposed hydroelectric developments in northern Quebec. Should such developments entail exports, an assessment of the environmental impacts of the export proposal must be submitted with the National Energy Board application. Further, interested parties may submit their views to the board. If the board has reason to believe that there has not been a thorough and adequate environmental assessment, its duty is clear. It recommends public hearings.

However, I am pleased to point out that steps have already been taken to ensure that new hydro developments in northern Quebec receive thorough scrutiny. Our colleague, the Minister of the Environment, presently is engaged in discussions with his Quebec counterpart to establish a joint federal–provincial process of public review. The Cree and Inuit will have a major role to play in the review process. They have already been invited to assist the government in planning and setting up the review process and will participate in the review itself.

Some hon. members have expressed other reservations about this bill. These are matters to which the government has given consideration and which, upon reflection, we believe to be unfounded. Let me discuss them briefly.

Some claim that the existing National Energy Board Act is just fine as it is. Well, in 1986, the NEB held a public inquiry into the regulation of electricity exports. During that inquiry, representatives of many utilities, provincial government officials and other interested parties complained of the duplication between provincial and federal review processes.

Let me illustrate the impact that this duplication of regulatory procedures can have. An Alberta utility, which recently appeared before the legislative committee, said it would be reluctant to propose to build an international power line. It said that the regulatory burden would be too great. The utility also pointed out that the lives of those living or owning land along the proposed power line corridor would be disrupted throughout the whole provincial and then federal regulatory processes. Our policy eliminates needless duplication, while ensuring Canadian interests are safeguarded.

The NEB act also needed to be updated with a new listing of key criteria the board should consider in reviewing an electricity application. Bill C–23 makes environmental protection a priority. It also ensures Canadians will be given the opportunity of fair access to electricity supplies before those supplies are committed to export.

Some have criticized this bill because it gives the final say as to whether an application will be subject to federal public hearings to the Governor in Council. These critics argue we should retain the procedure in the existing National Energy Board Act, or leave it to the National Energy Board to decide whether hearings will be heard.

I, and other speakers, have explained the need to amend the existing act, so as to avoid duplicating provincial reviews of an application. Clearly, if unwarranted duplication of good work at the provincial level is to be avoided, some discretion must be employed in determining when hearings at the federal level are

required. The question is: How do we establish sound processes to govern the use of this discretion?

We have heard many views on this matter. We have heard that you cannot leave these decisions entirely with the board. It has been argued that if a regulatory agency is placed in the position of repeatedly having to decide the degree of regulation to apply to proposals, the agency will tend to over-regulate.

Conversely, some have argued that if the Governor in Council alone ruled upon what review should take place, it would tend to avoid public hearings. Others have said cabinet might have a bias in favour of holding hearings.

The procedure set out in Bill C-23 involves both the board and the Governor in Council in the decision process. It establishes checks and balances between them to ensure that sound decisions are made about the extent of federal review.

The role of the board is to make a recommendation to the Governor in Council based upon its assessment of an application and the review of that application conducted at the provincial level. The National Energy Board will examine views submitted by interested parties and whatever considerations the board itself deems relevant. The check on the board is the fact that it must back up its recommendation by publicly stating the reasons it believes hearings are warranted and those reasons must be sufficient to guide the Governor in Council.

I would point out that the process for dealing with an application for an electricity export or an international power line takes place in the full light of public scrutiny. Applications, supporting documentation, the board's decisions and the reasons for those decisions all will be available to the public. And there will be plenty of opportunity for interested parties to comment to the board before it decides whether to recommend hearings.

The role of the Governor in Council in this process is to review the National Energy Board's recommendation and to decide whether to designate an application for hearings. It is obvious that a recommendation from such a respected agency as the National Energy Board, made in such a highly public fashion, will carry great weight with the Governor in Council. That is confirmed by history. Governor in Council authority over the National Energy Board recommendations is nothing new. Since the board was created 30 years ago, the approval of the Governor in Council has been required for all major board decisions respecting oil, natural gas and electricity exports. In all that time—three decades—not once has the Governor in Council overturned an export recommendation from the board. There is no reason to believe that trend will change.

Mr. Speaker, the government found the legislative committee's work on this bill valuable. We paid close attention to these deliberations, reflected upon them and acted upon some of the concerns raised. I would like to express my sincere thanks to everybody who participated, both with speeches in the House and with work in the legislative committee.

* * *

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: The hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell—Member of the Senate; the hon. member for Winnipeg Transcona—The Environment; the hon. member for Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing—Health.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

NATIONAL ENERGY BOARD ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Epp that Bill C-23, an act to amend the National Energy Board Act and to repeal certain enactments in consequence thereof be read the third time and passed.

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, we have come to the third reading stage of Bill C-23 where we debate the legislation in its final form.

I would like to explain this afternoon why I feel Bill C-23 should not be passed. There are two main reasons for this. One is that the bill does not adhere to the principle behind the bill as stated by the government. The other reason is that, as I said yesterday, I strongly disagree with what Bill C-23 in fact does. It takes the

power from the National Energy Board and gives it to the cabinet.

Under Bill C–23 the cabinet will make the final decision as to whether there is a public inquiry on applications of electricity exports and power lines.

• (1600)

First let us deal with how the bill contradicts the stated intention of the government. During the second reading of Bill C–23, the deputy House leader twice referred to the principle behind Bill C–23. On one occasion the deputy House leader said that the basic principle governing the new policies was that there should be no unwarranted duplication of federal and provincial regulation. "Elsewhere" he said "the National Energy Board should complement and not duplicate measures taken by provincial governments". That is the basic principle underlying the amendments contained in this bill.

The deputy House leader in his speech referred to the history that led up to Bill C–23. He mentioned how provincial regulation of electricity is much greater today than it was 30 years ago when the National Energy Board was formed and therefore why a second layer of federal regulation was no longer necessary.

That is fine. I am familiar with the provisions of Bill C–23 which accomplish these objectives, but the source of the problem is not so much in the government's desire to reduce regulations but in its desire for more power over electricity trade. It is this second motive that I think will do the most harm and which I believe could in some cases result in increased regulation of electricity.

If I can be blunt, we are setting the stage for out and out political interference by the cabinet in the electricity business. As I argued yesterday, this bill gives the federal cabinet new powers to stop a federal hearing on an electricity power line or an export application to the National Energy Board.

As we know, the present situation is if an application comes before the board for electricity export or an application for an international power line, there is a public inquiry. However, under Bill C–23 the National Energy Board will issue a permit or, if it thinks there should be a hearing, it will recommend to cabinet that there be a hearing; but cabinet must have the final say.

Under this measure the federal government will be able to speed up an application through the board or, more important, shield it from public spotlight.

That kind of meddling has not been acceptable for the past 30 years ever since the National Energy Board started, and it is certainly not acceptable today. Not only is it unacceptable; it runs contrary to the stated principle behind Bill C–23.

Nowhere in the speech of the deputy House leader, or in any of the departmental policy documents is there a reason stated for giving this kind of power to the federal cabinet. The only explanation came from the minister himself in response to a question that I put to him at a legislative committee. When asked why the board was not given the power to make the call on whether there should be a public inquiry, the minister gave a far–fetched explanation of why the NEB would be in an apparent conflict of interest situation.

As reported in the *Minutes and Evidence of Proceedings* of the legislative committee on Bill C–23 the minister stated:

> There is the perception that the board would be in a conflict of interest situation, because the board would literally be deciding how much more work it makes for itself.

That argument is totally false, as I explained to the House yesterday. Not only is the reason false; it seems that it was something that the minister said on the spur of the moment during the committee meeting. That argument certainly does not appear anywhere in the department's documents concerning Bill C–23.

Did the department forget to mention the reason for the single most important change heralded in this Bill C–23? No, I think not. I think the answer the minister gave represents the true principle, or it is the true principle behind the bill showing through, that is, that Bill C–23 is designated to give more power to cabinet over electricity applications to the National Energy Board.

There was an article in *The Calgary Herald* this week which seemed to indicate that this policy would spill over into oil and gas export applications as well. The government is apparently thinking of preventing the board from holding hearings on any export applications that it deems too sensitive. Not only would that make a mockery of the

National Energy Board, it would result in an energy policy that suits the government's political instincts and interests rather than this country's long-term interests. It is the same political principle behind Bill C-23.

Bill C-23 is not a technical document. It is a political document that the government is trying to pass for a technical one. It may very well pass, but let there be no doubt about what we are debating and giving third reading. It is really a licence for political interference.

I conclude my remarks and recommend, for the above reasons and for the reasons which I stated yesterday during debate on this bill, that the House not pass Bill C-23.

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, I do not want to repeat all the arguments we have already made on this bill during second reading debate last June and again in greater detail during meetings of the legislative committee in November. However, I do think the major points bear reiteration.

The first major point I would like to reiterate is that this bill is not about energy regulation. It is about energy exports. It is about a continental market for Canadian generated electricity. That is the principle at the heart of the bill. This entire shuck and jive about regulation is just that. It is a smoke screen and ought not to be allowed to get in the eyes of the prudent and sensible members of this House. However, more on that a bit later.

I would like, at first, if I may, to construct a little context here. The previous Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources stated in his speech to the board of directors of the Canadian Electrical Association on November 26, 1987: "Electricity's importance cannot be overestimated". He was quite right. The National Energy Board went even further in its report on the regulation of electricity exports, which was released in 1987, stating that in most uses "electricity qualifies as an essential commodity". A most trenchant assessment. There is every reason to believe that electricity will become even more important in the future. It will come to be considered a strategic resource.

The United States, Canada and other countries are becoming increasingly concerned about global warming which is caused in large part by the burning of fossil fuels, and there is no question that electricity has associated with it a host of environmental problems. These include, for example, in the case of hydroelectric facilities, the flooding of valleys and the destruction of the way of life of indigenous peoples. In the case of nuclear power, there is the never-ending problem of nuclear waste. In the case of natural gas-fired and especially coal-fired generating stations, there is acid rain and carbon dioxide emissions which contribute to global warming.

We in the New Democratic Party firmly believe that all of these environmental problems mean that how we produce electricity—and, even more important, how we conserve it—will become increasingly important in the future. The fact remains that electricity is convenient. There is also a widespread perception that electricity is clean. This reputation is mainly due to the fact that electricity is clean where it is used. In general, most of the environmental problems are associated with generating it, not with using it. But that perception of the cleanliness of electricity exists, and it means that the demand in the United States for electricity generated in Canada is bound to increase.

• (1610)

What has this government done in response to this new reality? Has it made changes to protect, to safeguard this strategic resource? Has the government added extra protections for our energy security just to be on the safe side, to be prudent? It is just the opposite. This government is making it easier to export electricity to the United States, and it is doing so immediately after it signed a deal that threatens our future energy security by assuring our United States customers a never decreasing supply of our strategic energy resources.

This government signed a free trade deal with the U.S. that will act like ratchet on our energy supplies. The proportionality clause, as it is known, will be, as was so trenchantly observed by my seat mate, the hon. member for Prince George—Bulkley Valley yesterday, a boa constrictor around the neck of our energy security. From now on, every single proposal to build a power line or to export electricity takes on a degree of importance that just was not there before. And I say every single proposal, including those for export of the so-called interruptibles because the interruptibles too—as the minister finally admitted in the committee after I perhaps unkindly badgered him for several minutes and several questions—are included in the total energy

exports noted in the free trade agreement as being subject to the proportionality ratchet.

Every new kilowatt hour of exported electricity will, in effect, set the floor for Canadian offers to export electricity in the future. It seems inevitable that the export of this strategic resource will be jacked up and up and up over the years. In the face of this situation where every export proposal essentially circumscribes our energy future, where every export proposal sets the limit on our future energy flexibility, this government in this bill is making public hearings on these export proposals less frequent. Indeed it is making them optional. That is right, Mr. Speaker—optional.

There will be no requirement for a public hearing on export proposals. There will be no requirement for a public hearing on the building of export transmission lines. The decision will be, in the first instance, up to whatever provincial regulatory authority may seize the power conferred on it by this bill, and in the second instance, by the National Energy Board, always subject to the cabinet saying: "Sorry, NEB, you are off base, they can go ahead without a hearing". For all but exceptional cases, exports will be approved by the NEB without a public hearing.

In those cases where the NEB believes that a public hearing is warranted, for example, in the case of a proposal to export a huge amount of hydroelectricity, this bill gives the cabinet the power to block that public hearing, and even when a public hearing is held there is no provision for reasonable intervener funding for those wishing to bring absolutely pertinent information to the attention of the body holding that public hearing.

Not only is that imprudent; it is dangerous, it is foolish, it is totally unacceptable, which is why in the committee I attempted to propose amendments that would at least guarantee that in the event of the construction of a hydroelectric export power line, or in the event of an application for the export of electricity, somebody at the provincial or the federal level, it does not matter, somebody would hold a public hearing. The government members defeated that amendment and leave us consequently with the bill before us today.

In an attempt to justify this bill, the government has claimed that the electricity industry is over-regulated: in the aspects of the construction of interprovincial power lines and export power lines, and in the event of electricity exported south as a commodity, there is over-regulation to a degree that must be dealt with because apparently the industry is suffering accordingly.

What are the facts, Mr. Speaker? The National Energy Board has never refused an electricity export application. Not once. Never. Is this over-regulation? This is an export holiday.

During the legislative committee hearings, no one—and I asked them all: not the minister, not the chairman of the NEB, not a single witness—could come up with an example where they or any person in the industry was harmed by this alleged over-regulation. Not one instance. Only one witness was able to point to a case where inappropriate regulation had the effect of discouraging a project, and that was in my own province.

TransAlta Utilities said that because of the current regulatory environment they would not even bother applying to build a line across British Columbia because B.C. Hydro would stomp all over them. Fine. But that is an instance not of over-regulation, rather it is an instance of inappropriate regulation. Not duplication, not excessive regulation, but inappropriate regulation. And that we have no objection to dealing with. But that is not what this bill does.

This bill, rather, eradicates the final effective control of the National Energy Board, in the public interest, to oversee the prudent husbanding of electricity in the national interest in Canada.

We agree changes to existing legislation need to be made, especially in light of the disastrous free trade agreement. But the changes should not reduce the safeguards on our energy future. They should add a greater degree of protection for our strategic—dare I mention it—Canadian energy resources.

By way of conclusion, let me highlight one last item which I think illustrates clearly the direction in which this government is headed. There was a time—there really was—when the Conservative party believed that Canadians should benefit most from our resources, that

most of the benefit of our natural advantages should not go to our neighbours and business competitors to the south in the United States, but should go to Canadians.

Listen to what the then Prime Minister said back in 1959. You may even remember this personally, Mr. Speaker. Let me quote from *Hansard* at page 4025, from a speech given in this House on May 26, 1959, by the Right Hon. John George Diefenbaker:

> —no longer will there be any suspicion that the Canadian consumer is being forced to subsidize the foreign markets or that Canadian industries will be asked to pay higher prices for their energy than those paid by foreign industries using Canadian energy.

The Mulroney Conservatives are selling out the Diefenbaker principles. Many Canadians know that the free trade agreement prevents our government from ever guaranteeing that Canadians will pay significantly less than American customers for our own energy resources, including electricity generated in Canada.

But what many Canadians do not yet know is that the Mulroney Conservatives will apply their new super tax, be it at 9 per cent or 7 per cent, to energy sold in Canada, but they will not apply it to energy sold to the United States. This means that Canadians could end up paying consistently more for Canadian energy resources.

Might I ask when is a natural advantage not a natural advantage? When it is left to the tender mercies of so blind and heedless a government. And what a government it is. Under the Conservative doubly whammy of the free trade deal and the GST, Canadian energy consumers will be penalized for living in Canada.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, we should be husbanding our strategic energy resources jealously. We should conduct open, public hearings when deciding whether to export electricity. We should protect the independence of the chief regulatory body, the National Energy Board. We should ensure that Canadians, not Americans, gain the most from our own Canadian energy resources. But, the government, in each instance, principally in this bill, is legislating the opposite.

This bill, even at this late date should be defeated, soundly defeated.

• (1620)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to the agreement reached earlier today, the question on the motion for third reading of Bill C–23, an act to amend the National Energy Board Act and to repeal certain enactments in consequence thereof, is deemed to have been put and a recorded division is deemed to have been demanded and deemed to have been deferred until 11 a.m., Thursday, December 14, 1989.

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MUSEUMS ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House proceeded to consideration of Bill C–12, an act respecting museums, as reported (with amendments) from a legislative committee.

SPEAKER'S RULING—MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There are three motions in amendment standing on the notice paper at report stage of Bill C–12, an act respecting museums.

Motions Nos. 1 and 2, standing in the names of the hon. member for Victoria and the hon. member for Mount Royal, are acceptable and will be debated and voted on separately.

Motion No. 3, standing in the name of the hon. member for Victoria, raises some concerns for the Chair; but I will give the hon. member the benefit of the doubt and allow the motion to be debated and voted on separately.

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria) moved:

Motion No. 1.

That Bill C–12 be amended in Clause 9 by adding immediately after line 17 at page 6 the following:

> "(2) Notwithstanding sub–section (1) the Canadian Museum of Civilization may not sell, exchange, give away, destroy or otherwise dispose of any native artifacts without written consent of the native community from which it originated."

He said: Mr. Speaker, I think it is in the interests of the House and those interested in this bill that we do what we can to deal with the various issues promptly so that possibly we can deal with this by five o'clock. I would be even more encouraged in that resolve if I heard

sounds of enthusiasm from the government for these very good amendments that my Liberal colleague and I have put forward. We will see how the discussion goes.

Let me address specifically Motion No. 1. The motion proposes that there be a restriction on the right of the Canadian Museum of Civilization in respect of the disposition of native artefacts and that the restriction be that those artefacts could not be disposed of without the written consent of the native community from which they originated.

The underlying point behind this amendment is an acknowledgement that the House must make as to the treatment of native artefacts over the last 100 years. In many, many native communities across this country, the non-native community, the Government of Canada, private citizens, church groups and others have treated native artefacts as not the property and heritage of native people in the communities from which they have come but, instead, as something which could just take from them. That is not only a deep injustice. It is clearly a grievance of the native community in this country.

We had witnesses before the committee from the Kamloops area who discussed these issues and had a number of proposals to put to us. At one stage I put an amendment to the committee that would have representatives of the native communities serve on the various boards that are being established under this legislation.

Regretfully, Liberals and government members voted against it. I hope, as days pass, that they will find a way to recant from that particular position. I would hope the government, in making its appointments, will consult with the native leadership in this country to see if it can find its way to appoint representatives of the native community to these particular boards. It is important that we acknowledge the historic role of native people in the development of the treasures, the art treasures and historic treasures of this country.

I would urge upon the House that, at least as a minimum, we require the Canadian Museum of Civilization to seek and obtain the written consent of the native communities when it proposes to dispose of artefacts in its possession. This is an important issue of the native community, and one that I would hope would have the full support of this House.

Mr. Friesen: On a question, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker's Ruling

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There really are no questions at this point. I would have to ask for unanimous consent of the House to put a question. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, I have a very short question on a detail. Does the member propose that artefacts should not be sold even in Canada, or is it foreign sales that he is objecting to?

Mr. Brewin: It is within the country. What I am really proposing is that it in effect be acknowledged that the Canadian Museum of Civilization holds these artefacts in trust, not only for the Canadian people but particularly within the Canadian family for the native communities, and that it cannot dispose of these artefacts without the consent of the communities for which in a trust capacity it is holding those artefacts.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, very briefly, because we have debated this issue at some length in committee, I would point out to the hon. member for Victoria that certain commitments have been made in terms of appointments of natives to boards of the museums. In fact natives have served, and on behalf of the minister I gave a commitment to the hon. member in committee.

There is indeed a conference coming up on native artefacts. The main point I would make in rebuttal to my hon. friend is that this amendment attempts to deal with a non-problem in the sense that the standard practice now is that whenever the museum on rare occasions does dispose of artefacts it always secures the consent of the community concerned, with one exception, and therein lies the problem. The exception refers to those very few cases where the provenance of an artefact is unknown. In those rare cases, consent is not secured simply because the artefact has no identity with a known community.

There are numbers of examples of native artefacts from the Canadian Museum of Civilization which have now been devolved to museums and locations, many of them in the hon. member's province: 'Ksan Indian Village and Museum in Hazelton, the Umista Cultural Centre in Alert Bay, the Kwakkuit Museum at Cape Mudge, as well as the Thunder Bay Art Gallery and the Native Museum at Gleichen, Alberta.

The Canadian Museums Corporation, the Department of Indian Affairs and the Winnipeg Art Gallery have an agreement regarding the distribution of the Inuit art collection of Indian Affairs. Much of that collection will be going to the Northwest Territories. Indeed, the museum has the curator in residence program and curator training programs for curators from native and other museums.

In summary, the practice is that artefacts are returned and there is no disposal except by consent of the community, but the problem with the amendment of the hon. member, with respect, is that it would force consent to be obtained where consent cannot be obtained. Therefore, I am afraid that the government cannot accept the amendment.

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for Victoria. The point was well made, and I think the sensitivity of the museology community and the boards of directors have been alerted by the hon. member bringing this to our attention at this time.

Debating it in committee is not as widespread as debating it within this House. I am sure that the interesting and legitimate concerns will now be far more carefully reviewed. As my hon. colleague the parliamentary secretary pointed out, there is that standard practice that does ensure no loss, no disappearance and the return where indicated. Certainly we did discuss and hear the concerns of the aboriginal and native peoples about the importance of all Canadians to enjoy their cultural products as absolutely fundamental to the constituency of Canadians. We are in a position to appreciate them even more by having them in our national museums. I cannot support the motion but I do support the principle and I hope that it will be part and parcel of the by-laws of a museum, a board, or a method of procedure they would adopt inhouse in policy.

• (1630)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The question is on Motion No. 3. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed will say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the nays have it.

I declare the motion negatived on division.

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal) moved:

Motion No. 2.

That Bill C-12 be amended in Clause 18 by adding immediately after line 5 at page 12 the following:

"(2) A person is not eligible to be appointed as a member of the Board if that person is not a Canadian citizen who is ordinarily resident in Canada."

She said: Mr. Speaker, in debating this bill on museums, I bring this particular amendment to the attention of the government because I consider that we are dealing with a very sensitive issue when it concerns Canadian cultural properties and Canadian cultural concerns.

It is my firm belief that Canadians have the talent, capacity and ability to fulfil the management positions, manage the funds, enable appropriate acquisitions, apply the mission statement or the mandate of the museum and be very creative in their approach to their responsibilities in the management of the four museums that we are referring to in this particular bill.

There is nothing more important than the historical record of Canada for Canadians, by Canadians and for the visitors to Canada. Our aboriginal people are our first founding peoples. Our bilingual nature is the result of our two founding European families who came from those nations which helped build this country. Our multicultural dimension is an increasingly important aspect of our Canadian reality which encompasses all our cultures. It is key that all of these realities be reflected in the board of directors and that they be Canadians of Canadian commitment and fulfil the roles that have been defined in this particular Bill.

I think that we have greatness in all walks of life in Canada and we can find the proper people to fill those jobs. I see no reason to have to look beyond our own

Canadian citizens in any way to fulfil the particular mandate that we have in mind.

There has been some concern expressed. While I understand that concern, I do not find it particularly well founded that those people who have chosen to come to live here in Canada but have not taken Canadian citizenship perhaps might not be enabled to sit on the boards of these four Canadian national museums.

To my knowledge, Canadian citizenship is required under the Constitution of Canada if we wish to be a member of this House of Commons. If you wish to summon someone to the Senate that person must be a Canadian citizen as well as a resident in the particular province that person is representing. If you wish to participate in the elections in Canada under the Canada Elections Act, you must be a citizen of Canada.

I suggest that there is no substantive jurisprudence and no clear precedent established that would indicate that we could not apply Section 1 of our Canadian Charter to say that it is reasonable and justifiable in an open and democratic society to have Canadian citizens, be they aboriginal, francophone, anglophone or from any one of our multicultural communities, represent the various required skills that enable a museum board to function most effectively.

I believe that we should and can have the kinds of expertise that we need to go out and market, explain and show the world the Canadian acquisitions that we have. I ask for the acceptance of Motion No. 2, hopefully with the understanding of the reasons behind this amendment.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, I think the concern that has been expressed about this particular motion, which I grant is on the side of the angels, is that it might infringe on the Charter, specifically the provisions of Section 15, the equality provisions.

In a recent decision in British Columbia the Supreme Court of Canada in the *Law Society of British Columbia .v. Andrews et al*, the finding was that a provision which restricted the right to practise law to Canadian citizens infringed upon the equality provisions of Section 15 of the Charter. There were two aspects to the analysis that was carried out.

Speaker's Ruling

To override a Charter-guaranteed right, the objective underlying the law must relate to concerns which are pressing and substantial in a free and democratic society. The nature and purpose of the enactment must be examined to decide whether the limitation represents a legitimate exercise to attain a desirable social objective which would warrant overriding constitutionally protected rights.

As a second stage of the analysis, a balancing of factors must take place, such as the nature and importance of the right of the individual or group concerned, the extent of its infringement, the degree to which the limitation furthers the attainment of the desired goal embodied in the legislation, and the broader social impact of both the impugned law and its alternatives.

All that having been said, there are some practical considerations too. I believe that the language which the hon. member has taken for her motion is parallel to the language that is in Bill C-40 which is also before this House. That bill is designed to protect the Canadian nature of our broadcasting system against all kinds of assailing forces which I need not go into here.

In this case, we are dealing with Canadian institutions, which are composed of Canadian exhibits by and large. All this having been said, Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to ask whether there would be consent of the House, and I ask the hon. member whether she would be disposed, to just drop the last six words of her motion. The words are "who is ordinarily resident in Canada". That would have the effect of admitting only Canadian citizens to the board but would remove the practical consideration and the practical worry of distinguished Canadians who, for reasons of health or other reasons, have found it necessary to live outside the country for periods of time. The words "ordinarily resident in Canada" might be an arguable proposition. To remove any doubt, would the hon. member be prepared to delete those last six words of her motion, and would there be the consent of the House?

Mrs. Finestone: Mr. Speaker, in response to the parliamentary secretary, I thank him for that consideration and I certainly would accept the removal of those last four words.

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Speaker, not only on our party's behalf do I accept the proposed amendment but I would indicate that we accept the motion.

• (1640)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The question is on Motion No. 2. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion No. 2, as amended, agreed to.

* * *

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It is my duty to inform the House that a communication has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed Bill C–50, an act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the Government of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 1990.

Also, I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed Bill C–20, an act to amend the Excise Tax Act and the Excise Act without amendment.

THE ROYAL ASSENT

[*English*]

I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received as follows:

Government House
Ottawa

December 12,1989

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that Her Excellency the Right Honourable Jeanne Sauvé, Governor General of Canada, will proceed to the Senate Chamber today, the 12th day of December, 1989, at 4.45 p.m., for the purpose of giving Royal Assent to a bill.

Yours sincerely,
Secretary to the Governor General.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

MUSEUMS ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C–12, an act respecting museums, as reported (with amendments) from a legislative committee.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria) moved:

Motion No. 3

That Bill C–12 be amended by adding immediately after line 25 at page 14 the following new clause:

"23. The Board of each museum shall appoint an Advisory Committee which shall consist of members representing each scientific and museological discipline represented in the Museum."

He said: Mr. Speaker, in the hope that we can deal with all of this, I do not want to unduly hurry, but I do want to say that this motion is intended to ensure that the boards do have on them a number of representatives of the scientific and museological disciplines representing the museums. It is a very important principle. It is very important that these boards not simply reflect either friends of the government or people who are dabbling at this business but people who are involved, who understand and who can reflect the constituency, at least a major constituency that these museums are intended to serve.

On that basis, I would urge the government to be as kind to me as it was to the Liberal critic by accepting her amendment and recognize the worth, the sense, the breadth of this amendment and, in the spirit of Christmas, agree to Motion No. 3.

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of Father Christmas it would be very nice if he came through the door. I just hope that we will not find ourselves with too many duplicate groups serving on the board of directors. That was my concern.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the sincere concern of the member in this regard. Rather than bind us with the legislation I can give him in this place at this time the assurance that every effort will be made to see that his objective is attained in the appointments. I can assure him that there will be people of definite scientific and museological competence and

distinction appointed to the boards of the various museums.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The question is on Motion No. 3. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the nays have it.

I declare the motion lost on division.

Hon. Jake Epp (for the Minister of Communications) moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Epp (for the Minister of Communications) moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed.

Mrs. Finestone: Mr. Speaker may I say something?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): If the Hon. Member for Mount Royal would like to say a few words she can go ahead and say a few words.

Mrs. Finestone: Mr. Speaker, the generosity of this House is making it become a very pleasant place. I think we can—

Mr. Harvey: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am just wondering if we might take this as precedent?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): No you may not take it as precedent.

Mrs. Finestone: Mr. Speaker, I have spoken in this House once before—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I must say to the hon. member that we should really suspend the sitting. On a point of order, the Hon. Member for Victoria.

Mr. Brewin: This point of order is an elaborate point involving museums policy in Canada. I guess we should not really indulge in such a procedure. We did try to co-operate in order to get the bill through this afternoon. I know that members do have comments that, in other circumstances, they might have been prepared to make.

I do not know if we need unanimous consent for us to ramble for a minute or two about the joys, for example, of working with the parliamentary secretary who was courteous in the way in which he dealt with it. The speed with which we concurred today is not reflective of the amount of work that went into the committee itself. It was the first legislative committee I have had an opportunity to be on and I found the experience very constructive and helpful. We had some good witnesses come to the committee in a very useful discussion. On that order, Mr. Speaker, you might consider hearing the Member for Mount Royal as well as the parliamentary secretary.

Mrs. Finestone: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to note that we are allowing a constructive use of this time. It was a pleasure to work with the new member from Victoria. It was a very courteous atmosphere for the parliamentary secretary, the other members of the committee and for the minister himself.

I hope many of the people who are watching will understand that the very confrontational Question Period is not the only business of the House. What is done in this place is often very constructive and there is a degree of friendship, co-operation and respect among members of all sides of this House.

It is in that spirit and as Christmas draws nearer that I would like to join my voice to the others and say thank you very much on behalf of the museums of Canada, the citizens of Canada who are going to enjoy those museums and their new thrust, their new mission and their new mandate. May they flourish and grow and may we find a few dollars in the treasury to enable that to happen.

• (1650)

Mr. Harvey: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say that I am impressed with the cordiality with which the two previous speakers have greeted the co-operation they

apparently enjoyed from the hon. parliamentary secretary opposite and can only hope, at this point, that the hon. minister opposite has been paying close attention and might hereafter conduct himself in similar fashion.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order I am grateful for the remarks which my colleagues from the opposition have addressed on this particular issue.

I think that the whole domain of communications and culture has been blessed with an all-party harmony. I recall the seven or eight reports which the committee, under the chairmanship of the former member for Battlefords—Meadow Lake, John Gormley, and I had the honour of chairing, along with the hon. member for Lévis in the last Parliament. All those circumstances led to a remarkable commitment to hard work and to dealing with the cultural and communications aspect of our life in Canada.

I thank the hon. member for Victoria for his words because he worked on the legislative committee on this particular bill in a way that was in the tradition of his predecessor, Lynn McDonald, the former member for Broadview—Greenwood who had a genuine commitment to this domain.

The hon. member for Mount Royal, I hasten to say my favourite Grit, did bring a tremendous sense of dedication to her work in the field of museums not only with Bill C-12 but also in the work of the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture in dealing with the Richard-Woodrow report, the Task Force on Museums Policy.

With respect, this is an illustration of the best traditions of parliamentary reform that the issues of the day can be dealt with in an all-party way. I think there has only been one qualified dissent among the many reports which that standing committee has brought forward. Of course, very often the members of our legislative committees are drawn in part from the standing committees for the sake of continuity and expertise.

In the spirit of the season I wish to present a verbal Hanukkah bush to my hon. colleague from Mount Royal.

THE ROYAL ASSENT

[*English*]

A message was delivered by the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod as follows:

> Mr. Speaker, Her Excellency the Governor General desires the immediate attendance of this honourable House in the chamber of the honourable the Senate.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker with the House went up to the Senate chamber.

[*Translation*]

And being returned:

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that when the House went up to the Senate Chamber the Governor General was pleased to give, in Her Majesty's name, the Royal Assent to the following Bills:

> Bill C-20, An Act to amend the Excise Tax Act and the Excise Act—Chapter 22.
>
> Bill C-50, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the Government of Canada for the financial year ending the 31st March, 1990—Chapter 23.

[*English*]

It being 5.07 o'clock p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

BILL OF RIGHTS

SUGGESTED CHILD PROTECTION COMMISSION

The House resumed from Thursday, October 26, consideration of the motion of Ms. Langan:

> That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of negotiating with the provinces to provide a comprehensive Bill of Rights for children which would standardize laws throughout the country, and that this Bill of Rights include a child protection commission and an emergency hotline which children could contact in times of crisis.

Mr. Maurice Tremblay (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, before I start my speech, perhaps I may recall that I had already started to speak to this motion on September 25,

and at the next opportunity, I was unfortunately, or fortunately, as you prefer, in Europe, which means that according to the Standing Orders, I still have ten minutes' speaking time.

Mr. Speaker, we welcome this opportunity to speak to the issue of children's rights, an opportunity afforded by the motion presented by the hon. member for Mission—Coquitlam (Ms. Langan).

This motion concerns the very important question of how we can guarantee and protect children's rights in Canada. We believe that children form the cornerstone of our society and the family, our most important institution. That is why any attempt to improve the living conditions of families and their members deserves our undivided attention as decision makers. This government recognizes the importance of protecting the basic rights of children and the need for helping families which have the primary responsibility for bringing up children.

On November 20, the United Nations adopted its Convention on the Rights of the Child. As you know, Canada played an active role in drafting the text of the convention, following efforts by both federal and provincial governments. In 1981, a federal-provincial task force was created to determine what the convention should contain, from a Canadian perspective. Several versions drafted by Canada were used as the basis for the convention itself.

The draft Convention on the Rights of the Child, proposed by the United Nations, is aimed at establishing an international standard. Its purpose is also to protect a variety of childrens' rights whether they are social, economic, political, religious or civil. The 54 draft articles guarantee the protection for children who have no family or who are exposed to abuse, and the right to social security.

This draft convention reflects a comprehensive view of childrens' rights and is international in scope. The countries that signed the convention will be monitored to ensure that progress is made on children's rights. For instance, two years after the convention is adopted, every signatory country will be asked to submit a report on the nature of the measures it has taken to promote the rights of the child.

• (1710)

The draft convention also provides for establishing an international panel of experts that will be responsible for evaluating the living conditions of children in the signatory countries.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, signing the international convention means that the laws of that country must conform to the provisions of the convention.

Several aspects of the international Convention on the Rights of the Child are a matter of provincial jurisdiction in this country, or that jurisdiction may be shared by provincial and federal authorities. As a result, the process of ratifying the United Nations Convention requires, in the Canadian context, the co-operation of both federal and provincial governments in order to consider very carefully the implications of this document for our existing policy and future action.

It is expected that a certain amount of harmonization will be necessary among the various Canadian provisions in order to meet the requirements of the convention. We should also remember that the Canadian government has taken a number of initiatives whose objectives have already been to promote the well-being and protection, and to guarantee the rights, of children in Canada. Such programs are also designed to help families and children experiencing difficult situations or major changes.

However, although we are better acquainted with the specific problems of Canadian families, we must not forget that most of these families, whatever their structure, take care of their members and are proud of their progress and success.

My point is that government assistance in protecting the rights of children should be complementary to the role played by families, not a substitute. Nevertheless, there are a number of very serious situations where families are unable to play that role satisfactorily.

The Minister of National Health and Social Welfare already followed up on part of the motion presented in the House, when he recently announced financing totalling $1.3 million for an emergency telephone service to be used by children in a crisis. I am referring to the "Kids Help Line". This free service offers immediate help to children across Canada, providing information appropriate to the situation and directing them to agencies that

may be able to provide longer term solutions for their problems.

In the mid 1980s, the Family Violence Prevention Division was created within the Department of National Health and Welfare to co-ordinate federal activities against family violence. The Division has a national information centre on family violence to inform the public and make it aware of this crucial issue.

In 1986, the government launched a five year $25-million initiative to fight the sexual abuse of children. This initiative includes legislation to amend the Criminal Code and the Canada Evidence Act and measures to prevent sexual abuse of children and for protection and treatment.

In 1988, the government allocated $40 million to a four-year national family violence prevention initiative intended to create spaces in shelters for victims of family violence. Canada is not free of child poverty. That is why the federal government protects the most disadvantaged, including families with children, through the Canada Assistance Plan. Under this plan, the federal government shares the expenses incurred by the provinces for social assistance and some social services.

This year alone, the federal government plans to give the provinces over $5 billion under the plan. Nevertheless, there are encouraging signs in the battle against child poverty. Official statistics show that the number of poor children has decreased since 1984. The rapid rise in the number of families where both parents work outside the home and the increased number of single-parent families show us the importance of establishing an effective child care program. The federal government is already contributing to child care through the Canada Assistance Plan. We plan to spend $240 million this year to create more subsidized child care spaces.

Created in 1988 with a total budget of $100 million over a seven-year period, the Child Care Initiatives Fund is used to finance innovative child care projects to meet the special and diversified needs of children.

As announced by the Prime Minister and in the Speech from the Throne, a new national day care program will be implemented towards the end of this Parliament. In terms of additional measures to maintain the economic standing of families, I would point to the child benefit system which includes, among other things, family allowances and child tax credits.

With the advent of the new Goods and Services Tax, the tax system will become more progressive and more equitable through a number of changes which will enable low income Canadians to apply for fiscal assistance. This is why families earning less than $30,000 a year will be in a better position once the GST is in force.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, all the activities, initiatives and programs we have just mentioned are only a few examples which show that the Canadian government is committed to protect the security rights of Canadian children and to help families.

[*English*]

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this particular motion. I am going to read it because it is a very specific request to the government. It reads:

> That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of negotiating with the provinces to provide a comprehensive Bill of Rights for children which would standardize laws throughout the country, and that this Bill of Rights include a child protection commission and an emergency hotline which children could contact in times of crisis.

Hotlines are not particularly unknown in this country and in the few cases where hotlines have been used for children, the use has been fairly extensive.

Today, I want to spend a little time on the intent of this motion. During the two-hour debate that has gone on, our party has put on record some of the considerations that we think are important in establishing an atmosphere for the raising of children and ensuring that those children are protected in all kinds of circumstances.

Canada is a country without equal when it comes to the social standards and social justice system that we have put in place. Canada has been a leading nation speaking out for human rights, speaking out for dignity of the person, on behalf of the kind of government which allows this kind of dignity and these kinds of human rights. It is the kind of democracy that recognizes the value of the individual.

We in Canada have seldom been found wanting when it comes to speaking out about the protection of the world's children. We have seldom been found wanting compared to other countries in the effort that we have made to make it possible for world's children to be a little better off than they would without our efforts. Those efforts have not necessarily been government efforts, but they have been the efforts of the individuals and families across Canada who see the possibility of harm and the need for care of children.

• (1720)

These are good reasons why we as members of this House should take a good look at this motion and support it as much as possible. We should move toward a bill of rights which would, to some extent, formalize our commitment to the ability of children to survive in Canada.

It is surprising that when we look around the country, we see a great deal of child poverty. In my home constituency of Saskatoon, there are something like 1,200 people who make use of the food bank every month. These kinds of things are common right across the country and most of the people affected by those kinds of situations are children. So, we do need to have a continuing commitment to the welfare of children. That is what this particular motion speaks toward.

Events of the last few years and the direction we have been going in human rights, the direction we have been going in the care and protection of individuals, particularly children, are overtaking us. The first League of Nations adopted a declaration concerning children 65 years ago, and that seems like a long time ago, yet we have not really been more specific in the direction we are taking since then.

The United Nations adopted a declaration of rights for the child 30 years ago. Ten years ago, we celebrated the International Year of the Child. This year, the United Nations General Assembly, after considerable negotiations, will be adopting a convention which I guess could be called a bill of rights in some ways.

We in Canada have played a considerable role in drafting and negotiating this particular convention. It is imperative that to make sure this direction is sustained, we in this House guarantee that what we think is good for the international child is good for the Canadian child as well. Consequently, we must therefore clarify what we consider are the necessities for a bill of rights for children and move in that direction.

This motion attempts to clarify what should be considered part of what is necessary in a bill of rights for children. There is no doubt, as the previous speaker indicated, that there are jurisdictional problems as far as a charter of rights for children is concerned. Detailed negotiations are going to be required between the provinces and the federal government to achieve such a charter. It is imperative, therefore, that we begin these negotiations with the provinces as soon as possible so that when Canada does become the signatory to the United Nations convention, we can say truthfully and honestly that we are doing these things at home. Consequently, when we sign the convention, we will be able to say that what we believe is good for us is good for the other people of the world as well.

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and support this private member's motion introduced by the member for Mission—Coquitlan and seconded by the member for Oshawa that, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of negotiating with the provinces to provide a comprehensive bill of rights for children which would standardize laws throughout the country, and that this bill of rights include a child protection commission and an emergency hotline which children could contact in times of crisis.

Certainly the objectives of this private member's motion are very laudable indeed.

Although it has been 30 years now since the United Nations decided that children have rights, it was not until last spring that an international legal convention was drawn up to make these rights stick. It was only last November 21 that the United Nations General Assembly did pass and adopt this convention and it will be in this coming January that the ratification ceremony will take place. Thereafter, it will require some 20 states to ratify the convention and then it will be binding, as international law, on those signatories.

It is with pride that we should say that Canada played a vital role in the design of this convention. But if this code is adopted, countries will have to change their laws and

constitutions to comply with the convention, and certainly Canada is no exception.

It is easy to understand why it has taken so long to legalize the rights of children. Children do not have the right to vote, they do not have the political power, they are dependent on others for their well-being and, therefore, the responsibility on us is even greater.

During the Year of the Child 10 years ago, Poland stated that it was an appropriate time to establish a statement of children's rights with the power of law behind it. It took 10 years to draw up this convention. The United Nations General Assembly, as I said, just recently adopted it. Shall we allow Canada not to comply with it until 1991, as the former ambassador to the United Nations said it could take that long? We cannot allow that. I think we have a duty to act and to act promptly.

The guiding principle of this treaty is to promote the best interests of the child. I would add that it also protects the child from the moment of conception. The convention spells out a wide range of economic, social, civil, political and cultural rights for children. These include the right to an education, the right of minority children to practise their own culture and language, the right to be protected from exploitation, torture, maltreatment and the right of handicapped children to special services.

The 54 articles in the convention cover three major categories or areas: survival, protection and development. Although the convention sets out rights for children, it is truly directed at adults, for it is we adults who have the responsibility to ensure that these rights are truly respected and enshrined in a bill of rights.

The need for a bill of rights for children, both internationally and in Canada, to protect the lives and normal development of children is only too clear when one examines conditions that create injustice for children. It is imperative that in Canada, and indeed in the world at large, adverse conditions that create these injustices be addressed and addressed promptly.

It is not good enough to merely implement social services after damage has been done. I think it is important to mention some of the things which affect the well-being of children. These are: war, poverty, violence, abuse—physical, mental or emotional, trafficking in children, exploitation by the drug trade and malnutrition, especially under-nutrition. All of these factors can lead to illness and even to the death of children.

Canada is not immune. Millions of children die of chronic under-nutrition each year or grow up stunted in mind and body because there is not enough food for thousands of these children and also because their parents lack knowledge of health and nutrition. The single greatest killer of children is not war or malnutrition, it is dehydration through diarrhea. This is something that happens not only in Third World countries. Unfortunately, this still happens here in Canada. All that is necessary to avoid this is a solution of salt and sugar in water, but sometimes parents do not even make use of this or are not aware of this approach.

Children have a right to the highest attainable standard of health and access to medical services. This is something which should be protected not only through an international convention but through a bill of rights in Canada.

• (1730)

There are other issues affecting children. They include homelessness, education, child labour, and other health issues.

Let me refer to a fact sheet publication from *A Choice of Futures: Canada's Commitment to its Children* produced by a variety of organizations; the Canadian Child Welfare Association, the Canadian Council on Children and Youth, the Canadian Council on Social Development, the Canadian Institute of Child Health, the Child Poverty Action Group, Family Service Canada, and the Vanier Institute of the Family, institutions that truly are concerned about the welfare of children.

Six thousand children died in 1985 as a consequence of low birth weight, accidents and respiratory illnesses. Six hundred thousand children from birth to age 19 were hospitalized as a consequence, in the vast majority of instances, of respiratory illnesses. There are 275,000 disabled children between the ages of one and 14 in Canada, about 5 per cent of the child population. They are startling statistics in so far as the welfare or state of health of our children is concerned.

Canada's future will be determined by the children of today. In light of this, should we not have a bill of rights to protect our children, to ensure that they are adequately fed, that they are kept healthy, that they have access to an education? Protecting our children is imperative to maintaining the moral and ethical fabric of our advanced

democratic society. It is imperative to the economic future of our country. Most important, it is imperative to the well-being of the children themselves.

To address the bill more specifically it is important to have a comprehensive bill of rights for children as proposed in this private member's bill instead of different provincial legislation dealing with this issue. The children of Canada are entitled to standardized rights which will safeguard their access to educational services and to social programs uniformly from coast to coast. A Canadian child is a Canadian child whether he or she is a resident of Newfoundland, Winnipeg, or Vancouver. There is a need for a universal affordable day care program.

Motion C-254 states that the bill of rights for children should include a child protection commission. This would be a beneficial first step toward the establishment of a national child abuse strategy.

The number of incidents of child abuse, especially sexual abuse, in this country is staggering. This government has rejected criticism that it has not moved fast enough to counter this increasing problem. The Minister of National Health and Welfare indicated that the government has acted on the majority of recommendations of the 1984 report of the committee on sexual offences against children and youth. But the first recommendation of that report calls for the office of a commissioner, and that has yet to be established, and so I suggest that it be established.

It is obvious that we must co-ordinate federal and provincial efforts to bring about programs to aid in the prevention and treatment of child abuse. A child protection commission would be a necessary first step.

In conclusion, the government could prove its commitment to the children of Canada by passing this private member's motion. Not only would this benefit the children of our country, it would ensure that the International Convention for the Rights of Children is signed and ratified by Canada and that Canada's ratification is not blocked by the refusal of provincial ministers to agree to the convention.

Children are entitled to the same rights that adults have and it is the responsibility of adults, especially adults that are in government, to ensure that these rights are respected and protected. We need political will and leadership on behalf of children. We can fulfil our commitment to our nation's children by adopting this bill of rights so that we can start the federal-provincial negotiation on this issue and make our commitment to the children of Canada a living reality.

Mr. Bill Attewell (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville): Mr. Speaker, I would like to address this motion on the advisability of a comprehensive bill of rights for children which would standardize laws throughout the country and which would include a child protection commission and an emergency hotline for children.

The protection of children is one of the foremost duties of any society. We can only be as strong as our most vulnerable and weakest members. I therefore laud the hon. member for Mission—Coquitlam for the concern she has shown for all children in Canada in her motion on this matter. Having said that, I would now like to turn my attention to some of the real difficulties faced by this motion.

Canada is under a federal system of government, with both levels of government, federal and provincial, having certain areas of responsibility under the Constitution. Provinces have been allocated power over much of family law, including the welfare of children. Section 92(13) of the Constitution Act of 1867 gives the provinces the right to legislate with respect to property and civil rights in the province. In the adoption reference, 1938, the Supreme Court of Canada determined *inter alia* that the welfare of children was a matter of provincial responsibility.

We have in Canada two basic types of legislation which afford protection to children; the criminal law which deals with the physical and sexual abuse of children, and child protection legislation which deals with the involvement of the state where a child has been abused or neglected. The federal government has constitutional jurisdiction over the former and the provincial governments have constitutional jurisdiction over the latter.

Provinces deal with child protection in a number of ways relevant to their individual circumstances and with a wide range of statutes covering such topics as adoption, child welfare, custody and access, and education. Each province has a government recognized body which has the responsibility for enforcing child welfare laws in

order to protect children and provide services to the child in his or her family. Given that these services are in place throughout this country, it does not seem to me to be advisable and necessary to involve the federal government in a long phase of negotiations to standardize these laws, removing flexibility from provincial legislatures and challenging the constitutional authority which has been in place since 1867.

Further, I am not at all convinced that a costly, central, monolithic child protection commission would or could provide better services than those now provided by each province and territory, nor am I persuaded that it would be constitutionally correct.

The hon. member has also included in her motion a reference to the need for an emergency hotline which children could contact in times of crisis. I would like to inform the House that the Canadian Children's Foundation has established a 1-800 number to serve just such a function. The number is 1-800-668-6868. It is called Kids Help Phone and it is my understanding that it is enjoying considerable success.

This crisis line handles calls from anywhere in Canada and refers children in distress to local authorities and services for assistance in dealing with their problems. This valuable service offers support and assistance to children from all across Canada. As a matter of fact, I spoke with Mrs. Heather Sproule of that agency recently. I might share with you a few statistics.

The crisis line was started in May of this year and already they have had some 75,000 calls. The average per day is about 800. On weekends they get as many as 1,000 calls. Unfortunately, they only have five lines now but with increased funding they hope to have ten. When it is fully operational they will likely be receiving as many as 200,000 calls a year.

The average age of the callers is between 11 and 14 years of age. They even have had over 100 calls from youths four years of age to seven years of age. I am told that 76 per cent of the callers are female, 24 per cent are male. I do not know the reason for that mix, perhaps it is the male ego not wanting to admit that they do need some help. Fifty per cent of the calls are from Ontario and that is partly because the start-up was there, but they will be advertising and communicating in all regions of the country in order that they may be able to help. I believe the federal government has contributed about $1.3 million to this most worth-while agency and $650,000 of that is to be matched by other donors. We wish them every success.

• (1740)

Children are our most important asset and, as I mentioned earlier, our society will be judged by how well we protect them. There are, in addition to child protection laws, criminal laws which protect our children. In particular, this government can be proud of its legislative achievements in the area of child sexual abuse.

In January of last year Bill C-15 became law. This bill amended the Criminal Code and the Canada Evidence Act to better protect children and youth from sexual abuse by enacting measures to permit more young children to testify and provide more sensitive procedures for obtaining their evidence. In addition, new offences were created and certain outdated and confusing provisions of the Criminal Code were repealed.

The Department of Justice has supported this initiative through law information activity such as an easy to read booklet for children aged four to ten that tells them to tell someone if they have been sexually abused, and a booklet for adults telling them how to proceed if a child discloses an incident of sexual abuse to them.

Concern for children is expressed not only in the Criminal Code but in the federal government's family law legislation. The Divorce Act, for example, provides that custody of a child is to be decided upon a consideration of the child's best interest only. This makes it clear that the needs and rights of the child are the central and, indeed, the only concern of the courts when deciding the difficult question of custody of a child.

The government has expressed its concern in other ways for children in situations of divorce through the Family Orders and Agreements Enforcement Assistance Act. This act plays an important role in the enforcement of child support payments as well as the recovery of children wrongfully abducted from the custodial parent by the non-custodial parent. All too often, it is sad to say, the parent who is to pay support for the child, usually the father, economically abandons his child by

not paying or by paying late or by paying less than the ordered or agreed to amount.

The Federal Government Enforcement Assistance Act allows for the garnishment of designated federal funds to enforce delinquent support payments. I understand the program has been a tremendous success having intercepted a total of $6.3 million in the year prior to June 30, 1989. In many instances, the debtor father chooses to disappear rather then to pay child support. In such cases, the federal government will search its information banks in an effort to locate the father, thereby aiding provincial authorities in the enforcement of the support order or agreement.

In conclusion, information will also be released where a non-custodial parent takes a child contrary to an existing custodial arrangement. Information has been released in a total of 6,638 cases in the period from the establishment of the program on December 1, 1987, up to June of this year. The Federal Enforcement Assistance Act is part of a larger federal and provincial initiative to provide concrete assistance to children of divorcing families.

The government's work in the areas of support and custody and the Criminal Code are simply a few examples of our commitment to the protection of all Canadian children. The value of children cannot be overemphasized. They are the future of our country. This motion, however, fails, in my humble opinion, to significantly improve the lot of children in Canada.

Mr. Larry Schneider (Regina—Wascana): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to stand before you today and to address the motion focusing on children. I would like to commend the hon. member for Mission—Coquitlam for bringing this matter before the House of Commons. Children are the cornerstone of this country, the basis for Canada's future.

The motion refers to a potential bill of rights for children, to a child protection commission and to a hotline; initiatives which are certainly diverse. But we must remember the other means by which we assist families and children. Their rights depend not only on laws or organizations but as well on other very practical means of support.

Families are the first form for socialization of our children, for shaping and teaching the social values vital to the well-being of children. We therefore need to ensure a positive environment for families so that they, in turn, can fulfil their nurturing and caring responsibilities for our children.

Over the past 150 years, governments all across the world have undertaken specific measures to support families and their children. The recent international report from the United Nations to establish and adopt a convention on the rights of the child is certainly evidence of this.

Domestically, Canada has established a comprehensive approach to supporting families. An important feature of the Canadian system of support is the shared responsibility between federal and provincial jurisdictions. Constitutionally, provincial governments have prime responsibility for the well-being of children and through, for example, their social services and social assistance programs they discharge their responsibility. The federal government assists or facilitates these provincial activities largely through the transfer of moneys through programs such as the Canada Assistance Plan and Established Programs Financing.

From the federal government's perspective the concept of a family benefit related to the child goes back to 1918 when an amendment to the Income War Tax Act introduced the child tax exemption. The family allowance program then came into effect in 1945 demonstrating that Canada has accepted its obligation to assist in the upbringing of children. It was established as a vehicle whereby the federal government could supplement family income in order to alleviate some of the costs of caring and raising children.

Several changes have been made to family allowance since its inception in order to make the system of family benefits better targeted to families most in need.

Currently the federal government delivers almost $3 billion in family allowance benefits to over 3.5 million families on behalf of 6.5 million children. Benefits are paid, usually to the mother, on a monthly basis. In 1989 the monthly benefit is set at approximately $33 per child amounting to nearly $400 per year. Current federal

income support for families does not stop with family allowances. In this regard, family allowances are complemented by a system of child related benefits delivered largely through the personal income tax system.

The child tax credit program which benefits lower income families is another key source of income support for families. Since taking office in 1984 this government has significantly enhanced the maximum value of the credit by over 50 per cent, with the actual benefit increasing from $367 per child in 1984 to $565 per child in 1989. Family allowances and the basic child tax credit together support families and children by almost $1,000 per child annually.

As part of the recent child care initiative, the federal government also introduced in 1988 an additional supplement to the child tax credit in respect of children six years of age and under. The supplement is valued at $200 per child in 1989 and for subsequent tax years. The federal government has undertaken other income tax support measures to assist families with children. For example, we have proposed the new goods and services tax package which, when all elements are taken together, will mean that families with incomes of less than $30,000 per year will be better off than before the package had taken effect. As part of the package, families will benefit from an enhanced tax credit under the goods and services tax package which would be paid quarterly, in advance. The maximum value of the credit would be $275 per adult and $100 per child with special arrangements to support single parents.

Families will also benefit from a proposed reduction in the middle income tax bracket to somewhere in the order of 25 per cent. This rate reduction complements the enriched credit since the benefit it provides increases over the income range where the credit benefits are declining. We also assist parents with the cost and affordability of non-parental forms of child care. Through the personal income tax system, families are able to deduct up to $4,000 in work-related child care expenses in respect of pre-school age children and $2,000 in respect of school age children.

Through the Canada Assistance Plan, a cost-sharing program with the provinces, the federal government shares in eligible provincial expenditures on child care. In 1988-89 the federal government expected to spend some $200 million under this cost-sharing program in respect of child care. The federal government intends to enhance its support for child care through a new national child care initiative which, as reported in both the Speech from the Throne and the Budget, will be introduced before the end of this mandate.

Families with new-born babies should soon experience additional support as the result of new legislation which is currently before the House and which would completely revise the current regime of maternity and sickness benefits.

• (1750)

The legislation will amend the Unemployment Insurance Act and introduce a multi-tiered system of maternity, parental and sickness benefits, including 15 weeks of maternity benefits available during the period surrounding the birth of a child; 10 weeks of parental benefits available to natural or adoptive parents, either the mother or the father, 15 weeks of sickness benefits and so on. The new unemployment insurance regime will allow claimants to receive each type of benefit up to its maximum as long as the cumulative duration of special benefits does not exceed 30 weeks.

In all of this, of course, we cannot forget that the best source of social protection is a job, and parents who have jobs are better able to provide for their own children. This federal government has been very successful in its economic policy efforts and has created over 1.5 million jobs since taking office in 1984.

Nonetheless, as we are all aware, family functioning sometimes breaks down as a result of outside strains and pressures. The federal government is concerned about these problems and with ensuring that families continue to be able to operate effectively and efficiently.

We are also aware of the important role that the public sector can play, both directly and indirectly, in assisting families during times of crisis. At the federal level, several initiatives have been introduced recently in support of families in crisis situations. For instance, we have identified and are responding to the priority issue of child abuse and, more generally, family violence.

In 1986, a five-year, $25 million initiative on child sexual abuse was announced. This initiative included the appointment of a special adviser on child sexual abuse, as we have already heard, who is expected to present his

report to the Minister of National Health and Welfare early in the new year.

A subsequent announcement in 1988 outlined a new $40 million family violence initiative. Under the second initiative, the majority of the funds, that is about $20 million, were allocated towards the creation of 500 new shelter units for battered women and their children.

The federal government is committed to undertaking further work in the area of family violence. To this end, we are developing a new family violence initiative which, in co-operation with provinces and the non-governmental sector, will improve the support available to families and children facing crisis and/or abusive situations.

The federal government has also eased the problems of marriage breakdown and divorce by introducing new divorce legislation which amended the grounds for divorce and humanized its consequences. To assist with the enforcement of support, the federal government also introduced services which provide for the release of information from designated federal banks to help locate persons who do not meet their obligations to a family order. They as well to provide for the garnishment of designated federal moneys from defaulting spouses.

Other federal initiatives in respect of families include efforts to reduce the problem of drug abuse in Canada and particularly among our young through the National Drug Strategy, and financial support to the provinces through the Established Programs Financing arrangements which supports the provision of health care in the education system.

The policies which I have just outlined are major federal programs which support families and children in Canada. These initiatives have helped families to cope with an ever-changing society by ensuring access to the key services and programs; child care, counselling, health care and education.

These initiatives have also contributed to lessening the problem of child poverty. In this regard, since 1984 the incidence of low income among children has continued to drop from a high of 20 per cent to just under 17 per cent in 1987.

We all have a vested interest in ensuring that today's children are provided with adequate social and health protection. I welcome this opportunity to speak on such a fundamental vital issue as our children.

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, recently Canada joined all major countries in the world as a signator to the historic UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Canada, as a result, is legally obligated to adapt our policies and our legislation to reflect this convention as it applies particularly to protect the rights of children in Canada.

This motion we are debating today, which was sponsored by the member for Mission—Coquitlam, reinforces the UN convention by advocating a bill of rights for Canadian children. I commend her for her initiative. We hope this motion will be adopted not only by this House but by all provinces and by the Government of Canada as a guideline and commitment to protect the rights of Canadian children.

When we see the plight of starving children on TV, children from Africa with their bloated bodies and eyes that we cannot bear to look into, we are moved. But do we take action?

UNICEF reported at a conference I attended last summer that 40,000 children die each day from simple childhood diseases that are preventable. The cost of curing these diseases is minimal and yet do we contribute, as citizens, to save one child?

Today it was reported on the CBC that the UN predicts 100 million children may die in the next 10 years because of lack of nutrition and neglect. It is almost unbelievable that we live in this kind of a world.

However, in our concern for the world's children we must not forget our own children in Canada. The problems of many of Canada's children are hidden behind closed doors in our cities, towns and countryside. Child poverty, child abuse and child neglect are not visible. Yet, in Canada, well over one million children live below the poverty line. Children are the fastest growing users of food banks in this country.

Many of these children are disadvantaged from birth. Child mortality rates are twice as high in poor households as in the rest of the country. Babies are born underweight and face medical complications because of their mothers' poor nutrition during pregnancy. Young brains, as a result, do not develop and progress in school is difficult. Poor kids face a high dropout rate in high school, further limiting their options. Many become

homeless street kids in their teens, with all the dangers that lifestyle entails. Verbal, physical and sexual abuse of children also are on the rise. Many children who are sexually abused grow up to become prostitutes and patients in psychiatric hospitals, and we viewed this recently, in dramatic terms, in documentaries on television.

Canada was a signator to the UN convention on the rights of the child and we are morally bound to adhere to its precepts. Article 27 of this convention states that as a member nation we, as a signator, must ensure a standard of living adequate for children's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.

While parents have the primary responsibility to provide security of life for their children, this is often not within their financial capacities. This means that where there are difficulties and where incomes are inadequate in families—and there are many, many of these, one in four children are in families who are in this situation—the state must supplement incomes and provide support programs. But we are not doing that in an adequate way. Sure, we have token welfare programs, but they are far below the minimum standard that is needed to sustain a family with young children.

I think that this government has short-changed us. Our children surely are our future, and our future is in trouble. Our society creates child poverty and neglect because it is based on inequalities. Women are left alone to raise children, without adequate incomes and without opportunities for independence in the future. Many parents are unemployed or underemployed. Housing is unaffordable for many young families today.

Our Conservative government leaves people at the mercy of the market-place where corporations reap profits while people lose jobs, and of course children suffer. Instead of improving social security and family benefits, the government's tax policies have increased the burden on low-income people.

What can we do to ensure that the rights of children are protected in Canada? We need a policy of full employment so that parents will be guaranteed a job with pay equity and parental leave provisions and affordable, quality child care. We need a children's bill of rights that will be enforced by governments, and by the federal government in particular.

I support the motion of my hon. colleague for Mission—Coquitlam that this government should begin negotiating with the provinces to provide a children's bill of rights which will standardize laws throughout Canada. I also support her motion that this bill of rights should include a child protection commission and an emergency hotline which children could contact in times of crisis.

Why do we as Canadians and as world citizens tolerate the hardship that so many of our children are experiencing?

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): Because others profit by it.

Ms. Mitchell: As my colleague says, because others profit by it. People on this side of this House, I hope, do not tolerate that. Why do we sit back in complacency knowing that a generation of children who should be the leaders and parents of the future are instead being scarred by poverty and abuse? How can we give at Christmas to assuage our guilt and then feel free to ignore and forget our children's poverty and the problems of the children of Canada for the rest of the year? Why does poverty continue to exist in an affluent country such as ours?

• (1800)

These are the questions we must answer with action. One of the first steps is for all of us to agree to adopt and implement a children's bill of rights.

Mr. Allan Koury (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join the list of many other speakers who have lent their voices to the important question of children's rights in Canada. I wish to thank the hon. member from Mission—Coquitlam for placing before the House of Commons her motion on this subject.

During the course of this debate on the issue of a comprehensive bill of rights for children, a number of speakers have alluded to the developments that have taken place internationally in regard to the human rights of the child. In fact, several members have suggested that as an alternative to elaborating a new bill of rights for children in Canada efforts in this country be focused on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the

Child. I wish to express my support for this suggestion, which I believe is a realistic means to enhance protection in this country for our children.

During earlier stages of this debate when reference was made to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, it was with the knowledge that the convention had not been adopted in final by the UN General Assembly. That important step was in fact taken on November 20, 1989, when the General Assembly adopted the convention by consensus.

As a Canadian, I am proud of the leading role that this country played in both the drafting and adoption of this fundamental instrument. Now that it has been adopted, the process of examining the question of Canadian signature and ratification of the convention will commence.

As the debate on the motion before us has progressed, it has become increasingly clear that many, if not all, of the issues that would be included in the Canadian bill of rights for children are addressed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Members speaking on this question have raised a number of extremely important concerns relating to the need for enhanced protection for children.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order please. The hon. member will have six minutes the next time this bill comes up. I regret that time has expired.

The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38(1) is deemed to have been moved.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on an issue which has been raised repeatedly by myself and other members for the last number of years. It is the issue of a safe drinking water act.

Last May 10, I asked a question of the Minister of the Environment calling on him to act in a preventive way, for once, and to live up to this government's commitment to bring in a safe drinking water act.

The requests for this act have been more urgent than in previous years as people from Winnipeg, for example, have become alarmed, and rightly so, by the plans of Consolidated Professor Mining. This company has been testing the feasibility of opening a gold mine in Shoal Lake, Ontario, the source of Winnipeg's drinking water. They want to build this mine on Stevens Island in the middle of the lake. Their operation would involve the crushing of rocks, which contain arsenic, right on the island with the assurance, so they say, that none of the arsenic would make its way into the lake.

They say they have retaining ponds which will never, ever leak under any circumstances. We are told not to worry about their having arsenic so close to the intake for Winnipeg's water, because there will never be any accidents, nor will there ever be any spills. It reminds me of the assurances that I am sure the people of Ukraine got from the Soviet nuclear experts about the possibility of a reactor accident, or the assurances that the people of northern Saskatchewan got about the retaining ponds at Wollaston Lake and other places where we have had spills recently of uranium mining waste water into the natural environment there.

• (1805)

It does not take a great deal of wisdom and foresight to see that such an operation poses an absolutely unnecessary risk to the health of the people of Winnipeg. The response to this issue in Winnipeg has been strong. It has been led by the Winnipeg Water Protection Group and its president, Helen McCullough. I had the opportunity to meet with Helen last summer and subsequently on a number of other occasions. The research and effort that they have put into stopping this project has been remarkable and should be commended.

As well, I would like to commend three grade five students from John de Graff School in my riding who were concerned about this, perhaps concerned that the adult community was not doing enough. They gathered

over 300 names on a petition about this issue. I had the honour of bringing their petition to the House last June. I commend them again for their actions.

These young people are right to be concerned that so far all that we have seen from the federal government on this issue is talk but no action. On May 10 the answer that I received from the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, who assured me that as a fellow Manitoban he shared my concern on this issue, stated, as reported at page 1541 of *Hansard*:

> No approval should be given until every assurance has been given that the water supply is safe.

This begs a question as far as I am concerned. Surely the government understands that the way to make sure that the water supply is safe is not to allow mines that leach arsenic to be built on islands in the middle of the lake in the first place. The way to do that is to bring in an act that ensures that commercial development such as this will always take a back seat to the safety of drinking water for Canadians. Surely if we have reached any point at all in our environmental consciousness we have reached the point where a gold mining company should not have a claim of any sort by which it could even think about establishing a good mine in the middle of the drinking water supply of 600,000 Canadians. Surely we should reach a point where that is not even on the table, that is not even an option, that is not even considered.

This is what I have in mind for a safe drinking water act. Such an act has been promised by the government in speeches and letters over and over again but the act has failed to materialize. My colleague from Beaches—Woodbine has been pushing for such an act for years, repeatedly bringing in Private Members' Bills to this effect. The government of the day, be it Liberal or Conservative, has always killed these bills at that stage.

Last June, Bill C-224, a safe drinking water act, was brought before the House by my colleague from Beaches—Woodbine and was talked out by a Liberal, the hon. member for Gander—Grand Falls. It is enough to make a person wonder if either the Liberals or the Conservatives will ever see the light as far as the safety of drinking water for Canadians is concerned.

We have been asking the government to take some initiative for years now. The government has been promising action but none has been seen.

In November, Helen McCullough received a disturbing letter from an Environment Canada official that told her the Shoal Lake management plan "has not directly involved Environment Canada to date". Why has it not? Why has it not, given all the assurances that we have received in this House from various federal ministers? Why has Environment Canada not been involved? What is the federal government doing with respect to this issue? Where is our safe drinking water act? The government has had years to move and the safety of as many as 650,000 people now is at stake. Why the reluctance to bring in the legislation?

This matter is clearly in the federal government's jurisdiction. It is time for the government to do something and not just talk about it.

I see that the hon. member for Brandon—Souris is preparing to respond on behalf of the government, someone who is also from Manitoba. Perhaps he will have some goods news for us, that for once this government will act in the interest of Manitobans. It did not with respect to Rafferty-Alameda. It got off to not a bad start. It did something right, but it has allowed that to lapse too.

Once again, in terms of the rhetoric of the government with respect to the environment, its bark has been a whole lot stronger than its bite. We would like to see some bite on Rafferty-Alameda, some bite on a safe drinking water act and some bite for the drinking water supply of Winnipegers.

• (1810)

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of the Environment first heard about the proposed gold mine which will be located approximately 12 kilometres from Winnipeg's water supply he immediately asked Environment Canada officials to investigate possible federal decision-making authorities over the proposed mine which could trigger the application—

Mr. Blaikie: Why do you say "will be", Lee, is it a foregone conclusion?

Mr. Clark (Brandon—Souris): If the hon. member will wait, I think he will find that there is some information here which applies to the question he has raised of the EARP process.

The Fisheries Act and the Navigable Waters Protection Act were the two acts that might have served this purpose. However, a recent decision by the Federal Court with regard to the Old Man River Dam in Alberta has cast doubt on the applicability of the EARP to the Navigable Waters Protection Act.

Under the Fisheries Act, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans may request plans and specifications for any project that is likely to result in the alteration, disruption or destruction of fish habitat, or in the deposit of a deleterious substance in water frequented by fish. While such a request may require the application of the EARP, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans does not consider the request to be justified in the specific circumstances of the Consolidated Professor Mine because the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act process will provide for the opportunity to address potential impacts on fish or fish habitat.

I wish to add that as a result of the expressions of concern by Winnipeg residents and as a result of discussions among the federal government, Ontario and the Province of Manitoba, Ontario decided to designate the proposed mine under its own Environmental Assessment Act. I understand the government of Manitoba is satisfied with the proposed review process. I can assure you that Environment Canada officials will also actively participate in the review of the project under the Ontario process.

The proposed mine is, as the hon. member probably knows, also subject to the federal metal mining liquid effluent regulations. Those regulations are rigorously applied.

With respect to the proposed federal safe drinking water act, the Minister of National Health and Welfare, the Hon. Perrin Beatty, has indicated that he intends to introduce a drinking water safety act that would establish drinking water quality objectives that would be mandatory within the federal domain. The proposed act would not directly address the issues that the hon. member has mentioned. It would permit the Department of National Health and Welfare to enter into agreements with other jurisdictions in order to solve drinking water problems of common interest. I think that is of considerable importance, Mr. Speaker.

Adjournment Debate

HEALTH

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, in May 1986 the Standing Committee on Health and Welfare produced a report on AIDS. The government responded by saying it was doing everything it could.

Two years later, in May of 1988, the Royal Society produced a report on AIDS. The government again responded by saying it was doing everything it could.

The former Minister of Health said in 1987 to the UN General Assembly: "In my opinion, we in Canada are doing our utmost to bring AIDS under control within our own borders." But AIDS groups and we in the opposition have said consistently that in fact the government was doing very little while this lawless fatal disease spread.

The current Minister of Health said he agreed with the opposition and recognized that his government had done virtually nothing to control the spread of AIDS. He said in *The Medical Post* on May 9, 1989: "I would have liked to have inherited a national strategy, but I didn't." He also said that affected groups are not being consulted. Looking at the way we have proceeded to date he said: "Too often the communications have not been adequate."

On August 11, 1988 the Prime Minister crowed over his government's AIDS policy saying it is part of a solid record of achievement of which all members of this Parliament can be proud. We on this side of the House have no pride in the inaction of this government, and apparently the Minister of Health is not part of his own government's action either.

Further, at the Montreal International Conference on AIDS, the Minister of National Health and Welfare in his speech talked about what his government was going to do in the future and did not indicate much about what the government had done in the past, and for good reason. The government's record on developing an AIDS strategy and responding to the AIDS crisis remains a record of inaction.

Five years ago when the Conservatives took office there were 122 cases of people living with AIDS. When I asked my question on AIDS in May there were 2,736 cases, an increase of 2,200 per cent in five years. Now there are in excess of 2,900 cases of people living with AIDS.

In addition to this massive and tragic growth in people living with AIDS are those tens of thousands—perhaps 50,000 people—testing HIV positive.

AIDS is a preventive condition. Yet many problems remain in reducing its incidence. I would like to relate a few of those problems which the government has yet to address.

• (1815)

It is known how the HIV virus is spread, but there remains a great deal of ignorance and misapprehension about the virus and about AIDS in general. While some have changed their behaviour on the basis of the information available, others have not. Condoms are not as widely available as they should be. Needle exchange programs have been thwarted by some provinces. Persons with AIDS or who have tested HIV positive are frequently discriminated against. The federal government has been far too slow to react to show the leadership needed. The same goes for provincial governments in Canada.

Insufficient research on AIDS and the HIV virus is being conducted and access to promising new treatments is too often hindered. Governments at all levels have funded the fight against AIDS in a totally inadequate manner.

Early testing and diagnosis in the treatment of HIV infection is critical. Yet the lack of availability of anonymous testing facilities prevents many from coming forward for testing.

Faced with inadequate government funding, leadership and co-ordination, community groups which have performed so well in the fight against AIDS are often understaffed and underfunded. The federal Centre for AIDS has not acted in such a way as to have gained the confidence of those in the field.

All these problems with the fight against AIDS should be seen in the light of the continued increase in the number of people with AIDS in Canada and should be seen in the light of inadequate funding and leadership by this Conservative government. This is in sharp contrast to the situation in other countries. Australia is a good example of this. There the federal government has shown leadership in the development of an effective strategy dealing with AIDS, including consultation with support groups. In addition, on AIDS the Australian government spends four times the per capita amount spent in Canada.

Canada has a long way to go and people are losing their future and, indeed, dying in the process. All the while this Conservative government sits back without taking leadership in policy development and a funding role.

Canada should have had a national AIDS strategy in place and in operation by now. There has been no valid excuse for the delay. The way ahead is clear. The strategy should deal with education and prevention, treatment, care and support, testing, cancelling discrimination and research. The government should develop a policy in the near future. It has an enormous amount of information available to it to do so.

In closing, if I may, I would like to pay particular tribute to all those working in support groups, voluntary and otherwise, for the very important work they are performing. They deserve and need the commitment and adequate funding which this government has not seen fit as yet to provide.

Mr. Bill Kempling (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, at the Fifth International Conference on AIDS in Montreal the Minister of National Health and Welfare announced this government's commitment to develop a national strategy on AIDS by the end of the year.

The development of a national AIDS strategy is an exercise which requires the participation and the involvement of all those involved in the fight against AIDS. These include the federal, provincial and municipal governments, as well as the non-government organizations in the country. Discussions with the various agencies have been ongoing and will continue.

The strategy will delineate the appropriate objectives and propose a course of action over a medium term of five years and will require input from other federal departments which will include Justice, Secretary of State, Corrections, Treasury Board Secretariat, Employment and Immigration, Labour, CIDA, External Affairs, the Department of National Defence and the Solicitor General.

The strategy will also be developed through a series of bilateral discussions and consultations. These will provide a forum for the exchange of information and activities already under way at the federal and provincial

levels in areas of education and community-based public awareness initiatives.

Ongoing consultations with the non-governmental sector are being conducted in parallel with the above process in order to obtain their input for the formulation of the national AIDS strategy.

Consultations have been held with such groups as the Canadian Public Health Association, the Canadian AIDS Society and their affiliates, the Canadian Haemophilia Society, the Canadian Council on Social Development, the scientific community and representatives from the educational field, including groups such as the Council of Ministers of Education, Canadian Home and School and Parent Teacher Federation, the Canadian Teachers Federation and others. The success of the development of a national strategy depends on the participation of all the partners.

The development of a national strategy on aids is a complex and important step in the fight against this deadly disease. It is crucial that we have adequate consultation with all the partners if we are to achieve a truly national approach. It is expected that the complete and comprehensive national strategy will be announced in the first half of 1990.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 6.21 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, December 13, 1989

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, FEDNOR is a government program that is a success story. This regional economic development program was designed with input from northern Ontarians, designed for northern Ontarians, and is benefiting northern Ontarians.

In its first annual report for the year ending March, 1989, FEDNOR recorded $8.7 million of assistance which levered $24 million of investment in the north. Through the Rural Small Business Assistance Program and the COR Industrial Program, 463 jobs have been created.

Recently a new FEDNOR tourism assistance program has been announced that will assist tourism operators and help to increase tourism throughout northern Ontario.

I am proud, as a northern Ontarian, to have been a member of a government which first gave my home region of the country the recognition it deserves. Northern Ontario has greatly benefited from our government's policy approach and the fine work done by FEDNOR's board, made up of and located in northern Ontario, its offices, which are located throughout northern Ontario, and FEDNOR's funding, specifically targeted to northern Ontarians and their business interests.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Prince Edward—Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the ever deepening crisis which Canadian food processors are facing. Last week the Ontario food processors, at their annual convention, stated: "Ontario's $15 billion food industry just cannot compete with the United States under free trade".

This was backed up later in the week, unfortunately, when COBI Foods Incorporated announced the closure of its Whitby, Ontario, plant with the loss of 100 full-time jobs, 150 seasonal jobs and 8,500 acres of processed vegetables.

We need action to stop this disintegration and destruction of Canada's agriculture, not just the announcement of task forces to talk about the problems. Agriculture is running out of time. Canadian agriculture wants action, not more and more rhetoric.

* * *

EL SALVADOR

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, as many in the House will know, there is a delegation from the El Salvadoran government in Ottawa that will be meeting with the external affairs committee later this afternoon. Tomorrow this same delegation from the Arena government will be meeting with officials of External Affairs.

I would like to take this opportunity to urge those officials at External Affairs, and urge the government, that they instruct those officials to express to the Arena delegation, in the strongest possible terms, the outrage of Canadians at the murder of the six Jesuit priests which, in everyone's opinion, was perpetrated by people in uniform and, therefore, by the army; the disappearances, the human rights violations, the bombing and killing of trade unionists and all the other things that have come to be associated with this particular government.

I think it is incumbent upon the Canadian government, having made the decision to receive this delegation, to take every opportunity to impress upon it just how much offence Canadians take at recent events in that country.

S. O. 31

GUN CONTROL

Mrs. Pauline Browes (Scarborough Centre): Mr. Speaker, the brutal slaying of 14 young women in Montreal last week has horrified all Canadians. We all share the grief and sorrow of the families.

That tragic event has also focused public attention on the availability of guns in our society. For under $500, a 16 year old in Canada can buy an AK–47 assault rifle that has been converted from fully automatic to semi–automatic. For an extra $60 that 16 year old can also legally purchase a trigger activator which will allow the gun to fire three bullets with one pull of the trigger. However, if that same 16 year old has any knowledge of guns, that AK–47 can easily be reconverted back into an automatic. An automatic AK–47 can fire 30 bullets in less than three seconds.

Last March I proposed changes to the Criminal Code that would ban any gun that was originally made as an automatic. The Minister of Justice threw his support behind the proposal and I urge him to introduce those changes as quickly as possible.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, it has been a tough week in Atlantic Canada. An empty feeling pervades all sensitive Nova Scotians over the announced closures at Canso and North Sydney. We on the South Shore know the pain of closures at Port Mouton, Lockeport, Shag Harbour, Port Lehebert and Port Medway.

We must cope with declining stocks and seek to reduce our economic dependence on the fishery. But, Mr. Speaker, must we put up with American fishermen thumbing their noses at our law enforcement efforts? Must the proud officers, men and women of our navy, suffer the indignity of being rammed on the high seas in Canadian waters by foreigners who are in the process of violating our laws, without fear of retaliation? Now we have George Bush's signature on the infamous Mitchell lobster bill establishing clearly, lest there be any doubt, that the Americans are prepared to act in good faith only so long as it serves their own interest. If the Mitchell bill is allowed to stay in place it will suggest to Nova Scotian's that the FTA is not worth the paper it is printed on.

• (1410)

I believe that Canada will win the FTA panel and I urge the government to move quickly with the process in order to minimize the damage that is already being done to Canadian lobster prices in Europe as well as the United States.

* * *

[*Translation*]

RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILD CARE

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East): On November 24, the Minister of National Health and Welfare confirmed that ultimate responsibility for child care rests with the parents. The minister is right. The Conservative government sent a clear message that it feels no obligation towards young Canadians or their families.

[*English*]

By not delivering a new child care initiative, by not addressing the needs of more than one million Canadian children who live in poverty and by not declaring a national emergency to deal with the shocking increase in child hunger, this government has introduced the Conservative social philosophy that the rich should prosper but the poor must pull themselves up by their own boot straps.

The recent last–minute bail–out of the successful Kids First hot line is an example of the ad hoc manner in which programs directed at the youth are funded.

[*Translation*]

The Conservatives have no overall plan and, as the minister confirmed himself, no short–term or even long–term vision to help the thousands of Canadian families who are unable to find reasonably priced day care for their children. The minister should agree that his inertia is depriving our children of a future to which they are now entitled.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*English*]

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, across the country we see horrifying examples of ignorance about violence against women.

A judge in Ottawa, in a wife battering case, said he was not going to worry about the woman being beaten. The same judge last year acquitted a man who threatened to rape three women because, according to the judge, these threats did not harm the women.

In British Columbia, a judge said a three-year-old girl was sexually aggressive, thus provoking her own abuse by an adult male.

In Manitoba a judge, said that it is sometimes okay for men to slap women around and he was told by a review that there was nothing improper in his remarks.

In Nova Scotia, a judge was removed from the bench for telling women to return to and to obey their abusive husbands. Also in Nova Scotia, a judge was given an absolute discharge for assaulting his own wife.

In Ottawa last spring, a man was given an intermittent 90-day jail term for beating his wife's head in with a baseball bat. She spent a month in a coma.

I call on this government to take concrete action to educate judges about violence against women.

* * *

[*Translation*]

SITUATION OF PEOPLE IN ISOLATED AND NORTHERN AREAS

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, the task force on tax benefits for isolated and northern areas did not respect the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement reached between the Governments of Canada and Quebec, the James Bay Energy Corporation, the James Bay Development Corporation, the Quebec Hydro-electric Commission and the James Bay Cree.

The villagers of Waswanipi and Mistassini were not consulted by the task force on chapters 14, 16, 18, 19, 25, 26 and 28 of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Cree-Naskapi Agreement.

The final report of this task force makes no mention of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and the inquiry into regional disparities conducted by Quebec in October 1989.

Mr. Speaker, the isolation of the Cree villages of Mistassini and Waswanipi is a reality in Quebec and in Canada.

* * *

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Ms. Barbara Greene (Don Valley North): Mr. Speaker, anti-pornography legislation is necessary but can only address the most explicit and obvious types of anti-social material. Mainstream pornography is far more insidious and pervasive in its impact on societal attitudes. Media studies education identifies positive and negative human values underlying media presentations. It helps students to recognize and deal with negative stereotyping, subliminal messages that create rape myths and make violence and domination of women, children and occasionally men appear sexually attractive.

Under the existing copyright legislation and the proposed exemptions, creators are able to prevent teachers from discussing and critically evaluating their material in the classroom.

The moral rights of creators should not be placed above those of other members of society. Educators must be allowed to address negative values inflicted upon us by the media. The commercial value of copyrighted material should not given precedence over the nurturing of positive human values in our society.

The Minister of Communications must bring in exemptions to the copyright legislation that will allow media studies education to continue legally.

* * *

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, it was one ago and four months ago when Rita Siliwa, a Canadian citizens of 11 years of age, went to Iraq to visit her natural parents. Rita had been adopted by her uncle in Canada when she was 14 months old. She had since spent her life as a Canadian learning Canadian values and believing in Canadian principles and human rights and justice.

Mr. Speaker, Rita is still being detained by the Iraqi government which refuses to issue her an exit visa. Article 13, Clause 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations, of which Iraq is a member, states: "everyone has the right to leave any country including his own and to return to his country".

Iraqi law recognizes neither Rita's citizenship nor the legality of her adoption. Therefore, it claims that it cannot allow her to return to her home.

I urge the Secretary of State to once again remind the Iraqi government of the gravity of this situation and to appeal to the Iraqi government to let Rita come home and continue to live her life as a Canadian.

As an adoptive parent myself, I call on the government of Iraq to respect the adoption laws of Canada.

* * *

STATEMENT BY SPEAKER

Mr. Speaker: I wonder if hon. members would indulge the Speaker's need to make a short statement.

I wish to inform the House that I have received several communications from all parties regarding testimony given before the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General relating to police investigations of certain members. I have given this matter my entire attention this morning and it was the major item of discussion at the Board of Internal Economy meeting this noon.

I want to assure all hon. members that the Chair will review with great care the testimony of the witnesses before that committee as it relates to the authority of the Board of Internal Economy and the rights and immunities of members of this House.

On this very important matter I shall, of course, report back to the House as soon as possible and I shall seek whatever advice and counsel is necessary in the process.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

FISHERIES

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. The Conservative government has allowed the Spanish and Portuguese fleets to pillage our own fish. What few fish are left the government has allowed the French to steal. It has allowed the Europeans to set fish quotas which are absolutely absurd. It caved in to the Americans on the fish processing rules for our salmon and herring. It caved in to the Americans on our export tax for fish. It has mismanaged our cod, our herring, our pollack and our flounder stocks. It has mismanaged the snow crab industry until it is now in total collapse.

Now the Prime Minister's good friend, the President of the United States, has just signed into law a ban on millions of dollars of Canadian lobsters. It is a great trade deal that the Prime Minister of Canada signed. It has just done wonders for the Atlantic coast fishery, hasn't it, Mr. Speaker?

What is the Prime Minister going to do for the Atlantic coast about the disaster that he has created? Did he not promise, among other things, that the President of the United States would not sign that law?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition raises, on the one hand, the very serious question of the Atlantic fishery, which has been with us for some time. Then I think he destroys much of the value of the point that he tries to make by turning it into a partisan issue when, in fact, it is a very important national issue.

• (1420)

I refer my hon. friend, for example, to an analysis by Professor Anthony Davis in this morning's *The Globe and Mail*, who is a specialist in fisheries research at St. Francis Xavier University. Contrary to what the right hon. gentlemen has just said, the conclusion of the distinguished professor, the expert, seems to be that one of the root causes of the problem originated with the report culled together and presided over by Michael Kirby in 1983. He spells it out very clearly. So, I commend that—

Some hon. members: Shame on you.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. members: Who's Michael Kirby?

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Liberal Party has the nerve to stand up here and blame this government for all of the sins of the world. Yet, when I point out an analysis that was done by a distinguished research professor in fisheries this morning who has a different opinion, all of a sudden they start to howl. I have acknowledged it is a very serious problem. I have

acknowledged that it is a very serious national problem and that the—

Ms. Clancy: What are you going to do about it?

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, I am trying to respond to a serious question. The Minister for International Trade, the Minister of Fisheries and I have pointed out the seriousness of the problem and the resolve of the Government of Canada to aid the Atlantic fishery.

Only a child would suggest that this problem of fish stocks disappearing was created in the last couple of years. Everyone knows, as the professor pointed out this morning, that this is a problem of long standing duration. It is a problem that commands the attention of the nation. We have taken some substantial actions and we propose to take more.

Let me summarize for my friend. When the farmers of western Canada were hurting, this government took action.

Some hon. members: They still are.

Mr. Mulroney: When Atlantic fishermen are hurting, we will take action as well.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister called for a non-partisan perspective and then cited a report from a previous government.

In the last five years, the overfishing has been permitted to take place. In the last five years, there was a trade agreement signed which eliminated our fish processing rules and eliminated the export tax on fish. All these things were as a result of this particular government. And his friend, the President of the United States, signed a law yesterday banning Canadian lobsters from the American market. I suppose the Prime Minister feels that Kennebunkport lobsters are better than Canadian lobsters. That is what he really thinks.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, in Bas Caraquet the fish packing plant is closed. In Shippagan the plant is in receivership. In Murray Harbour the plant is in receivership. In Tignish the plant is closed. Summerside Sea Products is in receivership. Canso, North Sydney, Lockeport, Woods Harbour, Port Medway, Port Mouton are all closed. In Newfoundland the great Avalon peninsula, the northern peninsula, Labrador, the Straits of Belle Isle are all a disaster and this Prime Minister reacts the way he does in the House of Commons. He ought to be ashamed.

Some hon. members: Shame, shame!

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, my question is simple. What is the Prime Minister of our country going to do about the collapse of the Atlantic Canadian economy, the collapse of the Atlantic Canadian fishery? They were doing just fine before this government took office and the Prime Minister ought to recognize that.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, two matters have been raised. The province of New Brunswick is leading the country in terms of investment and the Premier of New Brunswick says that the economy of the province of New Brunswick is doing better than it has ever done before.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. members: That's because it's a Liberal government.

Mr. Mulroney: The Premier of Prince Edward Island has produced a balanced budget, in large measure due to the assistance provided by the Government of Canada.

Since Newfoundland and Labrador has been admitted into Confederation there has never been such assistance, on a per capita basis, by the Government of Canada to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: Unemployment in all but one of the four Atlantic provinces is down dramatically today from where the Liberals left it in 1984.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: And the spectacle of the Leader of the Opposition, responsible for that chaos, suggesting that the fish stocks have gone away overnight because of this government is unworthy of the Leader of the Opposition. I have said that the kinds of broad, general, generous approaches that we brought in to help the western farmer will be in place to help the Atlantic

fishermen. He should be applauding that kind of attitude of the Government of Canada.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister ought to be sharing my anguish for the hundreds and thousands of Atlantic families who are facing poverty and joblessness and for the towns that have been wiped out. That is what he should be reacting to.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, the right hon. gentleman is so intent on being a bigshot on the world stage that he sold out Atlantic Canada.

Some hon. members: Shame, shame!

[*Translation*]

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, this is a national disaster. Fishermen and workers in processing plants on the Atlantic coast are out of work. They don't want frivolous answers from the Canadian government that shift the blame to our friends, they want a constructive response, an answer to the question how the economy of the Atlantic provinces can be revived. That is what they expect from the Prime Minister of Canada. Mr. Speaker, I have one more question. Aside from his partisan and frivolous remarks, what kind of concrete action will he take to try and revive the depressed economy of the Atlantic provinces? Let him do something so that people in the Atlantic region will not have the worst Christmas ever!

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*English*]

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, my right hon. friend talks about a crisis in Atlantic Canada. I have already indicated the seriousness of the matter and the intention of the government to deal with it.

Mr. Tobin: It's too bad you don't have a conscience, you might do something about it.

Mr. Speaker: I would ask hon. members on both sides to put their questions or comments through the Chair, if they feel a very great necessity to get into the debate. In the meantime we probably could move on more effectively if all hon. members would listen to the question and listen to the response.

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, to put it in perspective before the right hon. gentleman gets carried away with his own rhetoric, I ask the House to consider the numbers.

• (1430)

In September 1984 unemployment in Newfoundland and Labrador was 23.5 per cent.

Ms. Phinney: What is it today?

Mr. Mulroney: Today it is down to 17.1 per cent, a drop of 6.4 per cent under this government.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Clancy: Tell that to Canso.

Mr. Mulroney: The member for Halifax asks about Nova Scotia. It was 13.8 per cent under the Liberals. We have reduced it to 9.9 per cent, and it continues to drop.

In New Brunswick it was 16.3 per cent. It is now down to 12.8 per cent, and it continues to drop in New Brunswick.

In all of the provinces there has been substantial improvement. There is a new and important problem and that problem deals with the seriousness of the Atlantic fishery.

The Minister for International Trade, the Minister of Fisheries, the Minister of Employment and Immigration and all members of the government are involved in putting together a strategy that will assist not only the fishermen and the fishing communities but all who depend upon the fishery for a livelihood. Apart from the original, interesting and I think effective programs that have already been announced by the various ministers, I have already indicated to my right hon. friend that the Government of Canada will act in respect of the Atlantic fishery with exactly the same kind of generosity and enthusiasm that we brought to resolving the problems of the prairie farmer a few years ago.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mulroney: What we did then on behalf of the prairie farmer was criticized by members of the Liberal party. What we are doing and will do for the Atlantic fishermen will be criticized by them because they have not got a constructive bone in their bodies. They are nothing but negative destroyers of ideas and dreams.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister.

This government has known since July that there was a problem in the fishery. He has talked, he says, with President Bush on lobsters. He has talked to the European Community on groundfish, he says, and nothing has been done. Nothing. Instead of relating to the fishermen and the communities he has preferred to play up to the big companies.

This government should learn more about groundfish and lobster and identify less with sharks and bloodsuckers.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. MacLellan: They are all bigshots now with all the answers. Where are they?

Mr. Crosbie: What about Micronav?

Mr. MacLellan: One job and that's it.

The people in this country want support from their government. They are not getting it. When will this government help the fishermen and the fishing communities when this country and they need them most of all?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the government has been working on these problems and with some success since last July.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Marchi: What is your definition of failure then?

Mr. Crosbie: We can see the true interest in the problem by the fact that anyone who tries to answer a question is interrupted by guffaws and shouting from across the House.

With respect to Atlantic Canada, in the member's own constituency we saw to it that preference was given to Micronav, a company in the high-tech area of that city, to create employment in his area. The member knew who to contact then. He was not up playing in the House and making insulting statements when Micronav got the assistance it needed in his own district.

With respect to what we are doing, we announced on Monday what we are doing with respect to the immediate emergency. We are developing new programs, a community diversification fund. We are applying our program—the program for older workers—to those who are 55 and older who might not be able to get re-employment. We said that we are going to supplement that program for workers who are between the ages of 50 and 54 because these companies have not provided pension plans for their employees.

We are demonstrating concern. We are helping them. We are going to continue helping them. We are not just making cheap shots here in the House of Commons for supposed political advantage.

Mr. Tobin: You are an embarrassment to your province.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys.

Mr. MacLellan: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Crosbie: He knows all about poverty with his $1.9 million mortgage.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. members: Cheap, cheap!

Mr. Tobin: Coming from a Crosbie, that takes a lot of nerve.

Mr. Crosbie: The cheapest little demagogue in the country!

Mr. Marchi: Talk about your brother.

Some hon. members: Order!

Mr. Speaker: I wonder if it would help if all members on both sides considered that this is an extremely important subject and that there are a lot of our fellow citizens in the Maritimes who are hoping that something constructive will come out of the exchange today.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacLellan: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Prime Minister. He quotes Professor Davis. If he reads that article further he will see that Professor Davis recommends tying the quotas to the communities. Yet his own Minister of Fisheries said

yesterday he would not specify certain quotas with certain communities.

In the 1970s when Petit de Grat was threatened with closure then Liberal governments federally and provincially said that if vessels at Petit de Grat were going to fish they had to stay at Petit de Grat or not fish.

Will the Prime Minister stipulate now that any fish company which closes a plant will be required to keep those boats at that plant or not fish, and if they do not fish they will have their quotas reduced correspondingly?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend refers to a meeting held in Port Hawkesbury, almost next to Canso, written by Professor Davis from St. Francis Xavier who describes a visit there by Senator Kirby in 1983 and laying out—

Ms. Clancy: What are you on about? Pay attention.

Mr. Tobin: This is 1990.

Mr. Mulroney: I am answering the question. He lays out what he says the solutions are. Those solutions turned out to be the genesis of today's problems.

What I am saying to my hon. friend is apart from the programs that have been initiated and apart from the statement that I have made in respect of our attitude toward the Atlantic fishery, which will be comparable to that which we displayed in respect of the prairie farmer, I am delighted to have from him any suggestions. We will look very carefully at any suggestions that he and other members of this House make to put together a package of initiatives and changes that will benefit the Atlantic fishermen.

Our objective is to restore the Atlantic fishery to its previous health. To do this will require less partisanship and much more progressive attitudes from all members of the House of Commons. I do thank my hon. friend for what I think is a constructive suggestion.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. I think it will be small comfort to the people of Atlantic Canada, those fish plant workers who are going to be unemployed, that the right hon. Prime Minister has said that he will tackle the problem in Atlantic Canada with the same enthusiasm that he has done so for western farmers. I point out that according to Statistics Canada, net farm incomes in 1990 will fall 87 per cent in Manitoba, 54 per cent in Alberta and 101 per cent in Saskatchewan. There will be a negative farm income in Saskatchewan.

• (1440)

Some hon. members: Shame!

Ms. McLaughlin: The Minister of Agriculture has released a green paper called *Growing Together* which has ironically been subtitled "starving together" by prairie farmers.

Can the minister justify to the farmers of Canada his agricultural policy which he knows is destroying the family farm and the rural communities in western Canada?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, with respect, I might remind the hon. leader of the New Democratic Party that if members of her party were so interested in the welfare of the farmers they would have facilitated and expedited the back to work legislation that would get grain moving. That would be the first thing they could do.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mazankowski: Rather than selling out to the labour union leaders' interests, they may want to start paying a little more attention to the welfare of the farmers.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mazankowski: The hon. leader will know that the projections are very preliminary. We had similar projections with respect to the 1989 crop year that were forecast about this time a year ago. While there has been a slight drop from the record high incomes of 1988, 1989 came in just slightly below the 1988 figures, but significantly higher as compared to the original projections.

I might remind the hon. member that the crop is not in the ground yet and there are a lot of considerations to take into account.

Obviously we are concerned about this. I met with the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool this morning and we had a good discussion on it.

As the Prime Minister said, to be quite frank about it, this government has provided $21.7 billion worth of federal assistance to the farmers of Canada in the last five years. We stood with the farmers then. We are standing with them now, and we will stand with them in the future.

Ms. McLaughlin: Mr. Speaker, this party makes no apology for standing up for fairness and pay equity for people making $18,000 a year in the federal hospitals.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Ms. McLaughlin: Agriculture Canada estimates that one in ten Canadian farmers and one in three farmers on the prairies are in danger of going bankrupt. I think those figures speak for themselves.

This will devastate rural Canada. It will destroy the farms and it will destroy the rural communities.

Is the government going to sit back and wait until we see the collapse of the prairie economy, just as we are seeing with the Atlantic economy? Will this government put a moratorium now on farm debt or offer direct financial assistance to prairie farmers so they can keep going and put in their next crop this year?

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, obviously the leader of the New Democratic Party had her question written out and failed to listen to the answer that I provided.

I might suggest to her that when it comes to moving grain, you cannot have it both ways. You cannot pretend to stand for the farmers and then defend the interests of the union leaders at the same time. She will learn that in a short time, I am sure.

The fact of the matter is that what has been discussed over the last two days was a very serious discussion about the future of agriculture. There were some very serious policy deliberations. There were 1,800 people from across Canada representing the total ambit of the agriculture industry. We sat down to try to project and propose new solutions and new policies for the future.

Of course the interim difficulty with respect to the collapse of grain prices and the corresponding reduction in farm incomes is a matter that is under serious consideration. I can assure the hon. member that this party has always concerned itself with the interests of the farmer. It is concerning itself with the interests of the farmer today.

[*Translation*]

Ms. McLaughlin: Mr. Speaker, this government seems to think that the laws of the market place should apply only to farmers, not to banks. High interest rates and a strong Canadian dollar have dramatically reduced farm income to levels below what they were in the 1930s. When will this government finally let interest rates and the Canadian dollar go down?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I believe that in 1988, farm income reached record levels in several parts of the country, both in Quebec and Saskatchewan. This was largely thanks to frequent intervention by the federal government, which has always helped Canadian farmers. The proof is that during the past two days we have had a very interesting national conference or congress on future challenges to agriculture at the international level. Considering the importance of this congress, I think the leadership of the New Democratic Party will have every reason to congratulate the Minister of Agriculture, first for his generous treatment of farmers and also for what the future will bring. I remember, because I was here when the Conservative government intervened quite dramatically to help western farmers, that the New Democrats objected, as they do to measures that benefit farmers in Quebec.

* * *

[*English*]

FISHERIES

Mr. George S. Baker (Gander—Grand Falls): Mr. Speaker, if there is one point that all fishermen and fish plant workers agree upon on the east coast of Canada it is that the codfish have got smaller in recent years and that this government should not be issuing licences to foreign countries or agreeing with foreign allocations to catch squid and capelin, which is the food stock of the codfish off the east coast of Canada.

I want to ask the Minister of Fisheries this. Why did this Minister of Fisheries, when he knew by a scientific report recently that the weight of a seven year old codfish in Newfoundland had gone down 50 per cent, or close to it, in the last 10 years, and in Nova Scotia more than 50 per cent, agree to these enormous foreign allocations for squid around threes and fours, Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, for 1990 and an increase in

the capelin allocations? Canadian fishermen want to know why.

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, this is a very important question. It is a fact that the size of Atlantic codfish has been declining at a particular age of their maturity for the past 10 years. Scientists are examining this question very carefully because it appears there are more older fish of too small a size. We do not know what the total reason is for this. We believe it is partly due to fishing practices, perhaps involving domestic fisheries, on younger fish earlier in the year and partly due to environmental factors.

There is no evidence to suggest that the surplus stocks of capelin and squid are a primary cause of this matter, although it is one of the factors that is being examined.

• (1450)

Mr. Baker: Mr. Speaker, the depletion of the food supply is not responsible for the decrease in size of the codfish. Is the minister suggesting that codfish have been on a diet for the past 10 years, that they switched from squid to oat bran? Fish eat fish—that's brain food, something which is drastically needed by this government.

I want to ask the minister this. Why does this government agree to these enormous quotas for foreign countries on the east coast of Canada and an increase in the capelin quota when Canadian fishermen are under restrictions in the capelin fishery, restricted to their bay, restricted to their boats? Why restrict Canadian fishermen and open the door to foreigners? Or is the Department of External Affairs operating fisheries policy in this country?

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Siddon: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member were himself interested in consuming a little more capelin and squid we would perhaps not have to make this surplus stock available under international law to foreign fleets, which is our obligation under the law of the sea.

There is no scientific evidence to prove the fact that the hon. member has just alleged in this House, that there is a linkage between the quotas of capelin and squid and the growth factors of our northern cod stocks.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture. The minister knows that the figures released last Friday are the most devastating that have ever been put forward as to the net farm income for farmers in western Canada, especially Saskatchewan where farm incomes will be less than zero next year—the first time since 1933 and 1932.

Dairy farmers are threatened because the free trade deal did not protect their markets in Canada.

Pork producers are spending $2 for every hog marketed to buy access to the U.S. market.

I want to ask the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Agriculture, with all of these uncertainties in every sector of the Canadian agriculture industry—a drastic drop of 50 per cent from last year to this year in net farm income—why the government is cutting support programs by $2 billion in 1990.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is totally wrong. The income for 1989 has dropped by about 6 per cent from 1988, which was indeed a record year.

He talks about devastation. The devastation was in place when the Liberals were in office. In 1984, 550 bankruptcies occurred on the farm, plus all the foreclosures and the voluntary retirement of farmers. That has been reduced by more than 50 per cent.

While there are still problems, which we are addressing, I can assure the hon. member and the agriculture community, as we discussed throughout the course of the last two-day meeting, there certainly is an air of confidence about our ability to deal with the challenges of the future.

There is a clear indication that farmers know that this government has stood with them in the past. They know that we will stand with them again. That is the best confidence that they can have.

Mr. Foster: Mr. Speaker, a zero net income does not give any farmers, certainly the large group in Saskatchewan, any confidence at all.

The Prime Minister promised in December 1986 that he was going to stand with the farmers throughout the trade wars that are going on in farm commodities between the European Community and the United States. Still the United States is putting more and more money into the export enhancement program to steal away our markets, to drive down grain prices.

I want to ask the Prime Minister why he is breaking that promise that he made to Canadian farmers that he would stand with them.

A spokesman from the Minister of Agriculture's office said just two days ago that Ottawa will not repeat the special $1 billion subsidies of the past three years and the Western Grain Stabilization Fund will not pay out this year or next.

If the government and the Prime Minister are not going to break their promise, then come clean and tell the farmers right now that you are not going to cut that $2 billion of support which you have been promising all these years.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend clearly has the wrong Prime Minister. It was the other fellow who said to the western farmers: "Why should I sell your wheat?" You have got the wrong guy.

It was the other fellow who let interest rates rise to 24 per cent and just about crippled every farmer in Canada.

It was this Prime Minister who stood by the western farmers and eastern farmers and will continue to do so in spite of the negative, pejorative attitudes and the carping and the criticism that comes from the Liberals, which is why they have been rejected time and time again and will continue to be rejected in the future.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

* * *

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Industry. Investment Canada has now approved the loss of yet another Canadian research and development company in approving both foreign bids for Connaught Biosciences. The minister will not stop it.

Will he, however, provide the specifics of the "extensive legal undertakings" agreed to by those two companies? In short, will he provide us the exact denomination of the 40 pieces of silver?

Mr. Beatty: I can see why you lost the leadership.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I cannot be bought for any $7,000, I will tell you.

As required under the Investment Canada Act, Investment Canada evaluated the two applications that came in for the takeover bids of Connaught. As you will recall, the terms of the first bid by Merieux were deemed to not provide net benefit to Canada. They went back, reconsidered, improved the offer considerably in terms of its net benefit to Canada.

It is part of the press kit. Question Period does not permit me to go through all the details of the submissions and commitments made by both sides. It is part of the press kit.

Certainly, in my judgment and in the judgment of any fairminded person, both bids provide net benefit to Canada.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Last night *Fifth Estate* exposed the immigrants' investment fund, which is a scam seen overseas, especially in Hong Kong and Taiwan, as a buy–a–passport scheme. Wealthy immigrants are buying their way into Canada, investing hundreds of thousands of dollars, often in questionable investment, while lower income people are denied equal access.

Will the minister immediately discontinue this program and stop peddling passports? When are we going to get some fairness in immigration policy in Canada?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, first, just to put this in some perspective, in 1988 we had in Canada 249 investor

immigrants out of a total of 161,000. This year, to the end of July, we had 269. This is a small part of our immigration program.

This is a program that was intended to attract sophisticated investors to Canada. There are other countries that are looking at this. The program has some growing pains. There are some problems in it. We have taken a number of steps to attempt to deal with those problems.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN INDUSTRIES

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, this government allowed the sale of Connaught to foreigners. My question is for the Prime Minister.

Can he now assure us that no other leading-edge Canadian company will be sold to foreigners? What Canadian industries is he not prepared to sacrifice?

• (1500)

[*English*]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, since 1984 this government has been following an economic program calling for fiscal restraint, deregulation, privatization, and indicating to the world that we welcome investment. This economic policy has produced growth second only to Japan, only marginally so, has been applauded by the OECD as being exactly appropriate and the best kinds of policies that could be followed. Part of that context is our Investment Canada policy which says we approve investments in Canada which are of net benefit to Canada.

These investments for which a judgment was rendered this morning are of net benefit to Canada. That is why we did it and we will continue to do things that are of net benefit to Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Peterson: Mr. Speaker, with that answer, the Minister is telling our high-tech community and young Canadians, "Let them eat cake!"

[*English*]

With the sale of Connaught, Mr. Speaker, Canadians know Canada is up for sale.

The Prime Minister knows that with the free trade deal almost every single one of our high-technology companies can now be bought up by the Americans. Is he prepared to tell us that his policy is truly that Canada's economic future can be built if our key industries are all controlled by foreigners?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I take the liberty of answering because the question was broader and refers to the policies of the ministry. So my hon. friend, the minister, will allow me to respond on behalf of the government.

The Premier of Ontario and the Ontario Minister for Industry, Trade and Technology were in Paris earlier this year. They were indicating then in public statements that they believed that the free trade deal would now open up new economic opportunities for Ontario and for Canada and that the province of Ontario was positioned to take advantage of the free trade agreement. I believe that to be true. I believe the Premier of Ontario was dead on.

Mr. Peterson: He thinks it's a disgrace.

Mr. Mulroney: He says the Premier of Ontario thinks it is a disgrace. I want to tell the member that if the Premier of Ontario thought it was a disgrace, he did not say it in Paris. He thought it was a good deal for Ontario when he was in Paris.

Mr. Peterson: He does not.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: Clearly, Mr. Speaker, we are confronted with two opposing schools of political thought. One is based on the private sector, based on investment including foreign investments, and on the rules of the market-place with an important role for government. The other is protectionist, timid, timorous, which takes the country back to the 1930s and puts a Wall of China around Canada. That is the Liberal view of Canada. Our view is a confident, modern Canada building into the next century. That is what we are about.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Peterson: Sell it off!

Mr. Speaker: I should advise hon. members that that concludes question period. I am proceeding to tabling of documents.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

ORDER IN COUNCIL

TABLING OF APPOINTMENTS AND REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEES

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the minister, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, a number of Order in Council appointments which were made by the government. Pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 110(1), these are deemed referred to the appropriate standing committees, a list of which is attached.

* * *

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table in both official languages the government responses to several petitions.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

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[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

TABLING OF 2ND ANNUAL REPORT

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the second annual report on employment equity.

* * *

WESTERN ARCTIC INUVIALUIT FINAL AGREEMENT

TABLING OF 1988-89 ANNUAL REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): I have the honour to table, in both official languages, copies of the 1988-89 annual report on implementation of the Western Arctic Inuvialuit Final Agreement.

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): Mr. Speaker, I just tabled the second report provided under the Employment Equity Act.

It has been only three years since the legislation was passed, but already some progress has been made towards creating a labour force that is truly representative of the various segments of the Canadian mosaic. Federally regulated employers, with over 600,000 employees, have shown they are becoming increasingly aware of their responsibilities. They are seeking new ways to facilitate the integration of members of designated groups in their workforce.

[*English*]

This year, 375 federally regulated employers and Crown corporations with 100 or more employees submitted reports. Information was provided on salary ranges, occupational categories, hirings, promotions and terminations of employment. The comprehensive employer reports provided information on the status of the four designated groups: women, persons with disabilities, aboriginal peoples and visible minorities.

[*Translation*]

If we compare with last year's report, we see that progress has been made in all four groups.

Women's representation in the labour force has gone up from 40.9 per cent to 42.12 per cent; that of native people from 0.66 per cent to 0.73 per cent; that of persons with disabilities from 1.59 per cent to 1.79 per cent, and that of members of visible minorities from 4.99 per cent to 5.69 per cent.

In each designated group, there has been an increase in the number of persons hired for full-time employment. Furthermore, representation of these groups has increased in several occupational categories.

[*English*]

It is clear that the employers covered by the act have taken their task seriously. To achieve some change in only one year since the first report is a tribute to the efforts they have made.

[*Translation*]

These changes are not, however, enough to guarantee equity in the workplace. Representation of the four groups designated under the act is still lower than their representation in the population as a whole. There also tend to be fewer members of these groups in key professional categories such as management, and their average salary is always lower than that of other employees. This fact, the reason why the Employment Equity Act was passed in the first place, is ample justification for the continued existence of this legislation and for increased efforts by all parties to improve the situation.

I think a lot remains to be done in the years to come. I will continue to examine what is done by employers to enhance employment of members in the four designated groups, and I will submit further progress reports and indicate where further improvements are necessary.

I may add that if the situation has not improved sufficiently by the time the legislation is reviewed in 1991, this government will consider introducing some amendments.

I know the situation is improving. Employees at Employment and Immigration Canada are working harder than ever before to help employers implement their employment equity programs.

Throughout Canada, regional consultants are monitoring the situation, and their services are available to all federally regulated employers. Communities and professional associations are urged to provide information and express their views.

Finally, to enhance the effectiveness of employer equity programs, instruments such as employment practice tests have been developed.

[*English*]

It is my sense that there is a realization among employers that employment equity is good business, yielding both economic and social benefits. Workplace shortages are a reality of the future. Members of designated groups will without a doubt be needed to fill those gaps and our competitive situation will be improved since we will be using all of our talents and skills. From a social standpoint, offering group members equality in employment leads to improved financial security and, in the end, a fairer and more compassionate society in which to live.

• (1510)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, as employers become more experienced at implementing their equity programs, we will put greater emphasis on results. As was pointed out in the Abella report, employment equity will happen only if we work hard to make it happen. And that is what this government has done and will continue to do in the future.

[*English*]

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre–Dame–de–Grâce): Mr. Speaker, the report on employment equity tabled by the minister in the House today confirms the criticism that we made of this legislation when it was presented to Parliament in 1985. According to the report tabled today there has been very little progress with respect to employment equity, and in some industries there has been no progress whatsoever.

This is a law which deals with affirmative action. It applies to four target groups: women, aboriginal people, disabled people and visible minorities. It follows on the Canadian Human Rights Act of 1976 passed by a Liberal Government and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms introduced and passed by the Liberals in 1982.

In 1983 the government of the day set up the Abella Commission to advise the government on how to proceed with employment equity. Abella's report, which was presented in 1984 to the new Conservative government, suggested a law that would have teeth in it. When this law was presented to the House in 1985 it said that firms under federal jurisdiction must proceed with employment equity. But it did not provide for a sanction and it did not provide for a penalty if those firms did not proceed with employment equity.

We said at the time that unless there was a sanction in the law that these companies would drag their feet and they would not implement employment equity. That is exactly what has been done.

Let me refer to the report the minister just tabled. Let us look at some of the firms that reported. The report ranks these employers in terms of three categories. Category A is if they are close to what is supposed to be done; category B are those that do not meet the target

but are only slightly under it and category C refers to those employers that have no members employed in the designated groups, or very few.

Let us look at some of these firms. The National Bank of Canada ranks C with respect to aboriginal peoples, C with respect to disabled peoples, C with respect to visible minorities. The Royal Bank of Canada, C with respect to aboriginal peoples, C with respect to disabled people, C with respect to visible minorities. Air Canada ranks C with respect to disabled people and C with respect to visible minorities. Gray Coach Lines ranks C in all categories. That means it has none of the designated categories. It ranks C with respect to women, aboriginal people, disabled people and visible minorities. The same was true with Greyhound Lines. Interprovincial Pipe Line ranks C in all four categories. Loomis Armored Car Services ranks C in all four categories. Maritime Ontario Freight Lines ranks C in all categories. Northern Transportation, a Crown corporation, ranks C with respect to women, disabled people and visible minorities and only ranks B with respect to aboriginal peoples, even though it is a company which operates in the north. Reimer Express ranks C in all four categories. Time Air ranks C in three categories out of four. Voyageur ranks C in all categories.

I will bring this to a close but there are some very important companies here, Mr. Speaker. Bell Canada ranked C in three out of four categories. Two Canadian Crown corporations, Canada Post Corporation and the CBC, ranked C at the bottom of the list in all four categories with respect to women, aboriginal peoples, disabled peoples and visible minorities. It goes on and on. Canada Council ranked C in three out of four categories.

If the government were really serious about employment equity and affirmative action it would bring in amendments to this legislation immediately and we would co-operate in seeing these amendments passed. This law needs a sanction. These companies will continue to drag their feet with respect to employment equity unless there is a sanction in the law. It is no good simply to say: "You must do it in legislation," and then let it pass just as if nothing happened. Let us see some action. Let's have amendments to that law as soon as possible.

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the minister tabling this second report. I am sorry to say that the improvement is really rather pathetic. Native peoples' representation has increased by only 0.06 per cent. It is only 0.73 per cent in all of the federally regulated industries.

Natives make up in our society 2.1 per cent of the Canadian population, and this meagre improvement is just not satisfactory. The improvement for visible minorities is 0.7 per cent. The percentage of visible minorities employed under the act is 5.69 per cent, and yet their representation in the Canadian workforce where we know that they are represented already is 6.3 per cent.

With disabled persons, the improvement is only 0.12 per cent. The percentage of disabled persons employed under the act is 1.71 per cent, and in the percentage of the Canadian workforce disabled people total 5.4 per cent.

For women, the improvement is 2.2 per cent. The percentage of women employed under federally regulated industries is 42.12 per cent and the percentage of Canadian women employed in the Canadian workforce, in general, is 44 per cent. We know that the majority of these jobs are at the lower echelons of the federally regulated industries.

The enforcement mechanism in the legislation is very weak. It is so weak that it is criticized universally by a variety of organizations. It has been criticized by immigrant and visible minority women's organizations. Under the legislation it is up to individuals to lodge a complaint to the Human Rights Commission, or the overtaxed Human Rights Commission must conduct a review on its own after seeing the reports. We know that the Human Rights Commission does not have the resources to do this effectively. There should be mandatory work plans. There must be mandatory work plans. That has been brought up in this House before. The New Democratic Party brought it up in the committee and the government's response is always that we have to wait until the review of the Employment Equity Act in 1991.

The people of Canada are not satisfied with that answer. Women, native people, people with disabilities and visible minority Canadians are all tired of waiting. They have waited now for over a century. They are tired of waiting. They want action from this government. They want enforced timetables and a mandate for fairness for

them. We need goals, we need timetables, and we need effective enforcement for this legislation. I urge this government to bring in those kinds of sanctions.

It is ironic that today this report is tabled. It is ironic because in this House we are debating back to work legislation. Part of that back to work legislation is dealing with women hospital workers who have already supposedly won pay equity. These women—the majority of these hospital workers are women—are demanding pay equity and they are not receiving it from this government.

I urge the government to deal fairly with all of these groups in society and to bring in effective measures for employment equity.

* * *

• (1520)

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PRESENTATION OF 26TH REPORT OF STRIKING COMMITTEE

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the twenty-sixth report of the striking committee.

[*English*]

If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence in the report later this day and I would ask that we dispense with the reading of that report by the Clerk at the table as the report concerns only membership changes to committees.

BILL C-28—REPORT OF LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the report of the legislative committee on Bill C-28, an Act—

[*Translation*]

to amend the Income Tax Act, the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Federal Post-Secondary Education and Health Contributions Act, the Old Age Security Act, the Public Utilities Income Tax Transfer Act, the War Veterans Allowance Act and a related Act, without amendment.

[*Editor's Note: For above reports, see today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

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[*English*]

INCOME TAX ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance) moved pursuant to Standing Order 83(4) that Bill C-51, an act to amend the Income Tax Act, be read the first time and be printed.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INCOME TAX ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-52, an Act to Amend the Income Tax Act and Related Acts, pursuant to Standing Order 83(4).

Mr. Speaker: Shall the Hon. Minister have leave to introduce the Bill?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

Mr. Speaker: When shall the Bill be read the second time? At the next sitting of the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

STRIKING COMMITTEE—CONCURRENCE IN TWENTY-SIXTH REPORT

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, I move that the twenty-sixth report of the Striking Committee presented to the House earlier this day be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

SOCIAL SERVICES

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the following petitions containing the signatures of 7,000 senior citizens from across this country who call upon this government to withdraw its vicious proposal to claw back their pensions.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I also have the honour of filing the following petitions containing the signatures of several thousand Canadians from Sarnia, London, Scarborough, Etobicoke, Mississauga, Keswick, Brampton, Toronto, Bramalea, Burlington, Hamilton, Vineland, St. Catharines, Brockville, Ottawa, Gloucester, Carp and Kanata, all in Ontario; Vancouver, Surrey, Parksville, Port Alberni, Smithers, Burnaby, Port Moody, Coquitlam, Richmond, Penticton and Princeton in British Columbia; Lunenburg, Bridgewater, Yarmouth, Charleston, Mahone Bay, Chester Basin, Springfield, Martin's Point and Liverpool in Nova Scotia; Saskatoon and Yorkton, Saskatchewan; Calgary, Alberta; Aylmer, Gatineau, Kirkland, Hull, Montreal, Westmount and Laval in Quebec.

These citizens humbly call upon the government to withdraw its proposal for a regressive, inflationary goods and services tax no matter what the rate.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present petitions with some 6,000 signatures from across Canada of those citizens who are petitioning the government to cancel and to abandon the measure that it is proposing to claw back old age security and family allowance benefits.

These petitioners call for this measure because they realize that the government's intention is to begin undermining the principle of universality, therefore, undermining any kind of reason, in terms of geographical location or other factors in ensuring fairness in the Old Age Security system and family allowance system in this country.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure and the honour to introduce in the House a petition on behalf of students in higher education as well as concerned citizens who are calling upon their elected representatives to stop the erosion of quality and accessibility of our universities, colleges, and post-secondary educational institutions in Canada. In particular, they mention the over-crowded classrooms, obsolete laboratory equipment, poor library resources, high student-to-professor ratios, elimination of programs of studies, deteriorating buildings and physical plants that are now a fact of Canadian higher education.

Finally, they are calling on the government in the House of Commons to commit to arrange a federal-provincial conference of the highest political representatives to establish the obligations of the two levels of government in the financing of Canadian post-secondary education and to ensure an end to the shameful neglect of higher education in Canada.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present some 16 petitions containing more than 10,000 names from people in the following communities in Alberta: Spring Coulee, Magrath, Welling, Claresholm, Lethbridge, Raymond, Stirling, Cardston, Calgary, Waterton Park, Banff, Mountain View, Coaldale, Milk River, Champion, Pincher Creek, Fort Macleod, Warner, Lomond, Foremost, Medicine Hat, Hill Spring, Coalhurst, Picture Butte, Nobleford, Turin, Stand Off, Diamond City, Taber, and Blairmore. Also, some people have signed from British Columbia and Saskatchewan.

These petitions were signed by many people, including Bob Grbavac, Paul Pharo, and Senator Joyce Fairburn. They petition this chamber to call upon Parliament to reject the government's proposed goods and services tax.

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour and the duty as the member for my riding of York West, to present to the House and directly to the government five petitions from constituents in my riding who signed these petitions and have called repeatedly for this government to abandon its goods and services tax, whether it is at a 9 per cent level or a 7 per cent level. It

is bad for average Canadians in my riding, it is bad for average small business enterprises in my riding, and it is bad for Canada.

Mr. Gilbert Parent (Welland—St. Catharines—Thorold): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present to Parliament, on behalf of the people of the Welland—St. Catharines—Thorold riding and the surrounding area in the Niagara Peninsula, a petition signed by some 8,000 people. This is a petition which was started by Mrs. Idris O'Neill, and it is the remainder of the 12,000-plus names that she has collected.

The signators oppose the goods and services tax completely. Notwithstanding the fact that this government has seen fit to back off from its 9 per cent position to its 7 per cent position, this is still going to impose an extremely difficult hardship on the old people in our communities, our students and also average Canadians in the middle-income group. We would hope that the government would listen to reason and indeed withdraw any proposed goods and services tax.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, as I did yesterday, I would like today to rise under Standing Order 36, especially in light of the presence today in this building of the One Voice Committee, to present the signatures of another 419 Albertans, bringing the total now to well over 11,000, Albertans who petition Parliament to withdraw the budget proposal to claw back payments from the social programs, Old Age Security and family allowances.

Yesterday, the signatures came from Albertans mostly from Edmonton, but today they come from Edmonton, St. Albert and Sherwood Park too. But as well, there are signatures of people from Jarvie, Fawcett, Flatbush, Barrhead, Gunn, Dapp, Rochester, and lots of them from Westlock.

• (1530)

They also come from Busby, Vimy, Clyde, Warrensville, Pickardville, Calahoo, Slave Lake, Mayerthorpe, Legal, Newbrook, Thorhild, Edson, Swan Hills, Bloomsbury, known for its wools, McLennan, Bon Accord, Faust and Sturgeon.

MULTICULTURALISM

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today to table a petition signed by members of the Kingston community which urges the government to acknowledge officially the injustices suffered by Canadians of Ukrainian origin during World War I.

Between 1914 and 1920 over 5,000 Canadians from Ukraine were interned in prison camps across Canada. Their property and valuables were taken from them. They were denied the right to vote and their lives were altered forever.

In tabling this petition, I am not asking the government to apologize for those decisions taken over 70 years ago. I am asking, rather, that the terrible injustice committed and the hardship and pain which these people were forced to endure at the hands of their own government should be acknowledged and should never be forgotten.

This is the first of many petitions that will be filed in Parliament on this subject.

I say in presenting this petition that I am particularly honoured to do this because one of the principal internment camps was at Fort Henry in the riding of Kingston and the Islands. I am honoured to present this petition on behalf of the people who suffered so much at the hands of their government so long ago.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege and the responsibility to table a petition signed by over 1,200 residents of the Nickel Belt area.

They are from such places as Azilda, Val Caron, Hanmer, Garson, Chelmsford, Verner, Copper Cliff, Timmins, Worthington, London, St. Charles, White Fish, Kenora, Keewatin, Wanapetei, Sudbury, Coniston, Lively, Onaping Falls, Falconbridge, Val Therese, Sturgeon Falls, North Bay, Naughton, Hagar, Dowling, Alban, Sault Ste. Marie and Sundridge. Most of those communities are within the riding of Nickel Belt.

The people who have signed these petitions are pointing out, first, that the proposed goods and services tax of the Minister of Finance is an unfair form of taxation because it does not respect the ability of consumers to pay.

Second, they point out that the government has not addressed itself to looking at the tax system, to ensuring that it is progressive and fair in that many wealthy individuals and corporations pay little or no tax at all

while forcing lower and middle income taxpayers to bear more of the national tax burden.

Furthermore, they call upon Parliament to reject the current proposed goods and services tax. They also call on Parliament to reform the tax system so that there is an effective minimum tax on wealthy individuals and corporations.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present.

The first was gathered from about a dozen communities in my riding and calls upon the government to abandon its plans to cut service under VIA Rail and to make VIA Rail a modern and effective transportation company.

RCMP DRESS CODE

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, the second petition was presented to me by a resident of my constituency who gathered the names in Calgary.

It calls upon the RCMP to continue with its traditional form of dress.

SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to Standing Order 36 with a petition signed by some 71 residents of the city of Revelstoke in the constituency of Kootenay West—Revelstoke.

The petitioners are alarmed and enraged at the proposal of the government to tax back old age security and family allowance benefits in part or in their entirety, depending upon the recipient's income.

They believe that the government's proposed clawback measure will undermine the principle of universality of Canada's social programs and will, as a result, create a potential threat to the income of future pensioners, particularly because the lack of indexing in that proposal will in fact be a threat to average income Canadians in a very few short years.

Finally, the 71 petitioners call upon Parliament to abandon the proposed measure.

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition on behalf of residents of Saskatoon and residents in many parts of rural Saskatchewan complaining about the government's decision to remove oats from the Wheat Board.

They are calling upon the government to sustain and to ensure that marketing boards are improved rather than weakened, to not remove oats from the Wheat Board but to add barley and to ensure that in future consultation is carried out with organizations with regard to decisions affecting their activities.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. David Bjornson (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present two petitions on behalf of the member for Lisgar—Marquette, signed by 76 petitioners who call upon Parliament to enact legislation which protects human life from conception to natural death.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. David Bjornson (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, I also have the honour to present a certified petition on behalf of the member for Lisgar—Marquette, signed by 36 petitioners who call upon Parliament to consider instruction in skating as an educational service and therefore exempt skating education expenses from the proposed goods and services tax.

BILL 178

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am pleased to present two petitions.

The first is from 50 people in my riding as a part of 50,000 people from across the country reacting to Bill 178, the sign law, a law which has created a great deal of rancour and acrimony not only in Quebec but across the country. This is unfortunate legislation.

Nevertheless they urge the government to react to the concerns of these petitioners.

SAULT STE. MARIE LOCK

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by many thousands of people from my riding of Sault Ste. Marie.

It concerns the Sault Ste. Marie lock that has been closed for some two years now. As someone indicated to me, it would be like tearing the very face off the city if this lock is not reconstructed. I encourage the government to react to the demands and request of the citizens of Sault Ste. Marie. We will be meeting with the minister

tomorrow, and I hope that he will listen to us intently at that time.

It is ironic that the government has produced a brand new book praising the technology and transition—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member shares with us his great enthusiasm for his own riding and places in it, but perhaps he is trespassing a little beyond the normal confines of the rules.

RCMP DRESS CODE

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour and responsibility to present many petitions today, under Standing Order 36, containing 5,190 signatures from residents of the provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario.

These petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to preserve the distinctive heritage and tradition of the RCMP by retaining the uniformity of dress code with all the recognizable colour and trappings that have had such great historical value to the country.

The pride and *esprit de corps* should not be jeopardized by any concessions to religious or ethnic minorities which result in changes to this truly great police force, its proud traditions and uniform.

This brings the total to over 125,000 names that I have presented in the House to preserve this national symbol.

[*Translation*]

OPPOSITION TO TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS ON TAX BENEFITS FOR NORTHERN AND ISOLATED AREAS

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi): Pursuant to Standing Order 36, Mr. Speaker, I present a petition rejecting the recommendations of the Task Force on Tax Benefits for Northern and Isolated Areas. Signatories representing Abitibi's isolated community of Lebel-sur-Quévillon are concerned about the recommendations of the report which will signal the dismissal of a number of workers in these isolated areas. They believe the Government of Canada simply refuses to come to grips with the fact that their daily existence is different, for life in the north is difficult, isolated and costly.

Mr. Speaker, according to the 1989 disparity index of Quebec's isolated communities, Lebel-sur-Quévillon ranks 70th and Fermont 81st.

* * *

[*English*]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 148 and 165.

[*Text*]

RRIF/RRSP

Question No. 148—**Mr. Whittaker:**

> For the most recent year for which statistics are available to the government (a) what was the total annual cost of tax assistance for (i) RRIFs (ii) RRSPs (b) Has the government estimated the annual cost of eliminating the termination of RRIFs upon the RRIF beneficiary's reaching the age of 90 and allowing RRIFs to be held until the death of the beneficiary and, if so, what is it?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): There are no statistics which directly show the cost of tax assistance associated with saving through registered pension plans (RPPs), registered retirement savings plans (RRSPs), or registered retirement income funds (RRIFs). Since the nature of the tax assistance is a tax deferral, between the time a pension or RRSP contribution is made and the associated retirement benefits are received, rather than a forgiveness of tax, tax assistance costs cannot simply be determined from the level of contributions made in a year. The most recent estimates of the cost of tax assistance for retirement saving were prepared for the Department of Finance publication, *Account of the Cost of Selective Tax Measures*, which was issued in August, 1985. That report contained a section which described alternative methods for estimating the revenue costs associated with tax deferral provisions. It also provided an estimate of $4.9 billion per year for the federal tax cost of the tax deferrals associated with RPPs and RRSPs (including RRIFs). No attempt was made to separate the RPP, RRSP and RRIF costs—an exercise which would be difficult since funds can be transferred back and forth

between these types of plan. For 1989, the total federal cost of tax assistance is projected to be in the range from $5 billion to $6 billion.

There are no statistics available on the amount of RRSP funds that has been transferred to RRIFs. Qualitative information from financial institutions suggests that the usage of RRIFs was relatively rare until 1986 when the rules governing RRIF withdrawals were simplified. Their use has apparently grown strongly since that time.

The Department of Finance has not yet made any estimate of the annual cost of allowing withdrawals from RRIFs to be extended over a period beyond the year when the annuitant attains age 90. However, in response to requests to the Minister of Finance for such a policy change, the Department has begun to consider the implications of different options for extending the allowable RRIF payout period.

PAYMENT OF LEGAL FEES BY THE FEDERAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BANK

Question No. 165—**Mr. Kaplan:**

To the knowledge of the government, were legal fees paid to any law firms in connection with a loan made by the Federal Business Development Bank to *Pluri-Canaux Ltée* or to the University of Sherbrooke in 1987 for a home-study course to be produced by the former and, if so (a) to which firms (b) in each case, in what amount?

Hon. Thomas Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Insofar as the Federal Business Development Bank is concerned, the response is NIL.

[*English*]

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, on Monday I gave the parliamentary secretary notice that I wanted an answer to Question No. 169.

I realize that it involves a search in a number of departments and government agencies with regard to contracts which have been let to legal firms of senators and former senators.

I was wondering, recognizing the parliamentary secretary may not be able to answer the question on behalf of all departments and agencies, if he could give us an interim answer from those departments and agencies that have given him or the government the information so far.

• (1540)

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I cannot tell the hon. member that first of all the 45 days requested on his question have not yet expired.

We are doing the best we can to answer his question. I should mention my information is that it requires gathering data from some 225 people, which of course is going to be complicated, costly and difficult, but we will do our best to accommodate the hon. member.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the parliamentary secretary if he would be kind enough to check why the government has not answered Question No. 162 of October 30, 1989. I believe Your Honour will find that this is the forty-fifth day today. It involves an issue concerning the travels of the Prime Minister and a few limousines to Costa Rica.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to advise the hon. member that I do not have the information on that specific question. However, since this is the forty-fifth day, I can assure him I will do my best to track down that information.

Mr. Speaker: Shall the remaining questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all Notices of Motions for the Production of Papers be allowed to stand.

Mr. Speaker: Shall all Notices of Motions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S. O. 52

ATLANTIC FISHERY

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, I wish call to your attention an emerging crisis which will have dire consequences for thousands of families in Atlantic Canada's fishing communities as a result of recent and anticipated fish plant closings in the Atlantic fishery.

Speaker's Ruling

On Monday, National Sea Products Limited announced layoffs totalling 1,562 jobs or 27 per cent of its workforce. In addition to its Lockeport operation which was closed earlier this year, National Sea will be closing permanently its Canso operation, its St. John's operation, and will be making significant reduction in its North Sydney operation.

Fisheries Products International in Newfoundland, we expect, is soon to announce massive layoffs in Newfoundland. Many smaller plants in Atlantic Canada have also closed. Yesterday, by signing a bill which restricts the import of Atlantic lobsters to the United States, the president has placed the income of thousands of lobster fishermen in jeopardy.

The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans will soon announce the 1990 groundfish management plan, setting fish quotas for next year. Scientists are predicting a dramatic decline in the amount of fish stocks, and the government's management policies are currently in disarray. The government's response to the crisis has not been spelled out.

There is a sense of foreboding and crisis in families in all Atlantic Canadian fishing communities. It is shaping up to be a very bleak Christmas this year and for Christmases to come.

In light of these circumstances, I urgently request that Your Honour grant permission for a special emergency debate in the House to deal with this pressing and urgent matter facing the future of Atlantic Canada.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso has raised a matter in which he is petitioning the Chair to set aside the ordinary business of the day and proceed to an emergency debate on an issue which is a very serious one.

I think all hon. members can understand perfectly why the hon. member, coming from that part of the country, is raising this matter.

A great deal of anxiety has already been indicated in this chamber by other hon. members on both sides of the House. There was very extensive debate today on the matter. That debate may very well continue in Question Period and other places. I will be watching with very great care the questions and the responses of the government.

Under the circumstances I am not going to order a debate today. The hon. member may have good reason to apply at another time. I thank the hon. member for bringing the matter to the attention of the House. As I have said, he is open to raise the matter again at another time.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT SERVICES RESUMPTION ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C–49, an act to provide for the resumption of certain government services, as reported (without amendment) from a legislative committee.

SPEAKER'S RULING—MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There are seven motions in amendment in the name of the hon. member for Saskatoon—Dundurn a 11 motions in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa West set down on the notice paper at report stage of Bill C–49, an act to provide for the resumption of certain government services.

They are all in order but not all will be selected for debate as there is some duplication of content.

Motion Nos. 1, 4, 8, 13 and 16 in the name of the hon. member for Ottawa West are in order and will be grouped for debate. A vote on Motion No. 1 will be applied to Motion Nos. 4, 8, 13 and 16.

Motion Nos. 2 and 3 are virtually identical and the Chair will select for debate only Motion No. 2. It will be voted on separately.

Motion Nos. 5 and 7 and Motion No. 6 are in effect identical motions. I will select for debate Motion Nos. 5 and 7 and a vote on Motion No. 5 will be applied to Motion No. 7. Motion No. 6 will thus not be selected.

Motion Nos. 9, 10, 11, 12 and 14 all deal with the issue of equal pay for work of equal value. However, Motion No. 10 is a duplicate of Motion No. 9 and therefore it will not be selected for debate. Thus, Motion Nos. 9, 11, 12 and 14 will be grouped together for debate, but they will be voted on as follows:

A vote on Motion No. 9 will be applied to Motion Nos. 11 and 12.

Motion No. 14 will be voted on separately.

Motion No. 15 which deals with dates and time limits will be debated and voted on separately.

Motion Nos. 17 and 18 dealing with enforcement will be grouped together for debate. However, there will be a separate vote on these motions.

The House will now proceed with Motion Nos. 1, 4, 8, 13, and 16.

MEASURE TO ENACT

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West) moved:

Motion No. 1.

That Bill C–49 be amended in Clause 2 by striking out line 8 at page 2 and substituting the following therefor:

"tions Act, except that "Chair" wherever it is used in this Act shall mean the Chairman of the Public Service Staff Relations Board."

Motion No. 4.

That Bill C–49 be amended in Clause 8

(a) by striking out line 7 at page 4 and substituting the following therefor:

"of this Act, the Chair shall"

(b) by striking out line 16 at page 4 and substituting the following therefor:

"Ottawa, as the chair of the first board"

(c) by striking out line 19 at page 4 and substituting the following therefor:

"chair of the second board therein"

(d) by striking out line 30 at page 4 and substituting the following therefor:

"Chair shall appoint the nominee as a"

(e) by striking out lines 36 and 37 at page 4 and substituting the following therefor:

"Chair shall appoint as a member of that board a person the Chair deems fit for"

(f) by striking out lines 41 to 43 at page 4 and substituting the following therefor:

"to the Chair, the Chair shall appoint as a member of that board a person the Chair deems fit for that purpose."

Motion No. 8.

That Bill C–49 be amended in Clause 10

(a) by striking out line 3 at page 5 and substituting the following therefor:

"10.(1) The Chair shall refer to the"

(b) by striking out line 14 at page 5 and substituting the following therefor:

"Chair on September 22, 1989 and that"

(c) by striking out line 18 at page 5 and substituting the following therefor:

"(b) such other matters as the Chair"

(d) by striking out line 23 at page 5 and substituting the following therefor:

"(2) The Chair shall refer to the second"

(e) by striking out line 34 at page 5 and substituting the following therefor:

"Relations Act by the Chair on Sep–"

(f) by striking out line 38 at page 5 and substituting the following therefor:

"(b) such other matters as the Chair".

Motion No. 13.

That Bill C–49 be amended in Clause 11

(a) by striking out line 1 at page 6 and substituting the following therefor:

"Chair, after consultation with the par–"

(b) by striking out line 19 at page 6 and substituting the following therefor:

"(d) report to the Chair on the resolu–".

Motion No. 16.

That Bill C–49 be amended in Clause 12 by striking out line 33 at page 6 and substituting the following therefor:

"the Chair pursuant to subsection 11(1),".

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and speak on this group of amendments. I am sure the House will understand if I wish to put them in the context of the bill before us.

I find it regrettable that relationships between the government and 3,600 of its most vulnerable and valuable employees has reached the stage that the government must bring before the House legislation to force people back to work, because it is incapable of negotiating a fair and reasonable contract.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, as members of the opposition, we recognize the serious effects of this strike. We understand the great impact of the slowdown in shipping on the St. Lawrence Seaway. We understand that essential services have become uncertain on our three oceans and we can appreciate the difficulties facing veterans in Canadian institutions.

[*English*]

It is unforgivable, knowing that these would be the inevitable results of its intransigence, that the government wasted over four months of valuable time when it could have been negotiating a fair and peaceful settle-

ment for these workers. It spent that time trying to bypass the legal rights of workers instead of settling a contract.

• (1550)

Let there be no mistake. It is the government's inability to manage, its failure to meet its responsibilities as an employer, and its failure to anticipate and plan for possible disruptions in service which have led to this sorry state and this undemocratic bill before us today.

The aim of the Official Opposition has not been to obstruct the passage of this bill unduly, but unlike other times when back to work legislation was before this House we have certainly chosen not to expedite it. Indeed, since last week we have made every effort to moderate this unacceptable bill, to improve it, to have the government send a clear message to these valued workers that as undesirable, unacceptable and undemocratic as this bill is, at last it is prepared to come to a just and reasonable settlement.

Knowing as we do that the government has the voting power to make the passage of this bill at 6 p.m tomorrow night inevitable, we have been trying to put in place the best possible framework, or let us say the least damaging framework, that would at least give the workers a half decent chance of getting a fair settlement.

The government has used every tool at its disposal, including closure and time allocation, to limit debate on this bill. It has failed to anticipate problems. It has failed to solve problems. Now it is trying to force people back to work because of its own mistakes and incompetence.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, we know that these employees are being forced to return to work in a poisoned atmosphere, rightly convinced that the government does not understand their work and does not value them, convinced that the government absolutely refuses to propose anything but a mean-spirited, intransigent settlement.

[*English*]

I urge the President of Treasury Board to accept these motions, including the ones that have been moved by myself and others on the Order Paper, to send to the workers a clear signal that he personally will take responsibility for seeing a just settlement to this strike.

[*Translation*]

I ask the President of the Treasury Board to make his negotiators understand that he wants to reach an agreement in keeping with the demonstrated value of the work done by these employees.

[*English*]

I speak specifically to the content of these motions that have been just moved and to put them in the context of the others on the Order Paper that will be moved. I think it is important to note that nurses from Ste. Anne de Bellevue hospital in Montreal have come here by the dozens today to support the hospital services workers; not their union but workers they work with every day who they know deliver essential and valuable services.

They have seen these people out on the picket lines in the freezing cold over the last two weeks and they know how much suffering this strike is causing. They know that these people have been waiting for pay equity for two years.

The first group of motions I moved may seem to be technical and may seem to be window-dressing to some members of this House. They change the word "chairman" in this bill to the word "chair" because women are tired of having every position of power and authority in this country and in our laws expressed in male terms.

Those kinds of attitudes creep into this bill that support income inequity for women which is at the heart of one issue of the strike of these hospital services workers. This government has refused to implement the fair pay that the human rights tribunal has determined that these people are entitled to. Even in the last week the President of the Treasury Board has failed to ensure that the matter of pay equity is referred to the conciliation boards being established with this piece of legislation before us today.

The matter of pay equity will be before the House shortly under several motions to be moved by my colleague and one I believe to be moved by myself. The government has known for two years that the issue of pay equity is fundamental to these hospital service workers being able to accept an agreement.

All they are asking for is what the Human Rights Commission of Canada has said they are entitled to—a fair wage for the work they do and equal wages with other people doing comparable work. They will not settle for less despite this legislation and, if the government is serious about what it says about pay equity, then let it accept some of the motions that will follow mine. Let it accept the spirit of the first amendments. Let it very clearly say that pay equity is referred to the conciliation boards established in this legislation.

The whole process that has led us to this despicable point has been controlled by Treasury Board, has been manipulated by Treasury Board, has been thwarted by Treasury Board. The President of the Treasury Board even tried to imply in the House that the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada supports this back to work legislation. That is not true.

The nurses from St. Anne de Bellevue hospital are here today. They have travelled all the way from Montreal. They are sitting in the gallery to let this House know that they as professional workers in the Public Service of Canada do not support back to work legislation. They do support fair treatment for the hospital services workers who they work with every day. They support a reasonable and fair settlement to this contract, not a forced resumption of work.

They know that when they go back into those hospitals with workers who have been forced back there with no hope of a fair contract, the situation will not allow for a pleasant working environment.

I ask the opposition, I ask the government and I ask particularly the President of the Treasury Board to recognize the importance of this issue and the importance of parity for the ships' crews workers as essential fundamental pre-conditions to be able to resolve these contracts that have been now outstanding for two years. I ask them to recognize that the kinds of wages these people earn are not fair and not just. The daily cost of them not being at work is more than it would take to settle this contract for a whole year.

The process has not been fair, and this piece of legislation today continues the unfairness and the manipulativeness of that process. It sets up two conciliation boards which are supposed to impose a settlement of something that the government has been unable and unwilling to negotiate for over two years.

The normal process in conciliation boards, the normal process in decent, fair, humane labour relations is that each side names its members to a conciliation board and those members get to name an acceptable chair. It means that the process is not weighted in favour of the employer or the employees and that the fairness of the arguments that come before the board will determine what the settlement is.

• (1600)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret that the hon. member's time has expired.

Mrs. Catterall: Just one more sentence to finish off?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Yes.

Mrs. Catterall: Therefore, I urge the government to look carefully at these amendments, to not act vindictively, to attempt to improve this legislation, to attempt to improve the atmosphere in which these people will be forced back to work and, above all, to sit down and negotiate fairly. I will have an opportunity to speak further tomorrow and I will do so.

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Mr. Speaker, the day before yesterday when the government introduced its last heavy hand into this House, that is, closure on this portion of the debate on Bill C-49, the justice minister said that there had been agreement between the government and the Official Opposition on certain matters which would have led to a speedy conclusion to the passage of Bill C-49 but that it was the members of the New Democratic Party who held it up because, he said, we had to appeal to a higher authority.

In his sneering fashion, he was referring to us having been in consultation with the Public Service Alliance of Canada. There is a very good reason to do that because it is the Public Service Alliance of Canada which represents the people who have been so demeaned by this government and by governments prior to this one as well, ever since they became eligible to be unionized and to go on strike.

Since 1967, this is the first time that these people have been able to go on strike. Certainly it is not any wonder to anyone who has been following the process why they have gone on strike. They are the most underpaid people in the civil service, and yet, one has to wonder why, if these people are as essential as the government has said

they are—and if I have time in this particular part of the debate, I will get to that.

If they are as essential as the government says they are, why on earth are they so poorly paid? In our society, it is rather common, when people are deemed essential, when society cannot get along without their services, that they be paid commensurate to their value to society.

Successive governments have used the heavy hand of designating these people as being essential in order to prevent them from being able to go on strike and to make sure that their wages were kept down.

In spite of the fact that the justice minister was referring so sneeringly to us being in consultation with a higher authority, we were in consultation with a higher authority and that higher authority was something about which the justice minister may know something. I know doggone well nobody else on the government side knows anything about it. The only reason that he knows anything about it is because he is justice minister.

What we are referring to is justice, justice for these people who, for so long, have been kept under the thumb of tyrannical governments and have been prevented in a heavy-handed way from being able to receive the kinds of pay which their obvious value to society would dictate that they ought to be able to receive.

Justice is what we are talking about. The very day that this government introduced closure on Bill C-49 was the day when three people, one from each party in this House, stood up and praised the forty-first anniversary of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. The very day that closure, one of the most heavy-handed things that a government can use in any situation was introduced, was the very day that we were celebrating the forty-first anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights which includes the ability to go on strike, if it comes to that, if you are desperate enough.

I was an hourly paid employee before I was elected to Parliament. I have been on strike, Mr. Speaker, and I can assure you that going on strike is not the first thing you do. Going on strike is the last thing you want to do and it is an act of desperation. This has been true throughout the course of human history, whether strikes have been legal or not, with all due respect to the member for Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia who said there has to be a better way, that we have to look at the laws and maybe this will encourage us to do so. If he looked at labour relations history in any part of the western world over the last short period of time, he would find out that prohibiting strikes is not one way of solving the problem.

What we are talking about is a matter of justice. Can you imagine, in addition to these people never having been able to go on strike, that in 1981 it was brought to the attention of the government that these people in the HS group were being unfairly paid in relation to the GS group. Most of the people in the hospital services group are women. Most of the people in the general services group are men. The Canadian Human Rights Commission found that this group, mainly composed of women, were being underpaid and the government had a responsibility to pay them commensurate with those who worked in the general services group.

That was in 1981. It was 1987 before these people received any kind of financial recognition of what the Human Rights Commission had determined several years before. It amazes me that any group of people in a situation like this would have to go to the Human Rights Commission at all in relation to a government which is supposed to be elected to look after people's human rights and interests. These people had to force the government, albeit initially not the government we have here, but one populated by people down the hall on this side.

However, this government is certainly culpable. In 1987 when it decided to pay and it bemoaned the fact that it cost $28 million to finally divvy up—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I would like to bring to the attention of the hon. member the motion which refers to taking out the word "chairman" and putting in the word "chair". I do not wish to bring up relevancy this afternoon but I just cannot understand why the hon. member is not speaking to the motions. I would just like to bring that to his attention. I know he is a new member but I would still like to bring that to his attention.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I recognize the relevance of your suggestion, but I think you will find it much more convenient if members can cover a lot of topics in one or two speeches instead of being forced to rise on six different occasions throughout

the day. You may find it is to everybody's advantage if you are lenient in your ruling.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member knows that the Chair is always lenient in its ruling, and we like to help out members in this chamber. However, I would like to bring it to the attention of the hon. member, as well as any other hon. member who is going to be speaking on these particular motions.

Mr. Fisher: Mr. Speaker, thank you for bringing that to my attention. I intend to address the motions momentarily. In spite of the situation we have before us where equalization, human rights, fairness and justice prevail, where we have tried in most of society to remove the discriminatory stigmas on these kinds of words, the word "chairman" is still used. Of course it should be "chair", "chairperson", whatever. "Chairman" is offensive and certainly ought to be removed, but this is just an example of the government ignoring the very essence of the subject which we are discussing. I do thank the Speaker for having brought that to my attention.

• (1610)

In 1987, when the government did bring in the equalization payments, supposedly to ameliorate the problem of having discriminated against this group of people, there were no payments subsequent to July 26, 1987 until November of this year. There is an amazing sidelight to this. For the purposes of calculating income for pensions, the equalization payments which the government has reluctantly, I would suggest, come up with, do not count toward the pensions of these people.

This group, primarily composed of women, is perhaps even intentionally deprived of their full pension benefits because of the intransigence of this government in paying them what they ought to be worth. The main issue in this whole problem as far as the HS group is concerned is that the government will not only not pay up, but it will not include it in wages. That is the issue.

When I talked the other day about justice, that is precisely what I was referring to. It is a matter of justice that these people receive equal pay. I would suggest that somehow or other, the government either ought to be forced or ought to voluntarily include those equalization payments back to the time when the original matter was brought up.

I see my time is almost up, Mr. Speaker. I am sure I will have opportunities to speak later on, but I do thank you for bringing to my attention the topic of the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I will recognize the hon. member for Halifax West and then the hon. member for Churchill.

Mr. Crosby: May I defer to the hon. member for Churchill?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member for Churchill has the floor.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary. I realize that he would like to speak after me to try to cover up for the government's inactions.

Mr. Speaker, I heard your ruling with regard to speaking to the motion, but rather than rising a number of times this afternoon, I would like to speak on our position with regard to the bill and the amendments that have been forward by the member for Saskatoon—Dundurn on behalf of the New Democratic Party caucus.

Much has been made of the fact that on Monday night, the New Democratic Party would not agree to have this legislation passed that evening. The reason we did not do so is that we could not accept the fact that workers would not be able to negotiate or have a conciliation board, in this case, rule on job classifications.

We believe that all workers, whether they are under the auspices of the Public Service Staff Relations Act or the Canada Labour Code, should have the same rights to negotiate something that is as basic and as important as job classifications. We believe that that was doubly important in this particular case because we were talking about a mechanism to ensure that pay equity could actually come into force under the collective agreement.

We have made it very clear that we accept the fact that there must be a resolution of the regional disparity between the workers on the east coast and the west coast. We had made it very clear that we were concerned about the potential for loss of life, but we were not going to compromise our principles when it came to the very important issue of pay equity and the ability of workers, through their collective bargaining process, even when the collective bargaining process breaks down, as it has in

this case, to have the right to have an impartial third party ensure that job classifications were looked at and that pay equity would be treated fairly.

I was particularly upset when some Liberal members, especially some from Atlantic Canada, went to the media and attacked us for our position. This can be seen in the Atlantic newspapers and particularly those of Nova Scotia.

I think it is important, if the Liberal Party members want to say that they oppose the legislation, they should say the same thing in Atlantic Canada as they are saying in Ottawa and on the west coast of Canada. It is not acceptable to have some Liberals say one thing and other Liberals say something else.

If you believe that pay equity is important, and that workers have a right to negotiate job classification, then that should be the position you put in the House of Commons and it should be the position that your members put in other parts of the country as well.

We will support the Liberal amendments and we obviously will be supporting the amendments put forward by the New Democratic Party caucus. We will be consistent in what we say and what we do.

Mr. Howard Crosby (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, let me begin by saying that on December 6, 1989, when Bill C–49 was presented to the House, the President of the Treasury Board made it very clear in this House that he was prepared on behalf of the government and on behalf of the Treasury Board to continue negotiations with the representative of the two labour groups involved in the bill at all times, through day and night, whenever the Public Service Alliance was willing to meet to negotiate.

This negotiation could be taking place right now. There are no barriers to negotiations. If the union representatives have anything to present, any offers to make, they can put those offers on the table and they will be considered. Negotiations have never been terminated as far as the President of the Treasury Board is concerned. I want hon. member to keep that in mind so that we do not poison the atmosphere, do not prevent settlements from being reached by rhetoric in the House of Commons.

Even at this moment, the President of the Treasury Board and the Minister of Veterans Affairs are meeting with the leadership the hospital workers group to discuss matters of common interest. The atmosphere of good feeling, if it is retained, will eventually lead to settlement. I want everybody to understand that.

It is not my intention in rising in the House to speak to Bill C–49 to do anything that would poison the atmosphere and prevent a settlement from being reached because we all realize that that is the resolution to any dispute but particularly to a labour–management dispute.

No one takes any solace in Bill C–49 or in any kind of back to work legislation. Back to work legislation is only introduced when the system has failed, when the parties who are responsible for negotiating a settlement of a labour–management dispute have failed to come to an agreement. They have not been able to bring together the demands of the workforce and the needs of the government to produce a settlement.

In those circumstances, Parliament must act in the public interest. It then becomes the duty of the Parliament of Canada to act in the interests of all Canadians. The labour–management dispute has to be put aside. We recognize the value of the collective bargaining system. We recognize the value of settlement of disputes. But those values have to be put aside in the common interests of all Canadians.

What is that common interest? There are ships in distress on the high seas. There are ships locked up in the St. Lawrence Seaway system at great cost and expense, not to ship owners, as has been said, but to the people of Canada, the people who will be paying for the goods carried on those vessels, the farmers whose grain must get to market, or else. They will suffer at home.

I do not have to tell that to hon. members. They should know about the emergencies, the difficulties, the distress that a strike will cause in both the hospital sector and in the transportation sector. It is because of those interests that we are here today legislating back to work legislation, not because of any malice or animosity to the workers involved. It is fully recognized that their contri-

bution is of value to the country but there are other interests that have to be recognized.

Let me deal very quickly with the amendment that we now have before us. That is the amendment which changes the word "chairman" to the word "chair". We have recognized in the House of Commons for years now that this sexist language must be removed from the statutes of Canada. That is an ongoing process. The word at present used in the Public Service Staff Relations Act, which has been on the books of Canada for some years, is "chairman". Bill C–49 merely picks up the wording of the Public Service Staff Relations Act and uses that terminology.

• (1620)

If the hon. member wants to effectively change this sexist designation, she could introduce in the House of Commons a private member's bill changing the terminology of the Public Service Staff Relations Act. I am sure if she did that, it would meet with the approval of all members of the House. At the moment, we are simply using the terminology that is already there.

While the change would readily meet the support of members in terms of the principle involved, in terms of the merits of the particular application it is not a useful exercise. Bill C–49 before us is a transitory bill. It will be expended, hopefully, in a matter of days and, certainly, in a matter of 90 days. So it will produce nothing for the future. The change in the Public Service Staff Relations Act will go on for decades to come. So my suggestion to the member is that she withdraw her amendment and seek a change in the Public Service Staff Relations Act.

Let me address very briefly, because I know we are limited to 10 minutes on these speeches, the two issues that have been brought to the floor by members opposite. One is pay equity for the hospital workers. As I said, the President of the Treasury Board is even now prepared to meet with representatives of the hospital workers.

I want the House and all Canadians to know, because it has now become public, that an offer was made to conciliate, under a binding conciliation board, the matter of pay equity in relation to the hospital workers. Everyone knows that there is litigation outstanding under the Canadian Human Rights Act and that there is a decision of a human rights tribunal relating to pay equity. That is an ongoing process. That is a process outside the form of this bill. Even with that process being external to this bill, there is the resolve on the part of the Treasury Board to have that matter settled as well as all other matters, because it is obviously in the interests of the government, the Treasury Board, the Department of Veterans Affairs and, most especially, the workers to have all matters resolved.

The problem is how do you resolve these matters. How do you bring the parties together? It is very difficult for all of us who realize that we have reached the point that it has to be by legislation passed by this House. That legislation is pursuant to our public duty in the House of Commons and in the Parliament of Canada to protect the public. We do not want to do that at the expense of workers and that is why there is provision for a conciliation board on which the workers will be represented. The union will be there to ensure that their interests are protected. That is quite a normal process in labour–management relations.

Let me speak for one moment about the ships crews because that is very personal to me. I live on the east coast of Canada and I am well aware of the work of the Coast Guard, fisheries patrol vessels and the auxiliary vessels of the Department of National Defence and the Department of Public Works. I know the difficulties of engagement in that kind of occupation, but the ships crews know this very day that part of this process would have yielded to them what we have sought for decades. That is pay equality between east coast workers and west coast workers. It is a personal loss to me that the opportunity to bring about that pay equality, which could have been achieved Monday night by negotiation, was lost.

I can only hope that it will still come to those valued workers that they will receive pay equality through the process as established by this bill. It was in the hands of members of Parliament to deliver that goal which we have been trying to achieve for decades. It is unfortunate that that goal was lost. It was also the failure of the bargaining parties, but we had our opportunity. We had our chance and we did not take it.

Let me end by saying that we have a bill before the House of Commons, Bill C–49. It is not the kind of legislation in which members take any special heart. We recognize that it results from the failure of the system and the persons involved, the parties administering the

system, but at some point in time, it becomes the duty of parliamentarians to respect that broader public interest.

We have to put aside errors in judgment or otherwise of the past. We cannot assess fault. We have to deal with the realities of the situation. We cannot have our ships on the high seas unprotected. We cannot have ships tied up. We cannot have veterans, deserving of care, not receiving that care.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak to Bill C-49, legislation which forces two groups in the Public Service to go back to work.

First, I would like to comment on what the hon. member who spoke earlier said about language. I am sure he is more knowledgeable than I am about the English language, but I think the hon. member should understand why people want to make Canada's statutes gender-neutral. If we have a group of people, in this case Canadian women, who feel unfairly treated because of language, I think we have a moral obligation to take the time to make these changes. The hon. member talked about making changes, in French or English, to make all Canadians feel at home in this country. The hon. member who spoke earlier said in this respect that it was a lot of trouble and that it would be a full-time job to make all these changes. A change for the better is never too much trouble. These are things that have to be done.

We are equal in this country. We are all equal. Men are not more important than women, and vice versa, and if we are in a situation where we use language that will offend one group, we must change the words we use.

To get back to Bill C-49, the back to work legislation—-the previous speaker is from Halifax on the east coast. I fail to understand why he refuses to stick up for his own people. It seems seamen in eastern Canada are paid less than those on the Pacific coast. It is like saying that lumberjacks from one community are to be paid less than lumberjacks from another community. I don't understand that. Do they do the same work? Do they work for the same employer? Is the Atlantic Ocean easier to sail than the Pacific? Maybe someone could explain why one is more difficult than the other. If there is no difference, if the same kind of work is involved, why don't these people get the same salary? I don't blame seamen on the east coast for wanting to be paid the same as seamen on the west coast. I am told that on the west coast, seamen are prepared to accept a lower wage increase to compensate for what the seamen on the east coast will get. I think that shows the seamen with the Coast Guard in British Columbia have heart.

The words "emergency" and "safety" were mentioned, and the fact that a few days ago, the Coast Guard was needed in an emergency. Coast Guard employees were at their place of work, with their picket signs. It didn't take 35 minutes or an hour or two hours to find them. They were right there, in front of their place of work. It seems they were at sea 20 minutes. They did their job. That is really fantastic. We have a group that is walking the picket line, that is on strike, but when lives must be saved, whether they are Canadian or foreign lives, they are concerned, they take their work seriously and get on the job when people's safety is at stake.

• (1630)

When we talk about the people who work in our hospital services, I think they are right to ask for fair wages. I think it is horrifying and even immoral to see a woman working in one hospital and a man who does the same work in another building, two miles away or three or four kilometres away, and earns up to 40 per cent more. This is really beyond me. Are people paid on the basis of gender or are they paid for what they do?

I fail to understand the hon. member for Halifax West who is so concerned about gender in the legislation where it concerns the Public Service. He even goes so far as to tolerate the fact that women are paid less than men and that if women work in a field where they readily encounter the kind of attitude I just heard described—-I don't think that's fair. I think it is heartless and shows a lack of responsibility.

It seems that the men and women employed in hospital services are at the bottom of the wage scale in this country. Well, when we are sick—-maybe government members should be sick enough to go to a hospital where they could put their stupid arguments to the people who look after them and care for them. I wonder how they would feel then!

I wouldn't wish ill health on anyone, but perhaps a short experience of this kind would make them understand. If they had relatives, cousins, a sister or their mother, especially their mother who did this kind of work and they knew that one of their friends was earning 40 per cent more than their mother who works very hard, that should bring them to their senses.

Mr. Speaker, we live in Canada, we work in Canada, we were brought up in Canada, we want to raise our families in Canada and we also want to develop a sense of justice and improve our quality of life, and this is not done by downgrading either men, if one is a woman, or women, if one is a man, and especially not by downgrading people who are not as rich and not as powerful as we are. We must be fair, and as I said earlier, we must have heart.

I repeat that as a man, I would like to remind my fellow members, and especially those who do not speak my language, that they should improve their own language, if necessary, by removing all sexist terms, and learn to treat everyone with a sense of fairness and equity.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The question is on Motion No. 1. A vote on Motion No. 1 will be applied to Motions Nos. 4, 8, 13 and 16.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Motions Nos. 2 and 3 are virtually identical and the Chair has selected for debate only Motion No. 2. It will be voted on separately.

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn) moved:

Motion No. 2.

That Bill C–49 be amended in Clause 6 by striking out lines 37 to 39 at page 3 and substituting the following therefor:

"employer and the bargaining agent and shall be binding on the employer, the bargaining agent and the employees in that bargaining unit, on all matters relating to the employment of employees."

He said: Mr. Speaker, there is every likelihood that, just as surely as in the previous motion dealing with the Chair of the committee being referred to as Chairman in the text, this omission was something which could have been avoided. The omission of reference to the bargaining unit in this motion was probably due to either the government's lack of caring or understanding, or perhaps it is just simply an expression of the government's right–wing distaste for bargaining units.

The continuation of this whole concept certainly can be illustrated by the way in which the government has treated the members of the bargaining unit of the Public Service Alliance of Canada.

I mentioned previously that all through the history these two groups, the hospital services group and the ships' crews, have been precluded from going on strike. Successive governments have to do this consciously. Within a certain period of time after they receive notice from the bargaining unit, they have to let the bargaining unit know who within a particular group they wish to designate as essential. In the history of both of these groups the designation has been total. It almost begs the question, because they even do it in excess of total, if you can believe that. There have been times when the governments have actually designated as many as 110 per cent of the people involved as being essential.

Mr. Murphy: They're going to hire them and then force them back to work.

Mr. Fisher: That is right. So we have this concept of designation in addition to the obvious inequities which the hospital services group have suffered through the unwillingness of the government to come to terms with

the human rights decision and pay the hospital services group equitably.

In this case both the ships' crews group and the hospital services group are being adversely affected by the intransigence of the government. Intransigence hardly covers it. It is Draconian. Draconian in this context is not my word, it happens to be the description of a process which was used by the government back in 1986 when previous negotiations with the ships' crews led to an impasse and conciliation was followed through as is normal under the Public Service Staff Relations Act, the law governing negotiations with the government's employees.

The conciliation board reported that yes indeed these people had been underpaid. Its recommendation was that they be paid in a certain fashion and that fashion exceeded the general settlement which had been reached with the rest of the Public Service Alliance of Canada.

• (1640)

The government said no. The government refused to accept the conciliation board's report that these people, having been paid in an unfair way by the government, ought to be paid more. Again, out of desperation, just as surely as the situation we have before us now is a desperate one, the ships' crews went on what is commonly referred to as a wildcat strike. If you have been designated as being unable to go on strike and you do, certainly there is no question about it, everyone involved would admit that the law has been broken.

The government of course, in its usual benign fashion, summarily went to the courts and got an injunction. I would like to read something that the judge said in his decision on granting that injunction. Judge F. C. Muldoon said:

> Doubtless, these incidents do evince frustration in regard to the plight in which the defendants find themselves vis–à–vis statutory provisions which, without undue exaggeration, can be termed draconian.

When I used the word "Draconian", it is not a word which I alone have used in relation to what is happening. When a judge imposing an injunction against people refers to what is happening to them as being Draconian, it gives you an idea of the mentality of the government opposite. Obviously the mentality of the government has not changed, its outlook has not changed, its feelings toward its own employees have not changed in the intervening years.

There are many more things that could be referred to in relation to this and I would certainly like to refer to one or two others.

One of the parliamentary secretaries alluded to danger which was being faced by sailors on the high seas as a result of ships' crews who man our coast guard vessels being on strike. In every instance when these people have been called upon to respond to a situation of distress on the high seas, these crews have dropped their picket signs and gone on to those ships. Not only that, their union, the Public Service Alliance of Canada, in a case or two where these ships were in foreign lands, actually paid for these people to go to some place where they could be manning ships. The Public Service Alliance of Canada is paying for the hotel bills of these people standing by, it is paying for the meals of these people standing by, and when the need arises these people spring into action. The government has admitted that in every instance the response has been as good as ever and in some cases better than average, more expedient than is usually the case.

I think that speaks very highly of these people. Perhaps as the debate goes on I will be able to refer to how expediently the hospital services people tried to respond. The hospital services people tried to respond in a very similar manner to that of the ships' crews. The government accepted the offer of the ships' crews but turned down the hospital services group much, I would suggest, to its chagrin. Had the government behaved more kindly toward these people in the first place it would not have found itself in the nearly the trouble it is in and we would not be here debating this issue today.

I think I will probably have an opportunity to address this question a little later this afternoon.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, I must say that the fact that this motion even has to be debated today is a sign of the arrogance that the government has demonstrated throughout the last two years on negotiations with these workers. It has demonstrated that it is quite prepared to put an end to collective bargaining in the Public Service. It has abused over the last few years the designation process, disobeying the laws and then trying to go back through the

courts to get approval for its disobedience of the laws of Parliament.

The government knows perfectly well that this is a legitimate, acceptable amendment. It probably does nothing more than correct an oversight in the drafting of the legislation by asking that the law before us today that is part of the collective bargaining process simply recognize the bargaining agent as the other part of the contract between the employer and its employee.

In fact there is court precedent for this. The Supreme Court of Canada in two cases stated that a collective agreement replaces the terms of a master-servant contract for individual employees. The law relating to individual employment contracts is irrelevant when the employer-employee relationship is covered by a collective agreement in which case the agreement is between the bargaining agent and the employer.

All this motion is trying to do is correct a sloppily written piece of legislation to recognize the legal fact that a collective agreement is between a bargaining agent and the employer and not between the individual employees and the employer.

There has been a very recent decision on that when again this government tried to introduce a system of bonuses into the Public Service feeling that it could totally bypass the legitimate representative of the employees it was dealing with and deal with those employees one-on-one. The Federal Court of Appeal told the government that it could not do that, that it has an agreement between a bargaining agent and the employer, in this case the Government of Canada, and that its obligation is to change that agreement with the bargaining agent.

This government must be really paranoid or really arrogant if it is afraid to accept this amendment. That this should even have to be debated is a waste of the time of the House. It is an amendment that simply recognizes what the legal facts are in any collective bargaining situation.

I cannot disagree with the Public Service Alliance of Canada that represents the workers who are hit by this legislation when it says that the text of the clause, as it is now written, appears to be directly aimed at excluding the bargaining agent as a party to the agreement being put in place by the legislation, despite court rulings that say you cannot do that.

Instead of the government recognizing the havoc it has caused in hospitals across the country, in shipping lanes across the country and on the high seas, and trying at least to get through a half decent piece of legislation, it just sits there and ignores its legal obligations.

We are going to be voting on a lot of motions before this day is over and I have to express my personal absolute abhorrence for the government that refuses to even accept what the minister himself said was government policy and the policy of this place, that being that we no longer use sexist language in legislation. How dare they and how dare the Minister of State for the Status of Women sit there and say that she will pass another piece of sexist language based legislation in this House.

Mr. Howard Crosby (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I do not see any point in prolonging the debate on this amendment. It was dealt with at the legislative committee. Members opposite had the opportunity to question counsel learned in the law on the complaint about clause 6. The answer was given that the amendment now being proposed was redundant, involving a kind of legalese that has no real effect.

• (1650)

Notwithstanding that, I suppose that under other circumstances the government might be willing to accept an amendment, but at this point in time, bear in mind that the bill is transitory, it will only last for a limited period. It will not have any long-term effect beyond the resolution of this labour management dispute. There did not appear to be any point in responding to the proposal to amend in a positive way.

It is as simple as that. If anybody wants to look at the records of the legislative committee, they will find a complete answer to the matter given by the counsel. I have seen no legal-based opinion to indicate that the amendment was necessary and there seemed to be no real purpose served by responding to it.

At the same time, no one wishes to poison the possibility of settlement and better negotiations. It would only be in that spirit that the amendment would be accepted. With no commitment on the part of members of this House to agree upon other amendments which would advance the cause of the hospital workers and advance the cause of the ships' crews in matters of pay

equity and pay equality, there is no real purpose served by superficial amendments that just cater to the purists or people who have very defined legal views of the language used in the statute.

While I am on my feet I would like to again address the whole point behind this legislation. The situation in Canada is that we have no clear definition of essential services. I think everyone would be better off if all workers engaged in essential services knew that the work and activity in which they were involved was subject to special legislation that precluded the possibility of a work stoppage.

I hope that some day the Parliament of Canada will establish essential service legislation so that those engaged in that activity will recognize from day one that when they engage in that activity, they will not be allowed to stop that work contrary to the interests of the whole nation. Until we get this legislation we are going to have to deal with these matters on an ad hoc basis as they arise. We will have to assess in each case whether the legislated rights of workers will govern in a particular circumstance or whether the broader public interest will govern.

Again, let me remind all members of the House that the difficulty is in our failure to define essential services and our failure to deal with those services on a clear statutory base. We are left with dealing with situations as they arise. I think everyone in this House will agree that that is an unfortunate situation but until we can come to some consensus on appropriate limitations to the right to stop work, even where it is at the expense of the public, we are faced with these situations and we have to deal with them as our best judgment allows.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the House ready for the question?

Mrs. Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The minister referred to proceedings at the committee and I think inadvertently he has misinformed the House as to the discussion that took place at the committee. I have the minutes with me.

Just so the House will know the content of the discussion, in fact the motion was not accepted or rejected, but there was an agreement that the wording would be looked at to accomplish the objective. It is that wording that is now before the House. There was no advice or recommendation from the officials there that this was not necessary and I would be happy to provide the member with the actual discussion if he wishes to review it. I think it is important that this House not be misinformed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): That is a disagreement between two members. Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed will please nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8) the recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): moved:

Motion No. 5.

That Bill C-49 be amended in Clause 8 by striking out lines 15 to 20 at page 4.

Motion No. 7.

That Bill C-49 be amended in Clause 8 by adding immediately after line 38 at page 4 the following:

"(4) The members of the Conciliation Board shall, within five days of their appointment, attempt to agree on a nominee for chairman of the Conciliation Board.

(5) On receipt of a nomination within the period referred to in subsection (4), the Chairman shall appoint the nominee as the chairman of the Conciliation Board for which the person was nominated.

(6) If the members of the Conciliation Board fail to agree on a nominee for chairman of the Conciliation Board, the Chairman shall appoint as the chairman of that Board a person the Chairman deems fit for the purpose."

He said: Mr. Speaker, this is merely a continuation of the theme of heavy-handedness of this government which extends back to when it tried to prevent the hospital services people from receiving the just equalization payment *vis-à-vis* the group services people.

Something that keeps coming up throughout this discussion is how much the government cares about people. Government members refer constantly to how important it is that ships' crews go back to work so that the people at sea are well protected, in spite of all the evidence that they have been. They refer to the veterans and how important it is that they receive the care and attention to which, without doubt, they certainly are entitled.

I would suggest that that is something the government should have thought about when it was negotiating. It is something it should have thought about when it went back and tried to overturn a decision of a court to have these people designated as essential in the first place. The government probably spent as much money trying to have these people designated, after it made a mistake and it became impossible, as it would have if it had just agreed to the settlement which both these groups have proposed in negotiations.

This government cares not a whit for people. This is the same government that is bringing in the general sales tax which is going to hurt us all, including many of the nurses from one of the hospitals which is being so adversely affected because of this government's action, and the veterans who live there. I am glad to see the friends, neighbours and fellow workers of the people who are on strike supporting them.

This is the same government which brought in changes to the Unemployment Insurance Act which is going to devastate all parts of Canada. This is the same government which brought in the free trade deal. The government says that the strike is affecting farmers adversely. This is the government that is threatening the marketing boards of the agricultural communities in this country. This is the government that has accelerated the abandonment of rail lines. This is the government that has taken oats out of the Wheat Board, which is severely affecting the farmers of Canada.

I think it is atrocious that this government would take particularly vulnerable people, the veterans and the most poorly paid members of the Public Service, and then try to turn the farmers against them by saying that unless this strike is settled, there will be severe adverse conditions affecting farmers. I am sure that most of the farmers in this country do not feel any better about those hospital service workers being as badly paid as they are; that they are not receiving the kind of pay that they ought to be; that they are not going to get the pensions to which they otherwise would have been entitled.

• (1700)

I would suggest that on the basis of what has happened in particular to western Canadian agriculture in the last few years, they can sympathize with a group of people who have been out without a contract for two years. But what that really mean is that those people have been without a raise in pay for three years. That comes awfully close to the same kind of conditions in which the western Canadian farmer finds himself.

On that basis I am sure they can sympathize. To have circumvented the usual process of putting a chairperson in place by the parties involved rather than having one proposed to them is just a continuation of the same Draconian theme.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, this motion refers to Clause 8 of the bill. This clause perhaps more than any other exemplifies the reason that these two groups have been without a contract for over two years. It exemplifies quite clearly the approach that this government has brought to negotiations, the attempt to use its power, every ounce of delaying tactic, and every ounce of devious and cruel means it possibly can not to reach a settlement with these most vulnerable workers of the Canadian government.

These people earn $16,000, $17,000, $18,000, $19,000 a year. The value of their work as we have seen in the last couple of weeks is millions of dollars a day.

I have been speaking with the professional people who work in the hospital in Montreal. I have been hearing about what it is costing us in that hospital to keep services delivered to our veterans; how we are importing nurses from the west coast, putting them up in hotels;

how we are bribing the professional workers to keep on working—these people who support the hospital service workers, who support their work, who provide meals, cleaning, personal care, love and attention to the veterans in that hospital—and how it is costing us millions of dollars a day to keep these people away from work. They are providing special meals and are being provided extra pay. They are using the word of these professional workers who say: "Yes, conditions in the hospital are deteriorating". Then they are taking those words and twisting them, something which seems to be a speciality of the government with seniors as well, and saying: "That is why we need back to work legislation". That is not what those professionals are saying. They resent their words being used in that way.

I said that this demonstrates the arrogance and the willingness of this government to use its power instead of using good management and good labour negotiation techniques to reach a mutually amicable settlement to send people back to work with some sense of dignity, some pride in the work they do and some sense that their government appreciates the work they do. What this clause does is stack the negotiations, stack the conciliation process against them.

I want to remind the House that the conciliation process will be binding. These people will have to accept whatever comes out of that. That is what this government is imposing on them. It is stacking the deck against them by not following the normal procedure whereby each party to a negotiation names its representative and then those people agree on a mutually acceptable chair. It is instead appointing two out of three members of the conciliation board. What possible chance does the other side have when the government, with all its power, is saying: "We have got the majority on the board before it ever starts"? They are particularly concerned because the government has chosen in the conciliation of the hospital service workers' contract to bring in a new chair. This is not the person who throughout October listened to the arguments of both parties and was acceptable to both parties, who knows the issues, the situation, the status of the negotiations and might be able to proceed reasonably quickly to reach a settlement. They have chosen to bring in a new person, unfamiliar with the situation, somebody who has not been previously agreed to by both parties to the negotiations.

Is it any wonder that the hospital service workers think the government is deliberately bringing in a chair of this board who is favourable to the government's position, or likely to be?

The government could quite easily accept this amendment and put in place a fair process. It might give some remote hope to these people who are being forced back to work because the government has failed and neglected to fulfil its duty as an employer to reach an agreement with them and that they could go back with some optimism that this might be settled fairly. With the government stacking the deck against them this way they are going to go back to work bitter, defeated, and convinced that this government has no concept of the value of their work. Their patients do, and I think that is what has sustained them throughout.

The veterans in those hospitals and the Armed Forces personnel who they look after support these people. The volunteers in the hospital issued a press release just yesterday in support of the work they do and urging the government to be fair with them. The Human Rights Commission supports them. The Human Rights Commission has said: "Yes, since 1981 these people have been working for far less than they are worth and because of the inaction of this government they are still working for far less than they are worth."

Don't give me words about pay equity, equal pay for work of equal value, respecting the work of women as well as we respect the work of men, respecting the work of people at all levels. You have the chance to put in place a reasonably fair process, even in the context of this legislation. If the government members stand up and vote against this motion, don't ever say nice words in this House again because nobody will believe you.

I urge the government members to acknowledge that this is a fair amendment, that it gives the conciliation boards a reasonable chance of succeeding in the difficult work before them, and that it gives the workers a chance to go back in the two weeks before Christmas in a

reasonably good frame of mind and not to simply be stubborn and arrogant in refusing this motion.

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, it is hard to say that one is pleased to rise to address a bill such as the back to work bill now before us, but I am pleased the motion that stands in the name of my colleague, the member for Saskatoon—Dundurn, at least attempts to introduce a little bit of civilized procedure into what is an objectionable piece of legislation.

To comment briefly on the proposal before us itself, the present bill as it now stands would directly name and appoint the chairs of both conciliation boards. It is not just our opinion, but I believe it would be accepted as a fact that in the history of back to work legislation this kind of process is highly unusual and that the normal process would simply outline, within the bill, the process for such appointments after some discussion, or at least take into consideration the rightful opinions of the parties to the bargaining dispute. What this motion would do is delete that whole section and attempt to introduce a procedure whereby the parties themselves would have some opportunity to make the mechanisms involved in conciliation and the methods involved in choosing chairs for the conciliation boards more acceptable.

• (1710)

The failure of the government to take what has been the normal process into account is just one more example in a long history of bungling, ineptitude and lack of consideration shown by this government throughout this entire dispute.

The dispute itself deals with two categories, both ships' crews and hospital services. The employees are represented by the Public Service Alliance of Canada. Both of these groups have been without any economic increase since December, 1986. Their various contracts expired on December 21 and December 31, 1987. In a two-year period the government has bungled so much, so often and in so many ways that it must almost set new precedents in the history of bungled collective bargaining on the part of the federal government.

There are two issues that underline so much of this whole dispute. One is regional parity between the group on both the Atlantic coast and the Pacific coast and on the Lakes, which is involved in Coast Guard services. For hospital employees it is largely a matter of pay equity and equal work of equal value, largely for women workers and those in other lower paid categories who are attempting to get what they are really entitled to by the Charter of Rights of this country. The government has stalled, and stalled, and stalled, and stalled for so long that the workers have been left with no other opportunity but to withdraw their labour, a right which is as old as Magna Carta, even though it has not always been practised.

"No man shall be forced to build bridges" was written into the Magna Carta hundreds and hundreds of years ago. This government still does not recognize that right. That is a long time to go back, and a long time to learn a lesson. We are dealing not only with ineptitude, incompetence and what appears to be the worst of bad faith bargaining on the part of this government, but also a failure to recognize basic human rights in accordance with the right to strike.

In my own industry, which was the lumber industry in the province of British Columbia, in which I worked for years before coming to this place for the first time in 1980, we had a strike in 1967 dealing with exactly the issue of regional parity. There it was a matter of parity between the interior of British Columbia and the coastal areas of British Columbia. That strike makes this one so far look like a picnic. It went on seven and a half months and shut down virtually every lumber producing community throughout the southern interior of British Columbia. Feelings were strong. It was 22 years ago that we resolved that issue.

In 1989, is it too much to expect the Government of Canada to recognize that people who operate on the ships doing what they regard as essential services, life-saving services, have not earned that same kind of right 22 years later? That is hard to comprehend.

These two groups of employees are among the lowest paid in the public service, averaging some $18,000 to $23,000 per year. That puts them significantly behind their counterparts in the outside sector—anywhere from 14 to 28 per cent, depending on the group and area of employment. Any single parent or one-income family in that kind of group would be at or below poverty levels. That is obviously unacceptable and an unacceptable manner for us and for this government in particular to treat the employees who work so hard to save lives, whether in hospitals or at sea. Both these groups provide services of enormous social and economic importance to the nation. The government has recognized that simply by declaring them absolutely essential, although it did not do it at the proper time in order to keep designated employees on the job. That was some of its bungling. But it has accepted how valuable these employees are to the nation at large by saying that we cannot afford to do

without them and that is why it is choosing to force them back to work in an arbitrary manner.

During Question Period this morning I was absolutely astounded by the scandalous attitude portrayed by ministers of the government when they were being asked questions about the lack of government action to assist farmers in this country and the way they answered. It has to enrage people from one end of the country to the other when they suggested, "You cannot be interested in helping farmers or else you would force these other people back to work in order to get the grain moving". That is absolutely unacceptable. That is playing one group off against the other in an attempt to cover up your own failure to deal with either problem.

I do not know how we can appeal to the conscience of a government that engages in that kind of thuggery. But I would hope at least it would recognize that it is its responsibility to carry through this legislation in at least the most acceptable manner possible. One of the ways it could do that would be to accept this motion. That would at least give the employees within these two sectors the feeling that they were being listened to and that the kind of processes we have used before would be used to set out procedures to choose the chairs of the conciliation boards that are going to be dealing with their very legitimate grievances so that they will be appointed in a fair and impartial manner. That is all we are asking for by this motion. It will make a bad action somewhat more palatable.

I hope the government has enough common sense in spite of all its bungling prior to this time to accept this motion with the grace with which it is presented.

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr.Speaker, the letters and calls of support received in various members' offices, both government and opposition alike, lead me to conclude that the overwhelming majority of Canadians support these public servants in their efforts to attain pay equity. So what do we have? Once again we have this government surrounded by its friends in big business taking on the rest of Canada. The honest worker, the labourer, finds him and herself in a fight with government and big business. To add insult to injury the government wants to limit the debate on this question.

The government is in fact saying: "We will force these people back to work regardless of what anyone wants and we will do it without having to listen to your objections one instant longer than we have to."

At stake here are several important principles. The principle I would like to talk about first is the principle of pay equity.

We heard today the sorry state of pay equity in this country and the number of companies under the supposedly active legislation which do not even have the fortitude or the ability to stand up in Canada today and say: "Yes, we are implementing true pay equity."

We have a Royal Commission report that every member of parliament should read. I refer of course to the Abella report on employment equity. In that report Judge Abella called for employment equity legislation with teeth. That is not what we received. It is certainly not what the members of the Public Service who are on strike today are going to receive when this legislation is rammed through the House of Commons.

The question of the women seeking pay equity—pay equity that the Human Rights Commission has already stated they deserve—is something that has become nothing more than a national disgrace. Women in this country still make 67 cents for every dollar men make. That, Mr. Speaker, is when you add into the equation professional women, women running their own businesses and, yes, women who are members of Parliament and cabinet ministers.

• (1720)

When you take out of the equation women, in whatever small numbers, who are in the higher salary levels, women in this country make 50 cents for every dollar men make.

In this country today, a woman with a university education or a professional degree, such as a registered nurse, can expect to make the same as a man who dropped out of high school in grade 10. Where is the fairness, where is the equity in this situation for the women of Canada?

The women of Canada look to their government to protect them from the greed rampant among many of the people who employ them. When the government of Canada is that employer and it pays no heed to the calls for common justice and common fairness, then we are in a situation on the edge of 1990 that is absolutely unacceptable for anyone who believes in truth and in justice.

Everyone recognizes that this strike is affecting profits, that this strike is affecting the movement of ships in the Seaway, that this strike is affecting hospital care across this country. No one is in favour of the problems that this strike creates. Yet this strike is there because of a fundamental lack of justice in government policy.

The issue is whether or not the right to strike, the democratic right to dissent against unfair and unequal treatment, transcends the right to profit monetarily. The answer is and must be yes, individual dignity and individual search for justice and fairness has to be of a higher priority for the government of all of the people than the question of profit.

It would be pleasant, indeed it would be surprising, if even once this government tried to help the underdog and tried not to step on the average Canadian. But sadly, this has not been and apparently will not be the case. In all its pomposity, the government places the interests of big business ahead of anything else, ahead of human rights.

We have seen the government open up contacts, for example, with China, just one short month after Parliament unanimously condemned the Chinese government for human rights abuses. I guess an expectation on the part of Canadian workers, women and men, of justice in light of that kind of a development is a vain one. Just one short month after hundreds of innocent students protesting in a democratic fashion were massacred in China, this government cosied up with big business and the almighty dollar and wheeled and dealed with the butchers of Tiananmen Square.

There is another equally important principle which this government needs to address and that is the democratic right of association. Time after time, this government and the Prime Minister have challenged the authenticity of our Charter of Rights and Freedoms. "It is not worth the paper it is written on", the Prime Minister said, "because of the notwithstanding clause".

Well, if the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is worthless, it is only so because this government puts the sale of Canada and the sale of Canadians ahead of all other interests, ahead of all the traditions that we have held so dear, ahead of all those institutions in this country that have made us uniquely Canadian and a wonderful, individual society on the North American continent.

The democratic right of association, which includes the right to strike, is a principle, a legal, moral and ethical principle. But to this government, it is nothing more than an idea which is second to money, money and more money, and sadly, most particularly, American money.

In 1986, the government of Saskatchewan came under attack from various human rights organizations because it invoked the notwithstanding clause for legislation it passed on January 31 that ended rotating strikes by 12,000 public employees and imposed a legislative contract agreement. Saskatchewan invoked the notwithstanding clause before a challenge could be issued because the government was aware that its legislation was inconsistent with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

According to Chief Justice Dickson, the guarantee of freedom of association, Section 2(d) of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, includes the freedom to bargain collectively and to strike. Such legislation as that which is before us now interferes with the employees' freedom to engage in strike activity that would be lawful in the absence of Bill C–49.

I believe that the profits lost by the continuance of the strike would not merit exclusion under Section 1 of the Charter. The legislation is wrong. The government is wrong. The people are being put down and exploited because there is not a sense on the government side of the House of what is right and what is fair.

I see that the minister responsible for the status of women is in the House. Most particularly it is a tragedy that the rights of women to pay equity are being ignored and even vilified in this legislation. When the time comes I assure you the women of Canada will not continue to be silent. They will stand up for their rights. They will

exercise their rights at the ballot box, as well as elsewhere.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Howard Crosby (Halifax West): Mr. Speaker, if I may I would like very briefly to direct some remarks toward the proposed amendment.

Let me begin by saying, as I have tried to tell the House before, there comes a time in labour-management disputes when the matters at issue go beyond immediate concerns of that labour dispute and affect the broad public interest. That has been recognized in this House of Commons and in this Parliament of Canada time and time again. It has not been with any relish. Nobody enjoys back to work legislation. At some time Parliament has to accept its responsibility to the general public and introduce legislation.

May I indicate to the House some remarks made by a former Liberal cabinet minister who this very day sits in the House of Commons representing Papineau—Saint-Michel. He said it very well back on October 17, 1978 when he said in this House of Commons:

> Unfortunately, however, there are times and situations when the spirit of compromise and the demonstration of good faith so necessary on the part of all concerned are found wanting. In such circumstances the federal government, as custodian of the economy and protector of the public interest, must assume its responsibility.

That is the very case in which back to work legislation is introduced into the House of Commons—not to anybody's particular desire but as a way to protect the public interest and terminate a labour-management dispute and bring about a settlement.

The question that is posed by the amendment may be: "How do you bring about a settlement?" Obviously, you want to do it in the fairest and most expeditious way possible. The choice of the way in which you do it differs from case to case and from time to time and as the circumstances change. In the particular case, as was explained at the legislative committee, it was thought expeditious to name the chairpersons of the two conciliation boards who would deal with the separate disputes between, on the one hand, the hospital services group, and on the other hand the ships' crews group. That was the purpose of naming the chairpersons of those two conciliation boards, as explained by the minister and by his officials.

If it would serve the purposes of settlement to change that, I am sure there would be a disposition to make that change. But that disposition has to be evidenced, not by members opposite. They represent their constituencies. This is a bargaining situation. We have the Public Service Alliance on the one hand, the Treasury Board on the other. Who speaks for the Public Service Alliance? Not the member from Halifax, not the member from Ottawa West, not the member from Saskatoon—Dundurn. If the officials of the Public Service Alliance of Canada want specific changes made, they can speak in the negotiation that the President of the Treasury Board offered them in this House. Stay at the table and those changes can be negotiated, but not in debate in the House of Commons.

Surely the member from Ottawa West knows that that is not the way you resolve a labour-management dispute. You cannot resolve it on the floor of the House of Commons. It has to be resolved by the parties.

If the members want to serve a useful purpose in the resolution of this labour-management dispute, they should go back to the people they represent and urge them to sit at the table with the appropriate officials of the Public Service Alliance and of the Treasury Board and resolve these matters.

• (1730)

We are here to reflect the will of the parties once that will, that consensus, that agreement is achieved. I do not think, certainly speaking for the President of the Treasury Board, that his concerns are any more than I have stated. If there is a will on behalf of the bargaining parties to come to some agreement, the net agreement can be reflected in the legislation. But if there is no agreement, no meeting of the minds, there is no change that can be made that will advance the resolution of that dispute.

All members have to join in to ensure that this labour-management dispute is resolved as quickly as possible in the public interest, knowing full well that it takes away from the normal collective bargaining process. But we are here because the normal collective bargaining process has failed, just as the former Liberal minister said. There comes a time when it becomes our

responsibility as legislators on behalf of all of the people of Canada to resolve the dispute.

Let me talk for a moment about letters and cards. We are getting letters and communications. I received a very sad communication from a lady who wanted to remain anonymous. She said in a conversation with my constituency office that her husband was a member of the ships' crews sailing out of Halifax. She said that there were a lot of men who wanted to be legislated back to work. There was no food on the table. I do not know how many people are represented by this lady. But if there is one woman out there who has no food on the table, then I want to pay attention to her concern. At this stage of the labour dispute it is up to us to exercise our responsibility and get people back to work.

I do not want to exacerbate the problem of safety, but when someone from Saskatoon tells me that there is no problem on the east coast in seas two storeys high, I cannot let that pass; I have to address that subject.

Mr. Fisher: Your own minister said that the response has been terrific.

Mr. Crosby: We have this very day a barge carrying 150 tonnes of light diesel fuel that has broken away from its tow in high waves off the coast of Nova Scotia. We could sit here and do nothing. We could say: "So what? They should not have gone out if they did not have access to safety services". That is not the way I view it and that is not the way the government views it.

Ms. Clancy: You had two years.

Mr. Crosby: There is no point in looking back over the last two years. What mistakes were made are history. We have to deal with realities of this very day, December 13. We dealt with them on December 6. We brought legislation into the House to get workers back to work, to perform the services that people demand from the Government of Canada. We said the negotiations would continue, and they have. They could be going on right at this very moment. The dispute could be resolved. We could know even before voting time that the dispute is resolved, and I hope it is.

However, in the meantime we are exercising the responsibility that we have to exercise as parliamentarians. We know there are difficulties out there, but the resolution will not be aided by amendments in this House of Commons. It will only be aided by the parties getting together and resolving the dispute.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The question is on Motion No. 5, which will also dispose of Motion No. 7.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing order 76(8), the record division stands deferred.

The House will now proceed to Motions Nos. 9, 11, 12 and 14.

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn) moved:

Motion No. 9.

That Bill C-49 be amended in Clause 10 by adding immediately after line 17 at page 5 the following:

"(b) all matters relating to the Human Rights Tribunal order concerning equal pay for work of equal value for this group rendered on July 15, 1987;".

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West) moved:

Motion No. 11.

That Bill C-49 be amended in Clause 10 by adding immediately after line 17 at page 5 the following:

"(b) all wage matters relating to equal pay for work of equal value;".

Motion No. 12.

That Bill C-49 be amended in Clause 10 by adding immediately after line 42 at page 5 the following:

"(3) Nothing in this section shall be construed as derogating from the rights of the employees under the Canadian Human Rights Act."

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn) moved:

Motion No. 14.

That Bill C-49 be amended in Clause 11 by adding immediately after line 8 at page 6 the following:

"including implementation of the Human Rights tribunal order referred to in paragraph 10(1)(b)."

He said: Mr. Speaker, there is one item that I would like to touch upon just before I get into the essence of this motion. I would certainly like to set the record straight. If the member who just spoke was referring to me as being the person from Saskatoon who has no interest in what goes on on the east coast, I would like to assure him that indeed I do. Having lived on the west coast for a considerable period of time, I am familiar with the oceans and seafaring. I can assure the hon. member it is the government itself that has said the response of those people has been exemplary. The parliamentary secretary is playing with words and using the situation to try to alienate people, and he is not being successful.

The motion we have before us at the moment goes to the very heart of what this dispute is about, particularly for the hospital services people. We know from the debate which has gone on this afternoon that the Canadian Human Rights Commission made a decision long ago that the hospital services people should be paid at the same rate as the general services people. The decision was made on the basis that the HS group was primarily women and that there was a discriminatory action being taken by the government in not paying them equally.

This motion would put into place the provisions whereby this inequity can be addressed in this round of negotiations so that we do not have to wait for some long drawn out process. It escapes me entirely why the government is so insistent on drawing it out, other than the fact that it is reluctant to expend this money, I suppose. Maybe that is it.

The Conservatives have not said it yet. This is about the only piece of legislation in the last year where they have not made reference to the deficit. Perhaps they expect to recover from the deficit at the expense of these people. Considering what they have done to them already, I suggest that maybe that is the case.

That is the heart of the matter. It is a mystery to me why the Canadian government at any stage, whether the Liberals before this government or this government since it has come into office, would drag a situation out so long. Why would they not include those equalization payments as part of wages so that they can be included in these people's pensions? Why they will not do it within this legislation and get on with it is a mystery to me.

There are a couple of other things that ought to be referred to but which time is not going to permit us to debate at any great length, and that is a motion which refers to the length of the contract. It is doubtful whether we will get a chance to debate it this afternoon. It is important that when the legislation is passed—and I know the government is going to vote against it, but I would hope that the conciliator would take note of it—to make sure that the lengths of the contract do not extend beyond the present length of the contract of the Public Service Alliance of Canada general agreement.

In addition, there is reference in the legislation to liability in cases of non-compliance. We are suggesting that if government members are going to include reference to the union in that clause, they ought to be making reference to the employer which of course is themselves. The government ought to be making reference to agents of the employer. I do recognize that in its most definitive sense what we are really referring to is the Queen. It is rather doubtful whether or not if the government were to be non-compliant we would be wanting to incarcerate the Queen. Certainly not.

• (1740)

There ought to be references to the employer. Having referred to those two issues in addition to the very essential one of affirmative action, the government ought to stop dithering around, get down to work, and negotiate with these employees in good faith. It has been demonstrated since 1981 that it has not been doing this. Certainly it has been demonstrated in the last two years that it has not been doing it. It is a little late, but I would suggest that the government ought to be doing that and doing it now.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member for Halifax West on a point of order.

Mr. Crosby: The amendment was proposed by my hon. friend who has just spoken, Mr. Speaker. I think it would be appropriate for the government to respond to that specific amendment in the interests of the debate, but I will be governed by your wishes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): That really is the way it should be done. There are still a few minutes left, and I am sure the hon. member for Halifax West will split the time with the hon. member for Ottawa West.

Mrs. Catterall: Mr. Speaker, we have a group of motions before us, some of which were moved by the hon. member for Saskatoon—Dundurn and some of which were moved by myself. I presume I can speak to my own motion before its is responded to rather than after.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member for Ottawa West has the floor. The hon. member for Halifax West.

Mr. Crosby: Mr. Speaker, I would like to get the ground rules straight. I thought we would divide the time equally. Of course, if the members are not interested in what the government has to say about pay equity, it once again demonstrates that they are not interested in the realities of this dispute: pay equity, equality of pay; they are just posturing in an attempt to appeal to somebody outside this chamber.

Mrs. Catterall: Mr. Speaker, obviously I am going to have to speak extremely quickly. This group of motions before us is at the heart of both these strikes. It has to do with pay equity.

The government should have dealt fairly with the issue of pay equity with basic human decency, with the basic right of people to be paid a fair wage for the work they do equal to anybody else doing work of equal value. It has had over two years to do that. This strike of the hospital service workers would not be happening, and there is a very good chance that the strike of the ships' crew workers would never have happened.

This government is paralysed with fear to have a conciliation board deal with the issue of pay equity. I have a letter from the minister responsible for the Treasury Board which states that the adjustment of wages to meet equal pay for work of equal value can only happen in negotiations. It cannot happen through the Human Rights Commission, and the minister responsible for the status of women knows it.

This week we commemorated the passing of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We are trampling on human rights with this legislation. We are trampling on human rights with the way these workers have been treated for the last two years. The minister responsible for the status of women sits there as if this is a matter of no concern to her.

We have talked about violence against women for a week. We have been shocked by the implications of what we have seen happen in Montreal. We have seen a consciousness raising among both women and men like I have never seen happen before in a short period of time. Violence against women takes many forms. One of the most pernicious, damaging and dangerous violences against women and as a result against their children and their families is economic violence. We know that women are underpaid for the work they do and now this government wants to perpetuate that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It being 5.45 p.m., pursuant to Order made Tuesday, December 12, 1989, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the report stage of the bill now before the House.

The question is on Motion No. 9. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 14. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The next question is on Motion No. 15.

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): moved:

Motion No. 15.

That Bill C-49 be amended in Clause 11 by striking out lines 14 to 16 at page 6 and substituting the following therefor:

"shall not be earlier than December 21, 1990 or later than June 21, 1991, in the case of the agreements referred to in paragraph 10(1)(a) or not earlier than December 30, 1990 or later than June 30, 1991 in".

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 17.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West) moved:

Motion No. 17.

That Bill C-49 be amended in Clause 14 by striking out lines 9 to 20 at page 7 and substituting the following therefor:

"14. (1) Subject to subsection (2), an individual who contravenes any provision of this Act is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction and is liable, for each day or part thereof during which the offence continues, to a fine of not less than $500 nor more than $1,000.

(2) Where an individual contravenes any provision of this Act while acting in the capacity of an officer or representative of the employer or the bargaining agent, the individual is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction and is liable, for each day or part thereof during which the offence continues, to a fine of not less than $10,000 nor more than $50,000."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76 (8), the recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 18.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West) moved:

Motion No. 18.

That Bill C-49 be amended in Clause 14 by striking out line 21 at page 7 and substituting the following therefor:

"(2) Where the employer or the bargaining agent contra-".

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred divisions on Bill C-49, an act to provide for the resumption of certain government services, as reported (without amendment) from a legislative committee.

Call in the members.

And the division bells having rung:

• (1805)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There is agreement on Motion No. 1. It will be adopted and there will be no recorded division on Motion No. 1.

Therefore, I declare Motions Nos. 1, 4, 8, 13 and 16 carried.

Motions Nos. 1, 4, 8, 13 and 16 agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The next question is on Motion No. 2.

The House divided on the motion, which was negatived on the following division:

(*Division No. 148*)

YEAS

Members

Allmand	Althouse
Angus	Assad
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)	Bélair
Bellemare	Benjamin
Berger	Bevilacqua
Black	Blackburn (Brant)
Blaikie	Blondin
Boudria	Butland
Caccia	Campbell (South West Nova)
Catterall	Clancy
Crawford	de Jong
Dionne	Duhamel
Ferguson	Finestone
Fisher	Fontana
Foster	Gagliano
Gauthier	Guarnieri
Harvard	Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hunter	Kaplan
Karpoff	Keyes
Kristiansen	Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)	Laporte
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)	Lee
MacLellan	Manley
Marchi	McCurdy
McLaughlin	Mifflin
Milliken	Mitchell
Murphy	Nault
Nunziata	Nystrom
Pagtakhan	Parent
Parker	Peterson
Phinney	Pickard
Proud	Prud'homme
Riis	Robichaud
Robinson	Rodriguez
Rompkey	Simmons
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)	Speller
Stupich	Taylor
Tobin	Vanclief
Walker	Wappel
Whittaker	Wood
Young (Gloucester)	Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—82

NAYS

Members

Anderson	Andre
Atkinson	Attewell
Beatty	Belsher
Bernier	Bertrand
Bird	Bjornson
Blackburn (Jonquière)	Bosley
Bouchard (Roberval)	Brightwell
Browes	Cadieux
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)	Cardiff
Casey	Chadwick
Champagne (Champlain)	Chartrand
Clark (Brandon—Souris)	Cole
Collins	Cook
Cooper	Côté
Crosby (Halifax West)	Darling
DeBlois	de Cotret
Della Noce	Desjardins
Dobbie	Domm
Dorin	Edwards
Epp	Fee
Feltham	Ferland
Fontaine	Fretz
Friesen	Gérin
Gibeau	Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Greene	Grey (Beaver River)
Guilbault	Gustafson
Halliday	Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hawkes	Hicks
Hockin	Hogue
Holtmann	Horning
Hughes	James
Jelinek	Johnson
Jourdenais	Kempling
Koury	Landry
Langlois	Layton
Littlechild	Loiselle
Lopez	MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacDougall (Timiskaming)	MacKay
Malone	Marin
Martin (Lincoln)	Masse
Mayer	Mazankowski
McCreath	McDermid
McDougall (St. Paul's)	McKnight
Merrithew	Monteith
Moore	Nicholson
Oberle	O'Kurley
Plamondon	Plourde
Porter	Pronovost
Redway	Reimer
Ricard	Richardson
Robitaille	Roy-Arcelin
St-Julien	Schneider
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)	Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Shields	Siddon
Sobeski	Sparrow

Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Van de Walle
Vézina
Vincent
Wenman
Wilbee
Assiniboia)
Winegard
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vankoughnet
Vien
Weiner
White
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)
Worthy—133

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I declare the motion lost. The hon. member for Churchill on a point of order.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, I think you will find that there is agreement among the parties to count that vote against all the other deferred votes from this afternoon on the assumption on the final vote on report stage would be reversed.

Miss Grey: In the interest of saving time I would like it recorded that on Motion Nos. 5 and 7 which are grouped together and Motion No. 17, I would like my vote registered in the affirmative and then to concur at the report stage with Bill C–49, voting yes with the government.

• (1820)

Mrs. Gaffney: Mr. Speaker, had I been here for the last vote, I would have voted with the yeas, and any other votes I will vote in that manner.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The next question is on Motion No. 5.

The House divided on the motion, which was negatived on the following division:

(Division No. 149)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bellemare
Berger
Black
Blaikie
Boudria
Caccia
Catterall
Crawford
Dionne
Ferguson
Fisher
Foster
Gagliano
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvard
Hunter
Karpoff
Kristiansen
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacLellan
Althouse
Assad
Bélair
Benjamin
Bevilacqua
Blackburn (Brant)
Blondin
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Clancy
de Jong
Duhamel
Finestone
Fontana
Gaffney
Gauthier
Guarnieri
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Kaplan
Keyes
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)
Laporte
Lee
Manley
Marchi
McLaughlin
Milliken
Murphy
Nunziata
Pagtakhan
Parker
Phinney
Proud
Riis
Robinson
Rompkey
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Stupich
Tobin
Walker
Whittaker
Young (Gloucester)
McCurdy
Mifflin
Mitchell
Nault
Nystrom
Parent
Peterson
Pickard
Prud'homme
Robichaud
Rodriguez
Simmons
Speller
Taylor
Vanclief
Wappel
Wood
Young (Beaches —Woodbine)—84

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Beatty
Bernier
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bouchard (Roberval)
Browes
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Cooper
Crosby (Halifax West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dobbie
Dorin
Epp
Feltham
Fontaine
Friesen
Gibeau
Greene
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Hogue
Horning
James
Johnson
Kempling
Landry
Layton
Loiselle
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacKay
Marin
Masse
Mazankowski
McDermid
McKnight
Monteith
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Sparrow
Tardif
Andre
Attewell
Belsher
Bertrand
Bjornson
Bosley
Brightwell
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Chartrand
Cole
Cook
Côté
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm
Edwards
Fee
Ferland
Fretz
Gérin
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Guilbault
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Holtmann
Hughes
Jelinek
Jourdenais
Koury
Langlois
Littlechild
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Malone
Martin (Lincoln)
Mayer
McCreath
McDougall (St. Paul's)
Merrithew
Moore
Oberle
Plamondon
Porter
Redway
Ricard
Robitaille
St-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Stevenson
Tétreault

Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vankoughnet
Vien
Weiner
White
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)
Worthy—132
Thompson
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Van de Walle
Vézina
Vincent
Wenman
Wilbee
Winegard

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I declare the motion lost. I therefore declare Motion No. 7 lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 9.

The House divided on the motion, which was negatived on the following division:

(Division No. 150)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bellemare
Berger
Black
Blaikie
Boudria
Caccia
Catterall
Crawford
Dionne
Ferguson
Fisher
Foster
Gagliano
Guarnieri
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Kaplan
Keyes
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)
Laporte
Lee
Manley
McCurdy
Mifflin
Mitchell
Nault
Nystrom
Parent
Peterson
Pickard
Prud'homme
Robichaud
Rodriguez
Simmons
Speller
Taylor
Vanclief
Wappel
Wood
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—83
Althouse
Assad
Bélair
Benjamin
Bevilacqua
Blackburn (Brant)
Blondin
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Clancy
de Jong
Duhamel
Finestone
Fontana
Gaffney
Gauthier
Harvard
Hunter
Karpoff
Kristiansen
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacLellan
Marchi
McLaughlin
Milliken
Murphy
Nunziata
Pagtakhan
Parker
Phinney
Proud
Riis
Robinson
Rompkey
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Stupich
Tobin
Walker
Whittaker
Young (Gloucester)

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Beatty
Bernier
Bird
Andre
Attewell
Belsher
Bertrand
Bjornson
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bouchard (Roberval)
Browes
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Cooper
Crosby (Halifax West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dobbie
Dorin
Epp
Feltham
Fontaine
Friesen
Gibeau
Greene
Guilbault
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Holtmann
Hughes
Jelinek
Jourdenais
Koury
Langlois
Littlechild
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Malone
Martin (Lincoln)
Mayer
McCreath
McDougall (St. Paul's)
Merrithew
Moore
Oberle
Plamondon
Porter
Redway
Ricard
Robitaille
St-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Van de Walle
Vézina
Vincent
Wenman
Wilbee
Assiniboia)
Winegard
Bosley
Brightwell
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Chartrand
Cole
Cook
Côté
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm
Edwards
Fee
Ferland
Fretz
Gérin
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Grey (Beaver River)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Hogue
Horning
James
Johnson
Kempling
Landry
Layton
Loiselle
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacKay
Marin
Masse
Mazankowski
McDermid
McKnight
Monteith
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vankoughnet
Vien
Weiner
White
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)
Worthy—133

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I declare the motion lost. I therefore declare Motions Nos. 11 and 12 lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 14.

The House divided on the motion, which was negatived on the following division:

Government Orders

(Division No. 151)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bellemare
Berger
Black
Blaikie
Boudria
Caccia
Catterall
Crawford
Dionne
Ferguson
Fisher
Foster
Gagliano
Guarnieri
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Kaplan
Keyes
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)
Laporte
Lee
Manley
McCurdy
Mifflin
Mitchell
Nault
Nystrom
Parent
Peterson
Pickard
Prud'homme
Robichaud
Rodriguez
Simmons
Speller
Taylor
Vanclief
Wappel
Wood
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—83

Althouse
Assad
Bélair
Benjamin
Bevilacqua
Blackburn (Brant)
Blondin
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Clancy
de Jong
Duhamel
Finestone
Fontana
Gaffney
Gauthier
Harvard
Hunter
Karpoff
Kristiansen
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacLellan
Marchi
McLaughlin
Milliken
Murphy
Nunziata
Pagtakhan
Parker
Phinney
Proud
Riis
Robinson
Rompkey
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Stupich
Tobin
Walker
Whittaker
Young (Gloucester)

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Beatty
Bernier
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bouchard (Roberval)
Browes
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Cooper
Crosby (Halifax West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dobbie
Dorin
Epp
Feltham
Fontaine
Friesen
Gibeau
Greene

Andre
Attewell
Belsher
Bertrand
Bjornson
Bosley
Brightwell
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Chartrand
Cole
Cook
Côté
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm
Edwards
Fee
Ferland
Fretz
Gérin
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Grey (Beaver River)

Guilbault
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Holtmann
Hughes
Jelinek
Jourdenais
Koury
Langlois
Littlechild
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Malone
Martin (Lincoln)
Mayer
McCreath
McDougall (St. Paul's)
Merrithew
Moore
Oberle
Plamondon
Porter
Redway
Ricard
Robitaille
St-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Van de Walle
Vézina
Vincent
Wenman
Wilbee
Winegard

Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Hogue
Horning
James
Johnson
Kempling
Landry
Layton
Loiselle
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacKay
Marin
Masse
Mazankowski
McDermid
McKnight
Monteith
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vankoughnet
Vien
Weiner
White
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)
Worthy—133

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I declare the motion lost. The next question is on Motion No. 15.

The House divided on the motion, which was negatived on the following division:

(Division No. 152)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bellemare
Berger
Black
Blaikie
Boudria
Caccia
Catterall
Crawford
Dionne
Ferguson
Fisher
Foster
Gagliano
Guarnieri
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Kaplan
Keyes
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)
Laporte
Lee
Manley
McCurdy

Althouse
Assad
Bélair
Benjamin
Bevilacqua
Blackburn (Brant)
Blondin
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Clancy
de Jong
Duhamel
Finestone
Fontana
Gaffney
Gauthier
Harvard
Hunter
Karpoff
Kristiansen
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacLellan
Marchi
McLaughlin

Mifflin
Mitchell
Nault
Nystrom
Parent
Peterson
Pickard
Prud'homme
Robichaud
Rodriguez
Simmons
Speller
Taylor
Vanclief
Wappel
Wood
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—83

Milliken
Murphy
Nunziata
Pagtakhan
Parker
Phinney
Proud
Riis
Robinson
Rompkey
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Stupich
Tobin
Walker
Whittaker
Young (Gloucester)

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Beatty
Bernier
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bouchard (Roberval)
Browes
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Cooper
Crosby (Halifax West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dobbie
Dorin
Epp
Feltham
Fontaine
Friesen
Gibeau
Greene
Guilbault
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Holtmann
Hughes
Jelinek
Jourdenais
Koury
Langlois
Littlechild
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Malone
Martin (Lincoln)
Mayer
McCreath
McDougall (St. Paul's)
Merrithew
Moore
Oberle
Plamondon
Porter
Redway
Ricard
Robitaille
St-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Stevenson
Tétreault

Andre
Attewell
Belsher
Bertrand
Bjornson
Bosley
Brightwell
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Chartrand
Cole
Cook
Côté
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm
Edwards
Fee
Ferland
Fretz
Gérin
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Grey (Beaver River)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Hogue
Horning
James
Johnson
Kempling
Landry
Layton
Loiselle
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacKay
Marin
Masse
Mazankowski
McDermid
McKnight
Monteith
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker

Thompson
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Van de Walle
Vézina
Vincent
Wenman
Wilbee
Assiniboia)
Winegard

Thorkelson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vankoughnet
Vien
Weiner
White
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)
Worthy—133

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I declare the motion lost. The next question is on Motion No. 17.

The House divided on the motion, which was negatived on the following division:

(*Division No. 153*)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bellemare
Berger
Black
Blaikie
Boudria
Caccia
Catterall
Crawford
Dionne
Ferguson
Fisher
Foster
Gagliano
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvard
Hunter
Karpoff
Kristiansen
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacLellan
Marchi
McLaughlin
Milliken
Murphy
Nunziata
Pagtakhan
Parker
Phinney
Proud
Riis
Robinson
Rompkey
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Stupich
Tobin
Walker
Whittaker
Young (Gloucester)

Althouse
Assad
Bélair
Benjamin
Bevilacqua
Blackburn (Brant)
Blondin
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Clancy
de Jong
Duhamel
Finestone
Fontana
Gaffney
Gauthier
Guarnieri
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Kaplan
Keyes
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)
Laporte
Lee
Manley
McCurdy
Mifflin
Mitchell
Nault
Nystrom
Parent
Peterson
Pickard
Prud'homme
Robichaud
Rodriguez
Simmons
Speller
Taylor
Vanclief
Wappel
Wood
Young (Beaches —Woodbine)—84

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Beatty
Bernier
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bouchard (Roberval)

Andre
Attewell
Belsher
Bertrand
Bjornson
Bosley
Brightwell

Browes
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Cooper
Crosby (Halifax West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dobbie
Dorin
Epp
Feltham
Fontaine
Friesen
Gibeau
Greene
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Hogue
Horning
James
Johnson
Kempling
Landry
Layton
Loiselle
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacKay
Marin
Masse
Mazankowski
McDermid
McKnight
Monteith
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vankoughnet
Vien
Weiner
White
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)
Worthy—132

Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Chartrand
Cole
Cook
Côté
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm
Edwards
Fee
Ferland
Fretz
Gérin
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Guilbault
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Holtmann
Hughes
Jelinek
Jourdenais
Koury
Langlois
Littlechild
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Malone
Martin (Lincoln)
Mayer
McCreath
McDougall (St. Paul's)
Merrithew
Moore
Oberle
Plamondon
Porter
Redway
Ricard
Robitaille
St-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Van de Walle
Vézina
Vincent
Wenman
Wilbee
Winegard

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I declare the motion lost. The next question is on Motion No. 18.

The House divided on the motion, which was negatived on the following division:

(Division No. 154)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bellemare
Berger
Black
Blaikie
Boudria

Althouse
Assad
Bélair
Benjamin
Bevilacqua
Blackburn (Brant)
Blondin
Butland

Caccia
Catterall
Crawford
Dionne
Ferguson
Fisher
Foster
Gagliano
Guarnieri
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Kaplan
Keyes
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)
Laporte
Lee
Manley
McCurdy
Mifflin
Mitchell
Nault
Nystrom
Parent
Peterson
Pickard
Prud'homme
Robichaud
Rodriguez
Simmons
Speller
Taylor
Vanclief
Wappel
Wood
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—83

Campbell (South West Nova)
Clancy
de Jong
Duhamel
Finestone
Fontana
Gaffney
Gauthier
Harvard
Hunter
Karpoff
Kristiansen
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacLellan
Marchi
McLaughlin
Milliken
Murphy
Nunziata
Pagtakhan
Parker
Phinney
Proud
Riis
Robinson
Rompkey
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Stupich
Tobin
Walker
Whittaker
Young (Gloucester)

NAYS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Beatty
Bernier
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bouchard (Roberval)
Browes
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Cooper
Crosby (Halifax West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dobbie
Dorin
Epp
Feltham
Fontaine
Friesen
Gibeau
Greene
Guilbault
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Holtmann
Hughes
Jelinek
Jourdenais
Koury
Langlois
Littlechild
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Malone
Martin (Lincoln)

Andre
Attewell
Belsher
Bertrand
Bjornson
Bosley
Brightwell
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Chartrand
Cole
Cook
Côté
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm
Edwards
Fee
Ferland
Fretz
Gérin
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Grey (Beaver River)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Hogue
Horning
James
Johnson
Kempling
Landry
Layton
Loiselle
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacKay
Marin
Masse

Mayer
McCreath
McDougall (St. Paul's)
Merrithew
Moore
Oberle
Plamondon
Porter
Redway
Ricard
Robitaille
St-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Van de Walle
Vézina
Vincent
Wenman
Wilbee
Assiniboia)
Winegard
Mazankowski
McDermid
McKnight
Monteith
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vankoughnet
Vien
Weiner
White
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)
Worthy—133

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I declare the motion lost.

Mr. de Cotret moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in.

The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:

(*Division No. 155*)

YEAS

Members

Anderson
Atkinson
Beatty
Bernier
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Bouchard (Roberval)
Browes
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Cooper
Crosby (Halifax West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Dobbie
Dorin
Epp
Feltham
Fontaine
Friesen
Gibeau
Greene
Guilbault
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Holtmann
Hughes
Jelinek
Jourdenais
Koury
Langlois
Littlechild
Andre
Attewell
Belsher
Bertrand
Bjornson
Bosley
Brightwell
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Chartrand
Cole
Cook
Côté
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Domm
Edwards
Fee
Ferland
Fretz
Gérin
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Grey (Beaver River)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Hogue
Horning
James
Johnson
Kempling
Landry
Layton
Loiselle
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Malone
Martin (Lincoln)
Mayer
McCreath
McDougall (St. Paul's)
Merrithew
Moore
Oberle
Plamondon
Porter
Redway
Ricard
Robitaille
St-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Van de Walle
Vézina
Vincent
Wenman
Wilbee
Assiniboia)
Winegard
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacKay
Marin
Masse
Mazankowski
McDermid
McKnight
Monteith
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plourde
Pronovost
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vankoughnet
Vien
Weiner
White
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)
Worthy—133

NAYS

Members

Allmand
Angus
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bellemare
Berger
Black
Blaikie
Boudria
Caccia
Catterall
Crawford
Dionne
Ferguson
Fisher
Foster
Gagliano
Guarnieri
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Kaplan
Keyes
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)
Laporte
Lee
Manley
McCurdy
Mifflin
Mitchell
Nault
Nystrom
Parent
Peterson
Pickard
Prud'homme
Robichaud
Rodriguez
Simmons
Speller
Taylor
Vanclief
Wappel
Wood
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—83 *ediv
Althouse
Assad
Bélair
Benjamin
Bevilacqua
Blackburn (Brant)
Blondin
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Clancy
de Jong
Duhamel
Finestone
Fontana
Gaffney
Gauthier
Harvard
Hunter
Karpoff
Kristiansen
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacLellan
Marchi
McLaughlin
Milliken
Murphy
Nunziata
Pagtakhan
Parker
Phinney
Proud
Riis
Robinson
Rompkey
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Stupich
Tobin
Walker
Whittaker
Young (Gloucester)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I declare the motion carried.

It being 6.23 p.m. this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 6.23 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, December 14, 1989

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

NATIONAL ENERGY BOARD ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed from Tuesday, December 12, consideration of the motion of Mr. Epp that Bill C-23, an act to amend the National Energy Board Act and to repeal certain enactments in consequence thereof, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Speaker: It being 11 a.m., pursuant to Order made Tuesday, December 12, 1989, the House will proceed to the taking of the deferred division on the motion of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources for the third reading of Bill C-23, an act to amend the National Energy Board Act and to repeal certain enactments in consequence thereof.

The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:

(*Division No. 156*)

YEAS

Members

Anderson
Andre
Atkinson
Attewell
Beatty
Belsher
Bird
Bjornson
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blenkarn
Bosley
Bouchard (Roberval)
Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Brightwell
Browes
Cadieux
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Cardiff
Casey
Chadwick
Champagne (Champlain)
Charest
Chartrand
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Cole
Collins
Cook
Cooper
Corbeil
Corbett
Côté
Couture
Crosbie (St. John's West)
Crosby (Halifax West)
Darling
DeBlois
de Cotret
Della Noce
Desjardins
Dick
Dobbie
Domm
Dorin
Duplessis
Edwards
Epp
Fee
Feltham
Ferland
Fontaine
Fretz
Friesen
Gérin
Gibeau
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Greene
Guilbault
Gustafson
Halliday
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hawkes
Hockin
Hogue
Holtmann
Horning
Hudon
Hughes
Jacques
James
Jelinek
Johnson
Jourdenais
Kempling
Koury
Landry
Langlois
Layton
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lewis
Littlechild
Loiselle
Lopez
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Malone
Marin
Martin (Lincoln)
Masse
Mazankowski
McCreath
McDermid
McDougall (St. Paul's)
McKnight
Merrithew
Monteith
Moore
Nicholson
Nowlan
Oberle
O'Kurley
Plamondon
Plourde
Porter
Pronovost
Redway
Reimer
Ricard
Richardson
Robitaille
Roy-Arcelin
St-Julien
Schneider
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Shields
Siddon
Sobeski
Sparrow
Stevenson
Tardif
Têtreault
Thacker
Thompson
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Rosemont)
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van de Walle
Vézina
Vien
Vincent
Weiner
Wenman
White
Wilbee
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)
Winegard
Worthy—140

NAYS

Members

Allmand
Angus
Assad
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bélair
Black
Blaikie
Blondin
Boudria
Butland
Caccia
Callbeck
Campbell (South West Nova)
Catterall
Clancy
Crawford
de Jong
Duhamel
Ferguson
Flis
Fontana
Gauthier
Gray (Windsor West)
Grey (Beaver River)
Guarnieri
Harb
Harvard
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hopkins
Hunter
Karpoff
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Kristiansen
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)

Lee	MacAulay
MacLellan	Manley
Marchi	McCurdy
McGuire	Milliken
Mills	Murphy
Nault	Nystrom
Ouellet	Pagtakhan
Parker	Peterson
Proud	Rideout
Riis	Robichaud
Rocheleau	Rodriguez
Stewart	Stupich
Vanclief	Volpe
Wappel	Whittaker
Wood—65	

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Holtmann: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I noticed during the vote today the hon. member from Davenport came half-dressed. I wonder if the hon. member would consider doing the honourable thing and withdrawing his vote, or else going to borrow a tie from Herb Gray.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I think most members are aware of the way members should dress in the House. It is stated quite clearly in Beauchesne's that the dress of members should be conservative, contemporary dress. That is the rule.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It does happen, when we have votes, that members may come in at the last second and may not technically fit the criteria set out in Beauchesne's. It is for that reason that in the past we have allowed those members their voting privileges. However, if the time came for the member to speak in the House then the decision of the Chair could be different.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

ORDER IN COUNCIL

TABLING OF APPOINTMENTS AND REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEES

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, a number of Order in Council appointments which were made by the government. Pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 110(1), these are deemed referred to the appropriate standing committees, a list of which is attached.

* * *

• (1140)

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government responses to several petitions.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

* * *

[*Translation*]

REGULATORY AFFAIRS

TABLING OF THE FEDERAL REGULATORY PLAN 1990

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Privatization and Regulatory Affairs)): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, copies of the Federal Regulatory Plan 1990.

* * *

NATIONAL BLOOD SUPPLY SYSTEM

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have one of the best health care systems in the world. The national blood supply program is a vital component of this system. Canadians give blood generously, and tens of thousands of lives are saved thanks to these blood donations and the products derived from that blood.

For decades, our national blood supply has been a key component of Canada's public health policy and practice. The public must be able to have confidence in the system.

Thanks to new technologies and our bank of donors, Canada has one of the safest blood supplies in the world.

In fact, never at any time in our history has our blood supply been as safe as it is today.

[*English*]

There is absolutely no risk of contracting AIDS by donating blood, and less than one chance in a million of contracting AIDS from the blood supply or from blood

products. Each and every unit of blood is thoroughly tested by the Canadian Red Cross Society for HIV and for other blood-borne infections.

For a short while in the early 1980s the blood supply in many countries, including Canada, was contaminated by the AIDS virus. Scientists and governments banded together in an immense and successful effort to restore its purity. We developed methods of identifying the virus and treating blood which justify our confidence in the safety of today's blood system.

Before these measures were developed some people who received blood transfusions or who needed blood products to manage blood disorders such as haemophilia were infected with the virus which causes AIDS.

The Canadian Haemophilia Society and a small group of blood transfusion recipients asked the federal government for financial assistance for those who were affected. We have had many meetings with the CHS. I have been very impressed with the tireless efforts of the president of the Canadian Haemophilia Society, Elaine Woloschuk. I would like to thank her and her team for all of the work which they have done on behalf of their membership.

I am pleased to announce that the Government of Canada will provide $120,000 in assistance to each of the approximately 1,250 Canadians who became infected with the AIDS virus through blood transfusions or blood products in this country.

This tax-free sum will be paid in four equal annual instalments beginning next April. The plan will apply in full measure to those who are currently living with AIDS, as well as to the estates of those who have died.

Full details will be provided to potential recipients within a month. Every effort will be made before next April to ensure that their entitlement is established in a prompt manner while protecting rights of privacy and security.

I would like to assure the House that the funding that I am announcing today is over and above the money that we have already earmarked for AIDS. It will not be taken from other programs to provide assistance to people living with AIDS.

[*Translation*]

The measures announced today should not be considered as a compensation plan. Our decision was not dictated by a fear of legal liability. In any case, no amount of money could ever compensate for the loss suffered by a person infected by AIDS.

My colleagues and I have looked for a fair and equitable solution that acknowledges the fact that haemophiliacs, most of whom are unable to obtain life insurance, must be given special assistance, above and beyond our universal health insurance and social security programs. We have looked for a way to help a group of Canadians who do not have insurance and who in most cases are the family's bread winner.

Canada is not alone in taking this kind of action. Governments of other countries are helping people who were infected by blood products.

[*English*]

Our goal is twofold, to ensure that public confidence in our blood supply system remains high; and to provide a form of disaster relief to Canadians who are facing extraordinary hardship.

I have discussed the federal government's position on this issue with provincial Ministers of Health. Together we have reviewed the unique circumstances, particularly of haemophiliacs who have produced so urgent and tragic a problem.

We have also discussed the concern of both levels of government for maintaining the integrity of Canada's blood supply system. Doing so depends upon public support, technological, medical and scientific excellence, and when extraordinary circumstances arise, a willingness to respond with understanding.

I have received expressions of support for this assistance from many Canadians including from many members of Parliament. In turn I urge all those Canadians whose gifts of blood have been gifts of life for many to please continue to give blood. We have a system that is safe and we need their support to make it effective.

I would like to close my remarks today by saying a few words about other discussions currently taking place. As the House will know, we have received representations from the parents of vaccine damaged children. In some ways their situation is similar. Promoting public health in

Canada requires encouraging parents to have their children vaccinated. Even though we know that, in some unpredictable cases, children will have a severe reaction to the vaccine.

Not encouraging vaccinations, however, would lead to a much higher incidence of sickness and death. The government has discussed this issue with provincial governments over the past several months. I hope that we will be able to work co-operatively with the provinces to meet some of the concerns of those families and to ensure that public willingness to have their children vaccinated remains high.

As well, my officials have been discussing the report of the Thalidomide Task Force which we received earlier this year. Thalidomide victims have asked that they be considered separately, and our study of their needs is ongoing.

I have been heartened by the compassion that Canadians continue to show to those who are in need, who will continue to work diligently so that all of us can feel justifiably proud to live in a country that cares for those who are less fortunate.

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, persons with haemophilia who have contracted the deadly disease AIDS by relying on our Canadian blood banking system in the past were victims of a national medical catastrophe. The government has announced today assistance for them which is, indeed, welcome. But I wonder whether in fact it is enough.

The Canadian Haemophilia Society had asked on behalf of the victims for three times as much assistance as the government announced today. I would like to ask the government during this Christmas period why only about a third of the society's request has been granted. I would like the hon. minister to account for that discrepancy.

The reasons that assistance is warranted for this group of patients are of course that most haemophilia patients, by the very nature of this disease, are uninsured and hence are not eligible for disability insurance. Also, they had and they continue to incur out of pocket medical costs. For these two fundamental reasons the assistance requested by them and given by the government is truly welcome at this point. But the Canadian Haemophilia Society had asked for $340 million for about 1,000 victims. Thus we see the inadequacy of the assistance announced today.

• (1150)

The other point I would like to make is that it took almost a year to respond, and it will still take some months for it to be effective. I wonder why it does not start today upon the announcement.

Another point is in relation to the time frame of notification. If a victim does not apply to the government within a year, perhaps the privilege will be waived. I would like the government to consider that should there be haemophilia AIDS patients who are unable to apply within the year, special consideration be given to them even if cases emerge after the end of the year.

On the question of whether this particular announcement by the government would be a prelude to a policy of compassion for victims of failed public policy, that I would like to see established indeed. I would welcome it. We should compensate parents of vaccine damaged children and compensate thalidomide victims. This ought indeed to be a policy of government—if I might paraphrase the Minister for Health—if he would like to have the confidence of the public to follow our national public health policy.

In conclusion, I welcome this announcement although I feel it is not quite adequate. Any government of the day has a moral responsibility to assist victims of national health policy. The story for AIDS victims is not yet complete. The Government of Canada must take steps to alleviate the suffering of all individuals who become victims of this disease. It would then be consistent with our philosophy of universal health care that all people with diseases, as with AIDS, deserve similar assistance.

I urge the government to develop more quickly a comprehensive strategy on how to help all people with AIDS since only such a comprehensive national strategy will lead to the development of a unified and more effective national response to the AIDS/HIV epidemic, a response which will ensure access to drugs and treatment for all people with AIDS.

Again, I welcome this announcement. I had hoped that it would be more, but in the spirit of Christmas, we give credit as well.

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, I also rise to support the government's announcement today of financial compensation for those users of Canada's blood supply who contract AIDS, or become infected with HIV. In the words of the Canadian Haemophilia Society, this is an horrendous medical catastrophe, a colossal failure of the country's blood supply system. By failing to adequately screen the national blood supply system after it became clear that some blood products were contaminated with HIV, and the failure to recall potentially harmful blood products, the government is responsible for part of this tragedy. It is only right that it has moved to compensate the innocent victims.

I note that this announcement today has only come after intense effort by the Canadian Haemophilia Society over 18 months, and after the Royal Society of Canada recommended last year that the government compensate persons infected through the blood supply system.

Now that the government has finally moved to help these people, there is an opportunity for them to finally act to prevent the spread of AIDS through the general population. I note that the total compensation offered to those persons infected through the blood supply system is greater than the entire budget allocated to the fight against AIDS.

Mr. Beatty: Wrong!

Mr. Axworthy: It seems likely that it was only the possibility of legal liability that encouraged the government to compensate those infected through the blood supply system. Other persons with AIDS, those infected with HIV, and those who will be infected in the future have only a moral and compassionate claim on this government. We have seen how reluctant the government is to act when it is not forced to do so. The Minister of Health has said in the past that he is very concerned about the spread of AIDS, for the plight of the 3,272 persons with AIDS and the approximately 30,000 to 50,000 persons infected with HIV. Yet this often repeated concern has not meant any action to date. It is negligent of this government to continue to stall while new cases of infection are reported each day.

There must be an immediate and national preventive education program. There must be palliative programs to assist persons with AIDS, as this government has already admitted through its announced assistance today the enormous personal and financial cost endured by persons with AIDS, their families and friends.

The minister has pledged that he will not allow AIDS to destroy the human spirit. Perhaps the time will not be too far away before he also sees fit to act to prevent AIDS from destroying ever greater numbers of human lives.

Steps must be taken to alleviate the hardship of old people infected with HIV or with AIDS. The federal government and its provincial counterparts must bear the responsibility for not acting sooner to instigate adequate education and prevention programs. Everyone with HIV or AIDS deserves the same sort of assistance which the minister has announced today for those contracting AIDS from the national blood supply system. Canada does not have adequate social and health facilities for dealing with HIV and AIDS and this situation should have been addressed a long time ago.

The federal government must act with urgency to ensure the adoption of an effective and adequately funded national AIDS strategy. While the announcement today is a welcome one, more is required than a piecemeal approach. It is the government's responsibility and that of the Minister of National Health and Welfare to address the concerns of all of the 3,272 people with AIDS and the estimated 20,000 to 50,000 people infected with HIV.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, there remain the other claims on the government, as the minister has mentioned, vaccine-damaged people and the tragic thalidomide victims. If we are to maintain an effective universal vaccine program, it is essential that those harmed by the vaccine be compensated by government, given their difficulty obtaining compensation through the courts.

Likewise, the government bears a special responsibility to those harmed by the drug thalidomide. Their claims are based on strong moral grounds, including the gross failure of the drug approval process which led to government acceptance of a dangerous drug, and the past promise of the Government of Canada to help those harmed by the drug.

I welcome this announcement, Mr. Speaker, but as I have indicated much more needs to be done, and I urge the minister to quickly settle those other outstanding claims on a fair and just basis.

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-53, an Act to amend the Criminal Code (arson).

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. minister shall have leave to introduce the bill?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-54, an Act to amend the Criminal Code (joinder of counts).

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. minister shall have leave to introduce the bill?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

* * *

CUSTOMS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Gerald S. Merrithew (for Mr. Jelinek) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-55, an Act to amend the Customs Act.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. minister shall have leave to introduce the bill?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

[*Translation*]

PETITIONS

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Gabriel Fontaine (Lévis): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity today to present a petition from young students at the Charles-Rodrigue School in Lévis.

The purpose of this petition is to send an important message to our legislators about the environment, the ozone layer, the greenhouse effect and acid rain.

I would like to pay special tribute to students Marie-Ève Préau and Julie-Anne Vien who helped to promote this petition. Mr. Speaker, I may add that the message sent to us by students of the Charles-Rodrigue School is supported by their teachers and all the people responsible for transmitting to our young students a collective awareness that must be translated here by our legislators into concrete measures to protect our environment.

• (1200)

[*English*]

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I rise today, under Standing Order 36, to present a petition signed by the residents of southwestern Ontario objecting to the government's goods and services tax.

PORNOGRAPHY

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I also have two petitions duly certified by the clerk of petitions to present on behalf of the constituents of Lambton—Middlesex to the House of Commons.

The constituents are very concerned about the impact of pornography on the outlook and views of our children. They are concerned specifically that obscenity involving children is degrading and harmful to the human mind, and also that organized crime is usually the beneficiary of the proceeds that this bleeds from the economy.

I present these petitions on behalf of these constituents in my area who are concerned about the level of pornography in the country.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to present a petition pursuant to Standing Order 36 and certified correct by the clerk of petitions.

It is from a number of constituents from Brampton who are very concerned about the government's intentions regarding the 7 per cent goods and services tax. They point out that it is a very regressive tax in that it hits the low and middle income earners the hardest.

They also point out that Canadians, as we all know, are not only overtaxed but that the tax system is discriminatory, unfair and biased in favour of upper income earners and large profitable corporations.

They also draw our attention to the fact that over 60,000 large profitable corporations do not pay any income tax at all and therefore obviously our tax system needs to be improved and made more fair, just and equitable.

They go on with a whole page of concerns that point out why this is wrong-headed, why the government has misread the people of Canada, that over 80 per cent of Canadians have indicated clearly that they oppose the tax, that this tax will particularly hit the regions of Canada, and that with the news of the last few days regarding the thousands of people who have lost their jobs in Atlantic Canada this 7 per cent tax on most of the goods and services which they utilize will simply be a cruel and a brutal tax.

In summary, the petitioners are simply asking the House of Commons to do whatever we can to bring the government to its senses to abolish and abandon its plans to implement such a cruel, brutal tax on the people of Canada.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Al Horning (Okanagan Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise today pursuant to Standing Order 36 to present a petition from 25 of my constituents who humbly pray and call upon Parliament to enact legislation which will effectively protect the life of the pre-born child without distinction as to the stage of development.

EXTRADITION LAWS

Mr. Al Horning (Okanagan Centre): Mr. Speaker, I also have a second petition to present pursuant to Standing Order 36. It contains 97 signatures of petitioners who call upon Parliament to revise the laws of Canada relating to extradition to allow the Justice Minister of Canada to order the extradition of alleged or convicted criminals at any time after their apprehension in Canada, even during their period of incarceration for crimes committed in Canada.

These 97 constituents represent over 100,000 names that have been presented here in the last three months.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey—White Rock): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present two petitions signed by people from Surrey, B.C. who are calling upon Parliament to introduce legislation that will effectively protect the life of the pre-born child without distinction as to the stage of development.

[*Translation*]

OPPOSITION TO TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS ON TAX BENEFITS FOR ISOLATED AND NOTHERN AREAS

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am today tabling five petitions which reject the recommendations of the Task Force on Tax Benefits for Isolated and Northern Areas.

The signers representing the isolated community of Lebel-sur-Quévillon in Abitibi are concerned about the recommendations of this unfinished report.

Mr. Speaker, the final report of this task force makes no mention of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and of the inquiry into regional disparities of isolated posts by the Quebec Government in October 1989.

[*English*]

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Ross Stevenson (Durham): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition pursuant to Standing Order 36, signed by 161 people most of whom live in the riding of Durham, in the Bowmanville area of the town of Newcastle.

The petitioners call on the government to enact legislation which will effectively protect the life of a pre-born child without distinction as to the stage of development.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, I stand in this House once again to call on the government to come to its senses with respect to the way it is taxing the people of Canada and its concept of a goods and services tax.

The words on the petition express the very sincere worry of Canadians across this land that they are not going to have any disposable moneys, that they are not going to be able to make this economy work. Since September 1984, this Conservative federal government has imposed on Canadian taxpayers at least 31 new taxes and tax increases. Since 1984, the federal sales tax, which we have called the silent killer of jobs so many times in this House, has been increased from 9 per cent to 13.5 per cent. Now they want to put it back to 9 per cent and tell us that they are giving us a gift.

The Conservative federal government wants to impose a new federal goods and services tax. Whether it is 9 per cent, 7 per cent, or any per cent, the public does not want it. Obviously this government cannot hear or does not care to listen. This new tax will be hidden, irrespective of what this government says that it will be an open and well understood tax.

It will apply virtually to everything they buy. The imposition of this new goods and services tax will cause serious and unfair hardship to low and middle income Canadians. There is not enough money in what it is proposing to enable people to buy fairly and evenly across this land. The imposition of this tax will create onerous burdens on small business.

I would suggest that in the name of those Canadians from the Mount Royal riding who have called on me to oppose strongly in their name this new goods and services tax which is an unprecedented tax grab from the pockets of Canadians and will hit them not only with higher taxes but with higher inflation, higher interest rates, and higher unemployment. I think this government does not realize what it is doing.

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg St. James): Mr. Speaker, I have the duty and the privilege of presenting a number of petitions this morning which have been certified correct as to form. They all relate to the goods and services tax, that abominable tax proposed by the Conservative government. I would like to cite one petition, in particular.

This particular petition is on behalf of private music teachers in my Province of Manitoba. It specifically mentions that the taxation of these private lessons would impose a financial burden on the parents and students involved. They would be required to pay such a tax on a weekly basis for at least nine months of the year and often for more than one member of a family.

They ask all of us who are members of this House to reject, and soundly reject, this goods and services tax.

• (1210)

Mr. A. H. Harry Brightwell (Perth—Wellington—Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition under Standing Order 36 from people in the town of St. Mary's concerning figure skating. They plead that we consider instruction in skating as an educational service and therefore exempt skating educational expenses from the proposed goods and services tax.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour and the duty to present two sets of petitions to the House this afternoon. Both have been certified correct according to Standing Order 36.

I have a petition here that has been signed by residents of the London—Kitchener, Ontario area; Melville, Saskatchewan; Yorkton, Saskatchewan; a number of other places in western Canada, Prince Albert, for example; and Ottawa.

These Canadians are very concerned about the government's plan to drastically reduce VIA Rail services. They call upon Parliament to maintain, improve and modernize VIA Rail services in those areas of the country where it can provide a more rapid economic, safe, convenient, environmentally sound, and energy efficient alternative to other means of transportation.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I also have a group of petitions signed by 232 residents of the riding of Thunder Bay—Atikokan, primarily the community of Thunder Bay but also from Upsala. These petitions have been circulated by merchants in the community who are concerned about the goods and services tax: Intercom Supply, Michael's Hair

Design, Galaxy Lanes, Superior Cartage, Peran's Music, Hugh Wilson's Body Shop, G&G Esso in Upsala, and Aesthetics by Linda.

They all collectively call upon Parliament to reject the goods and services tax at any per cent.

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I also rise under Standing Order 36 to present petitions on behalf of my constituents.

These petitions are signed by over 200 people who live in New Westminster and Burnaby, British Columbia. They are very upset about the goods and services tax.

They call upon this Parliament to reject the proposal for a goods and services tax. They say that the tax is a very regressive tax, that it will hurt mostly people in middle and lower incomes, and that the wealthy will pay the same tax on a pair of shoes as the poor will pay on a pair of shoes. They are upset about that.

They call on this government to withdraw the tax and to bring in fair taxation for Canadians.

ROUGE RIVER VALLEY

Mrs. Pauline Browes (Scarborough Centre): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to present a petition to the House of Commons today. This petition is called "Help Save the Rouge".

This is an extremely important issue that the petitioners are presenting to Parliament and that I have the privilege of presenting. We are talking about 5,000 acres of land in metro Toronto that is presently in a wilderness state, presently in its natural beauty, and we want to protect it. The threats to it are a metro Toronto garbage dump in the Rouge Valley or a 12-lane freeway up through the valley.

The petitioners are outraged. The citizens of Scarborough are outraged with this kind of thinking. Right across Canada the people are concerned about this. We are most encouraged today to see that the federal Minister of the Environment has made a commitment to quadruple by the year 2000 the national park land. This is most encouraging to the petitioners.

The Minister of the Environment has toured the Rouge Valley. This government has committed $10 million to save the Rouge Valley. The petitioners are calling upon Parliament to work with the provincial government. The Canadian people own the land through the provincial government, and they want the Government of Canada to work with the provincial government to establish this area as Canadian heritage land or a provincial park.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to Standing Order 36 with a petition signed by some 63 persons from the communities of Revelstoke, Nelson, South Slocan, and the other B.C. communities of Golden and Salmon Arm.

The petitioners are upset that the federal government is getting its hands even deeper in their pockets and is now trying to tax reading, haircuts, diapers, coffins and home heating fuels, among other commodities.

The petitioners also call upon Parliament to reform the taxation system so that there is an effective minimum tax on wealthy individuals and corporations, and to ensure that if and when there is broad public consensus on a sales tax measure to replace the manufacturers' sales tax this reform not be an opportunity for the government to impose a massive tax grab.

That is perhaps too much to ask, but the petitioners are upset in any event.

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I rise with two petitions today that have both been certified under Standing Order 36.

The first is in objection to the goods and services tax from people who live in Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Pitt Meadows, Mission, and Maple Ridge. They feel very strongly that the suggested goods and services tax will not only affect them as individuals but will dramatically affect the financial viability of the community. The reason for that of course is the impact that the goods and services tax will have not only on small business in the community but on the municipal infrastructure.

RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, the second set of petitions that I have come from Surrey, Vancouver, my riding of Mission—Coquitlam, as well as Alberta and Ontario.

The petitioners are asking Parliament to support Private Members' Motion No. 254 regarding children's rights and are calling on the government to negotiate with the provinces to provide a comprehensive bill of rights for children in Canada.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Jack Whittaker (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): The last for petitions but I am sure the first in the heart of the Speaker.

It is my pleasure today to stand and present 13 petitions pursuant to Standing Order 36, with 1,954 names from various places in my riding, such as Naramata, Kaleden, Princeton, Rock Creek, Bridesville, Okanagan Falls, Keremeos, Hedley, Oliver, Osoyoos, Christina Lake and Penticton.

The petitioners are upset with the goods and services tax as proposed by the government. They are asking Parliament to reject the current proposal for the goods and services tax, to reform the taxation system so that there is an effective minimum tax on wealthy individuals and corporations, to ensure that if and when there is broad public consensus on a sales tax measure to replace the manufacturers' sales tax this reform not be an opportunity for the government to impose a massive tax grab, and, finally, to cause the government to cease with a proposal which will shift the tax burden on to ordinary Canadians through a regressive consumption tax instead of through real tax reform.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, one month from tomorrow the policy announced by the government to scupper our national rail system will take effect and the VIA cut-backs announced by the Minister of Transport some time ago will go into effect to the great dismay of thousands of Canadians from coast to coast, indeed millions of Canadians.

I have a petition signed by some of the people who are so concerned and upset about this bad decision on the part of the government.

The petitioners are residents of the riding of Kingston and the Islands. They went to the time and trouble to sign a petition to call upon this Parliament to urge the government not to cancel in whole or in part rail passenger service in Canada.

I note that the petition was signed before the disastrous government decision was announced, and I know, if these people could be approached again to ask their views of the decision that the government announced, there would be even a stronger objection than that contained in the petition.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Howard Crosby (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I have been asked to advise the House on behalf of the deputy House leader that all questions should be allowed to stand.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Shall the questions be allowed to stand?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

[*English*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair has received notice of an application under Standing Order 52 from the hon. member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso.

The Chair has also received notice of a question of privilege from the hon. member for Ottawa South.

* * *

MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S. O. 52

ATLANTIC FISHERY

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 52, I ask leave to move a motion that the House adjourn to discuss a matter requiring urgent consideration, namely, the dire consequences facing thousands of families in Atlantic Canada's fishing communities as a result of recent and anticipated fish plant closings in the Atlantic fishery, and the urgent need for government action to deal with this crisis in Atlantic Canada.

• (1220)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The matter raised by the member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso is no doubt a most serious and important matter. For that reason I will consider it before giving a decision, which I would intend to give at three o'clock.

PRIVILEGE

COMMENTS BY MINISTER

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, I gave notice yesterday to the Chair of my intention to raise a question of privilege arising from a series of questions and answers given in the House last week with respect to the proposals of the government to apply a special tax to old age pensions and to family allowance benefits under Bill C-28.

If I might very quickly refer to that series of questions and answers, I think the question of privilege will become apparent. I should also advise the Chair that my intention to raise this matter was indicated to the office of the Minister of State for Privatization yesterday afternoon as well.

The first question and answer occurred on Tuesday, December 5, 1989, in a question directed to the Minister of Finance concerning the clawback tax. He responded by quoting from a document given to him in February 1989 by One Voice, which is a group representative of seniors in Canada. He quoted from that document at page 6509 of *Hansard*.

The context of his quotation indicated that the One Voice seniors network supported the proposed clawback measure, and in response to that implication from the quotation One Voice issued a press release on December 6, 1989, in which they stated that the Minister of Finance had "twisted their words", to use the wording of the press release, and I quote from it:

> Mr. Wilson invited us to consult on the budget while it was in preparation. At that meeting he specifically promised us he would not touch social programs but then he went ahead and proposed this awful clawback. That was a real betrayal. But now he is taking our own words out of the context of our brief to make it look as though we agree with the clawback. This simply is not what we said. Mr. Wilson has aggravated the anger and mistrust seniors are already feeling.

In light of that press release I raised the question in Question Period on December 7. In the absence of the Minister of Finance, the Minister of State for Privatization and Regulatory Affairs rose to reply to the question. He said at page 6615 of *Hansard*, and I quote:

> In the pre-budget consultations which the Minister of Finance had with various interested groups, Mrs. Woodsworth was there.

Mrs. Woodsworth being the president of One Voice. The quotation continues:

> And I want to quote exactly what she said as part of the presentation that was made to the Minister of Finance. She said, "We agree with the Economic Council that people with over $50,000 of income should have their OAS taxed back."

He went on in answering a supplementary to that question, again at page 6615 of *Hansard*, and I quote:

> It is very plain exactly what Mrs. Woodsworth who was representing that group said. She said it and I will read it to you again. I will do so slowly, "We agree with the Economic Council that people with over $50,000 of income should have their OAS taxed back."

I might note that there was a touch of sarcasm at the time that that second quotation was read.

This matter was raised on a point of order as you will recall, Mr. Speaker, on Friday when I asked that the minister table the document from which he was reading. He said, and I quote, on page 6671 of *Hansard*:

> I was not quoting from a document yesterday. I was quoting from one-page notes that I had in front of me.

He therefore refused to table anything.

On December 11, the One Voice, the Canadian seniors' network—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member raises a question of privilege which the member obviously has a right to do. The Chair would like to know as soon as possible where the member believes his own privileges have been breached. What the member has raised may be an important matter for the member and may be a question of debate, but so far I must indicate to the member that I do not see at all how the member's privileges have been breached. Could the member please address that question?

Mr. Manley: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I am concerned very much with the privileges of the House. I think these become apparent.

There are two issues of privilege here. The first emerges clearly in the letter from One Voice to the minister dated December 11. I will quote from that letter:

"During Question Period on December 7, 1989 you made reference to a pre-budget consultation meeting between representatives of One Voice and other national seniors' organizations and the Hon. Michael Wilson,

Minister of Finance. The meeting took place February 28, 1989".

"In response to Mr. John Manley, Ottawa South, in the House of Commons you quoted me as saying at that consultation: 'We agree with the Economic Council that people with over $50,000 of income should have their OAS taxed back' ".

"It has been the consistent position of One Voice that the clawback is a serious threat to universality of Canada's social benefit programs and we have never supported the measure. I know that I personally never made such a comment".

"We have contacted the Economic Council of Canada and they have been unable to locate any report which makes a reference to the clawback or the $50,000 threshold. What concerns us more is that the clawback was not announced until the budget was released in April. We wonder how discussion of the clawback or the $50,000 threshold could have taken place in February before it had been announced in April".

"Your reference to our organization and to my supposed comments in particular as supporting the clawback have created a mistaken impression in the House. We insist that you clarify this error as soon as possible".

The issues of privilege are these: first, it would seem that Mrs. Woodsworth, the author of this letter on behalf of One Voice is indicating to the minister that he has either inadvertently or advertently misled the House in answering the question on Thursday.

I think this is a very important matter of the privileges of the House, that the House be given fully truthful and correct information.

And related to that is the minister's refusal to table the document from which he was—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That matter I must remind the member has already been settled by the Chair. The member has the floor.

Mr. Manley: The second issue of privilege is that of the use of the House of Commons as a forum in which to use in debate the confidential advice given in pre-budget meetings with the Minister of Finance. Many groups and organizations are invited to meet with the minister prior to a budget being completed and tabled in the House of Commons, this group among them.

What has happened here is that this chamber was used to take the words given in a confidential session where there was no transcript of the meeting held and to use them in debate in an apparently, at least as far as the organization to which the words were attributed is concerned, misleading fashion.

This can only undermine the pre-budget consultative process and I believe is therefore an offence of the privileges of the House of Commons because of this chamber being used as a forum in which to take these private and confidential submissions and make them public.

That completes my submissions, Mr. Speaker.

• (1230)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The minister may or may not wish to answer, but the Chair does not feel it is necessary for the minister to answer.

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Privatization and Regulatory Affairs)): Mr. Speaker, I listened very closely to my colleague from Ottawa South who is debating facts on a point between a group known as One Voice and their president, and the meeting that was held and the understanding of what the Minister of Finance heard at that meeting. We are very aware that One Voice has changed its stand since that meeting. I think it is incumbent upon us to let the people know the type of advice we get at these meetings when people say they did not give us that advice when, in fact, they did.

I indicated to the House on December 8 that I was not quoting from a document during question period on December 7. I had a one-page note in front of me that I was referring to. First of all, the member has not brought this up at the earliest possible opportunity. Second, he has not given the Minister of Finance an opportunity to reply to the letter that One Voice very conveniently sent to the member before the minister had seen it, and has not given the minister a chance to reply to that letter.

I believe that the point of privilege is frivolous, it has wasted a tremendous amount of time in this House and the hon. member should get on to more important things

such as the business of this country rather than wasting time on such frivolous things in this House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I will listen to the hon. member for Kingston and The Islands, but I must say that unless he has very compelling arguments the Chair intends to rule that both questions raised by the hon. member for Ottawa South are not questions of privilege. That will probably be the ruling I will make and at the earliest possible opportunity I will give the reasons to the hon. member in the proper way. I will hear the member for Kingston and The Islands out of courtesy for the member.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister of State for Privatization misunderstood the point. I just wanted to clarify it for the House. The letter that was sent was addressed to the Minister of State for Privatization, not to the Minister of Finance. I would not want the minister to think that my friend had not raised this issue at the earliest opportunity. The letter was delivered to him yesterday, the notice was sent to the House yesterday, I believe, or first thing this morning. It was at the earliest opportunity. The matter was raised properly and in an appropriate way.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT SERVICES RESUMPTION ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Gerald S. Merrithew (for the President of the Treasury Board) moved that Bill C–49, an act to provide for the resumption of certain government services, be read the third time and passed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the minister's statement, Government Orders will be extended by 16 minutes as of one o'clock.

[*English*]

Mr. Howard Crosby (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, as the House and probably many Canadians know, Bill C–49 has been before us for several days, having been introduced in the House of Commons on December 6, 1989. Each hour that the House delays the passage of this legislation causes more difficulty and upset to Canadians, both in the health sector and in the marine transportation sector. However, it has been very clear that the need and desire for termination of this work stoppage has been recognized by the government and the government is proceeding to ensure that this legislation is passed and put into operation so Canadians can have the government services to which they are entitled in marine transportation and in hospital services.

In introducing the legislation to the House on December 6, the President of the Treasury Board made it abundantly clear that the presence of Bill C–49 and the back to work provisions would not prevent the negotiations being continued in order to reach a settlement of matters in dispute, both with respect to hospital workers and with respect to ships' crews, which are the two work groups affected by the current strike situation.

The President of the Treasury Board has made several attempts to have negotiations continued. There have in fact been negotiations taking place but to date no successful resolution has been arrived at, so we must proceed to pass Bill C–49 to terminate this situation.

Nobody, and certainly not the President of the Treasury Board, the Minister of Veterans Affairs or the Minister of Transport, who are the members of the ministry immediately involved in this matter, approach back to work to work legislation with any sense of relish. It is done in light of the need of Canada and Canadians to have government services and not to be deprived of those services for any protracted period of time.

It is important to note immediately that the ships' crews, who provide very valuable services through the Canadian Coast Guard, through fisheries patrol, through auxiliary vessels on behalf of the Department of National Defence and the Department of Public Works, have been on strike since November 14.

Hospital workers have been on strike since November 30, with the effects that has had on the services provided in hospitals under the jurisdiction of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

I do not think there is any point in exacerbating the situation with rhetoric in the House of Commons and certainly no government member in the ministry would involve themselves in that pursuit. But it is important to underline the risks to Canadians and persons on the high seas and in our hospitals that occur in a strike of this kind

and particularly when the strike is protracted over a long period of time.

I do not like it, but I have an obligation to remind members and the Canadian public that during the period of the strike three vessels were lost at sea off the east coast of Canada with a loss of life of 48 seamen.

The Minister and the President of the Treasury have made it abundantly clear that there is no linkage between the strike situation and the loss of these vessels. But that loss of life, that dramatic event of a ship going down to the bottom of the sea with all personnel aboard, focuses our attention on the fact that the services provided by the Canadian Coast Guard are vital to seamen and persons who go out on the sea in ships.

The member from Dartmouth and other members have said in this House of Commons that there is no risk, there is no danger, there is no immediate problem. Of course the coast guard have indicated that they would provide emergency services and have in cases. That is not the point. The point is that there is an important government service available to ships and persons who navigate our waters and that service is not being provided. Had the strike been settled after a short period of time or had there been some immediate hope for settlement, it may not be that we would have to deal with back to work legislation. But that was not the case. The government has a duty to act and did act.

There have been numerous cases in the past when the House has considered back to work legislation and invariably the House has co-operated because there was a recognition that government services affected on railways, in postal services and in other essential services had to be restored and reinstated.

A current member of the House who was a former Minister of the Crown, the member for Papineau—Saint-Michel, has stated the circumstances under which back to work legislation is justified. I have repeated this several times but I am going to repeat it once more because I hope hon. members will listen to this criteria, especially members of the Liberal Party, because it comes from a Liberal.

• (1240)

The member said in 1978: "Unfortunately, however, there are times and situations when the spirit of compromise and the demonstration of good faith, so necessary on the part of all concerned, are found wanting. In such circumstances the federal government, as custodian of the economy and protector of the public interest, must assume its responsibility."

We have in Canada a process of collective bargaining that has been developed over a long period of time and which resolves most, if not all, cases. This is one case where collective bargaining was not effective to resolve the matter in dispute. The Parliament of Canada that makes the laws proscribing collective bargaining, which creates the right to strike, now has to intervene to enact a new law to resolve the situation.

At the same time, every effort has to be made to continue negotiations to ensure that if the parties can reach a sensible agreement that is in the interests of all Canadians and of the particular workers involved, then of course that is the course of action that we would like to see followed and completed.

Because I think there has been in this debate disinformation that might affect people in Canada who expect from their parliamentarians fairness and good and proper treatment for all Canadians, I want to indicate some events that led to this strike.

First, we do not have in place in Canada a clear definition of essential service and we do not have legislation that prohibits strikes and work stoppages in relation to those essential services. Of course that is our fault as parliamentarians, all of us, for not bringing forward legislation that would make it clear that we cannot have work stoppages that affect some essential services.

Considering that void in the laws of Canada, it is essential for the well-being of all Canadians that when events do occur that involve withdrawal of essential services we must meet the exigencies of that situation. In this case there was collective bargaining over a long

period of time, the parties could not come to an agreement and it was apparent that no agreement would be reached in an appropriate period of time. At that point one must look at the facts.

In the case of hospital services, what can one say? These hospital services involve the veterans of Canada who require hospital care. If any member of this House of Commons wants to deprive the veterans of Canada of hospital care over a protracted period of time, I invite that member to get up and say so. I invite that member to get up and say: "Yes, I believe that the veterans of Canada should be deprived of effective and proper hospital care services over a protracted period of time, because the workers who administer those services are having a wage dispute with the government".

If that is the view of members, I wish they would say that very clearly and not say that they believe in collective bargaining and that they believe that the collective bargaining process should be let alone to resolve any labour disputes. Of course we all believe in the collective bargaining process. We also must recognize that when the process fails, when the system fails, then there is a duty to consider the effect of that failure and the effect of that failure on the persons involved, in this case the veterans.

I say with some concern that we should have a better system in Canada, but I do not say with any embarrassment that I for one, and all members of the government I am sure, are agreed on this point, that if it comes to choosing between continuation of effective hospital services to veterans and the temporary deprivation of a right seen by the workers involved, we have to choose the veterans, and that is what we are doing in Bill C–49. We will do everything possible to see that the workers involved get a fair and effective settlement in the end result.

Now let us talk about the ships' crews. We are talking about the coast guard, fishery patrol vessels and so on. I do not have to go too far to find examples of why back to work legislation is necessary in this situation. Yesterday when we were debating this bill a barge off the coast of Nova Scotia broke away from its tow line. It was carrying 150 tonnes of light diesel fuel. I do not think any member would like to see that barge go up on the rocks and cause a massive oil spill that would result in environmental damages that would take months, years and even decades to resolve.

According to an Ottawa *Citizen* report, there were on December 11, after this bill was introduced in the House of Commons, 41 large ocean–going ships which would be jeopardized in terms of not being able to remove themselves from the St. Lawrence Seaway before the closing date of December 19.

What did those 41 ships have on board? They were carrying grain. They were carrying 1.3 million tonnes of grain. I wish some member from western Canada, from the grain–growing area, would get up in this House of Commons and say that they do not really care what happens to that grain, that what they care about is that the government and the workers involved should resolve their dispute over whatever period of time it takes to resolve it.

Would somebody in the New Democratic Party from Saskatchewan get up in this House and tell western farmers, grain producers, the people who are involved in this process, that the strike will go on indefinitely regardless of the ability of the parties to reach a settlement, and that grain can freeze in the St. Lawrence, the 41 ships can stay there into March and April of 1990 when the ice breaks up in the St. Lawrence, then they can leave.

Again, we all appreciate the collective bargaining system. We all appreciate the desirability of labour and management settling their own disputes, but sometimes it becomes our responsibility to take action. If members from Saskatchewan want, they can say: "No, no, we have to live with the result of failure in the collective bargaining system. Let the 41 ships with millions of tonnes of grain freeze up in the St. Lawrence, to heck with western grain farmers, to heck with the grain industry. They will have to take the loss of that labour dispute".

We cannot accept that. We appreciate the good work done by the coast guard. We appreciate the desirability of having wage settlements and all matters involved in disputes resolved by the parties, but there comes a time for action.

What is the action we have taken? Very briefly, Bill C–49 provides for a conciliation. That conciliation will be binding on the parties.

Because I have a particular interest in their situation, I believe that as a result of this legislation ships' crews will have a very beneficial settlement.

I hope members opposite have not thrown away their opportunity for wage equality between ships' crews on the west coast and ships' crews on the east coast because members like myself and my colleague from Annapolis Valley—Hants have fought for this equality for years. In the 11 years that I have been in Parliament, I have raised it hundreds of times. Finally, we have come to the point where this could be a reality.

I hope members of the Liberal party, especially the member for Dartmouth, and members of the New Democratic Party have not thrown that opportunity away because they are going to have to answer to the ships' crews. The ships' crews knew that they had wage equality in their hands. If they lose that wage equality it will be on the hands of the members opposite and the member for Dartmouth can answer for that.

I say to the ships' crews, do not picket my office. Do not come and see me. I had delivered for you wage equality. Picket the Liberal offices. Go to the Public Service Alliance of Canada and ask Daryl Bean why he threw away wage equality on your behalf when we had it in their hands. It was on the table, it was theirs, and Daryl Bean and the Public Service Alliance of Canada gave it away because they wanted to delay this bill. They wanted to suffer through the process of the House of Commons. They wanted the ships to risk tie-up in the St. Lawrence Seaway. They watched ships go down at sea and they did not care. They showed no concern for that.

We could have had this bill passed on December 6. Those ships could be moving, the men could be back to work and they could have a favourable settlement, but they are not simply because the process of the House of Commons and the avarice of the members opposite in their leagues with the Public Service Alliance. They are lackeys of the Public Service Alliance. They would not make their own decision. They would not make the decision in the interest of the people of Canada. They delayed this legislation. The legislation will go through, it will be passed. People will be back to work and they will get fair settlements and those who suffered through the delay can blame the members opposite. The blood is on their hands.

• (1250)

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, I see that I have very little time before the lunch break to respond but I would like to begin by responding to some of the comments that the hon. member opposite made.

He talked about the serious situation being created by this strike and he talked about it as if it were something that materialized the day the strikers went on strike. One fact of life in Canada is that winter comes every year. That means ice comes every year. That means traffic on the Seaway gets into difficulties every year and that sooner or later the Seaway closes down. The shippers are aware of that. The government is certainly aware of that. The ships' crews workers who are on strike are certainly aware of that because they are the ones who go out in those icy waters, keep the channels clear for commerce, for the grain ships, for the oil ships, for the chemical ships, for the ships bringing supplies to communities along the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes.

I am mystified totally by the hon. member pretending that these situations only arise because workers are on strike. The fact is that the Saguenay River is frozen which is something that happens every year. The fact is that ice-breakers need to be up and down that river constantly throughout the winter. This happens every winter. It has happened every winter since Confederation, and it happened for centuries before that when nobody was there to see it happen.

The member has done something on which he has been challenged before in this House, on which he has been challenged in committee, and I am going to challenge him once again. Despite the words of the President of Treasury Board, despite the facts of the situation, the member has unconscionably attempted to link this strike and the workers on strike with the tragedy at sea. That is an abuse of his ability to stand and speak in this House with impunity. That is a despicable attempt.

The member knows that in this, as in every other urgent situation at sea, even though these workers have been on strike they have responded and have responded instantly. They have never once failed to meet normal times for normal responses to an emergency or even a potential emergency at sea.

On the particular occasion to which the member referred, the ships' crews workers, despite the abuse by this government, despite the mistreatment, despite the fact that for two years their requests for equity and justice have been denied, delayed, fought every step of the way by the government instead of recognized and acceded to, those people put out to sea. Despite that even those who were not on a coast guard vessel, *The Alert*, put out to sea with a full crew above and beyond normal requirements of emergency services.

The union representing these workers has spared no effort to make sure that they are available at any time to respond to an emergency. They have not been sitting at home nice and warm and comfortable. They have been out on their picket lines, and they have put down their pickets the instant there was a requirement for their services.

The union representing them, the Public Service Alliance of Canada, has spent thousands and thousands of dollars, even though it has no obligation to do so, to make sure that these workers are available at all times for emergency services. Not the government, but their bargaining agent which this government refuses to even recognize in legislation, has kept them in hotel rooms. The workers have voluntarily left their own communities, stayed away from their families for weeks at a time to be available for emergencies. They have been put up in hotels and transported by their union. They have remained right on the scene so that they could respond to any kind of an emergency. This has been done at great personal sacrifice by the workers and has been done at a cost to all workers represented by this union. Despite that, the member has the nerve to stand up in this House and try to link the names and reputations of those workers with a tragedy.

The member tries to pretend that the members on this side of the House are unaware of the seriousness of the situation. We are well aware of the seriousness of the situation, and I will come back to some specifics on that. We know where the blame for that serious situation lies, it lies right across the aisle of this House. It lies with a government which is incompetent, incapable and unable to respect the collective bargaining process, which is unconcerned about paying people what they are worth and paying people who are doing the same job the same amount of money. This government is absolutely unconcerned about following due process. It is using every legal means at its disposal to try to bypass collective bargaining and waste valuable time and valuable dollars dragging people through the courts instead of trying to reach a settlement with them.

It is the members on this side of the House who, before the strike ever started, raised questions in this House and pointed out to the government the dangerous situation that was developing and the need to act quickly to settle these collective agreements.

Last spring we were raising in the House the question of pay equity for hospital service workers. That was at a time when the first round of collective bargaining had been negotiated, completed and referred to the bargaining units. It was at a time when the different bargaining units were considering whether they would or would not approve the particular agreements that had been worked out for them. I will be going through that case in a little more detail later, after the lunch break.

The hospital service workers wanted one thing, one sign that this government really understood the whole basic question of human rights, fairness and equity. They simply wanted the government to grant them what the Human Rights Commission had already said they were entitled to. They simply wanted the government to include in their contract the settlement of this whole pay equity issue so that people performing the same work, whether in a government office building or the veterans home on Smyth Road, were getting paid the same.

The government had gone through those 18 months of negotiations without ever addressing those issues. It had refused to address those issues. It had refused to recognize that the basic problem of a proper wage for their work needed to be recognized in their collective agreement with the Government of Canada.

If our veterans are suffering less than adequate care right now it is because when we raised that question in the House last June the government chose not to respond to that, not to address that question and, in fact, continued to stonewall. The government knew that this strike was going to happen. The government knew because we warned it in this House. The workers had warned that the agreement was unacceptable if the issue was not dealt with in that agreement. As far back as two years ago, this government knew the end result of its intransigence, its bull-headedness and its stupidity in refusing to recognize that fair is fair, just is just. The Human Rights Commission had told the government what was fair, what was just, and what was right in this situation. If one veteran is suffering a lack of comfort

anywhere in this country, it is because of this government. It is not because of the opposition in this House.

• (1300)

We raised in this House the question of safety and security. My colleague from Leeds—Grenville pointed out to the minister the very specific problem of navigational buoys in the St. Lawrence Seaway and the fact that if an effort was not made to settle the strike, millions of dollars worth of equipment were at risk in the St. Lawrence Seaway, the value of which is far greater than the cost of settling this strike with the ships' crews workers.

Mr. Speaker, may I clarify that I may resume after lunch?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brightwell): Perhaps the hon. member does not realize that the sitting will be extended by 16 minutes because of Ministers' Statements and she may proceed until 1.16 p.m.

Mrs. Catterall: I recognize that, but I understand I may continue after lunch.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brightwell): Yes, by all means.

Mrs. Catterall: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, my colleague from Leeds—Grenville did point out to the government that $6 million worth of navigational aids were at stake, safe navigation in the St. Lawrence Seaway was at stake, if the government did not act quickly to settle this problem. The government chose to ignore that.

I am not sure why the hon. parliamentary secretary is today saying that the opposition seems unaware of the problems that are being created by this strike. We seem to have been the ones to tell the government of the problems that were being created by this strike.

One of my colleagues from Prince Edward Island warned the minister in the House of the dangers of harbours freezing up, of the costs to commerce of that happening off Prince Edward Island and of the dependence of Prince Edward Island on keeping the sea channel open to the mainland. It seems that the members opposite do not remember that when winter comes, water freezes and it is necessary to anticipate problems, to be sure that the people who perform the work of keeping our sea lanes open and safe are there to do their jobs. I am sure if the government had realized that, it would have made some effort to act like a good manager and to negotiate a settlement that would be acceptable to their workers and a fairer recognition of the work they do.

We also raised with the Minister of Transport the question of safety and security when we realized that winter was coming on, the strike was still on, and there was no movement on behalf of the government to meet any of the needs of these workers for a settlement which they could accept with some dignity and some assurance that it would allow them to provide for their families adequately. In spite of the fact that the ice was creeping out on the St. Lawrence River, various harbours were starting to freeze over, what did the Minister of Transport say? The Minister of Transport said, "There is no problem with safety and security". He sloughed off our suggestions that the strike needed to be brought to a quick and speedy end with some movement by the government at the negotiating table. We asked the President of the Treasury Board about safety and security and he said, "There is no problem with safety and security. We have contingency plans in place; everything is under control".

We know now what the contingency plan was. It was, "Don't deal with the issue. Don't deal with the situation of the sea lanes and the harbours. Just pull back to work legislation out of your back pocket and force people back to work. Don't act like a responsible employer who is concerned about your employees and concerned about the service you are offering to the people of Canada. Just stonewall at every opportunity, walk away from the table". How often have we heard the President of the Treasury Board in this House stand at his seat and say, "We are ready to go back to the negotiating table. The union just has to come back to us."

Whose responsibility is it to make sure that collective agreements are in place, that workers are at work doing their jobs and earning a decent living for doing it? It is not the union's responsibility. It is not the opposition's responsibility. It is the responsibility of the government. It is the responsibility of the President of the Treasury Board, when he sees that things are going off the track, to take a hands-on approach and make sure that things

are happening in a way that is going to get this issue settled.

The parliamentary secretary can stand there and talk about the deprivation of veterans. The government is responsible for the deprivation of veterans.

I also want to refer to some other comments from my colleague on the other side. He referred to back to work legislation that was brought into this House in 1978 and made a point of quoting from a predecessor of mine in the House. I would also like to quote from the same hon. member, the Hon. John Munro, then minister of labour when he introduced Bill C–45 to provide for the continuation of regular postal service operations. What the former member said at that time is quite different than the impression created by the parliamentary secretary this morning.

Bill C–45 was introduced in the context of a pending election and a pending strike by postal workers. It is far from the Draconian piece of legislation that we have before us today, far from the piece of legislation that basically says, "You're going to get back to work whether it is fair or not. You're going to accept binding conciliation whether it is fair or not. You're going to accept the fact that we have loaded the dice in our favour, whether it is fair or not". That is the government speaking. "We're going to by–pass and over–ride every principle of collective agreement we can think of in this act."

I want to quote the Hon. John Munro. I must say that the members opposite who were in Parliament at the time agreed with him, including the parliamentary secretary who spoke just before me, because he did in fact vote for this bill. He stated:

> By introducing this bill I am not attempting in any way to interfere in the process of negotiations by officers of the Post Office and the bargaining committee of the trade unions in the Post Office. Nor do I anticipate that the amendment proposed by the bill would interfere with that orderly process in the future—with the single exception of a breakdown in negotiations that could occur during a federal election.

At that time a federal election was pending. Mr. Munro continues:

> I would like to assure hon. members that the government continues to rely on the voluntary determination of any new collective agreement by the parties.

Obviously, this government has no wish to rely on the voluntary conclusion of any agreement acceptable to both parties. It wishes, instead, to ramrod and to force its will upon these, the most vulnerable, the poorest paid workers in the Public Service.

The former minister went on to say:

> I would be among the first to recognize that public employees have normally used their democratic rights as trade unionists wisely and responsibly.

• (1310)

That is not an opinion obviously shared by this government. It obviously does not believe that it, as a government, can go into a collective bargaining process unforced by legislation and reach any kind of solution.

The Hon. John Munro said further at that time:

> Public service unions in Canada have not been strike–happy in the past, and I do not believe they are quick to call a strike at this time.

That is certainly the case in this instance. The workers have reluctantly and belatedly used the right to strike. They have not done this willingly. No worker making $17,000, $18,000, $19,000 a year willingly goes on strike and leaves his or her family with a much reduced income in the weeks just before Christmas. As winter is coming on, with the need for heating, with additional expenses on any Canadian family, no worker willingly does that. No worker willingly goes out on a picket line in temperatures below zero and does it day after day, week after week. They only do it when they are forced to do it and when they are faced by an employer who is unable, unwilling to come to any kind of an agreement with them.

I think the member has at least given his own interpretation—I tread carefully here—has at best given his own interpretation to the words of the Hon. John Munro back in 1978 and attempted to apply them to a situation which is hardly at all comparable. We are not facing an election, unfortunately. It would be kind of nice at this point in time if I thought we were.

The parliamentary secretary also referred to discussions which occurred between the parties early this week and he seems to have forgotten the actual course of events.

Mrs. Finestone: Maybe he distorted them.

Mrs. Catterall: I would not suggest, as my colleague behind me did, that he might have distorted them. I would not say that for a moment. He has been in the House of Commons since at least 1978, so perhaps it is just that his memory is failing somewhat since Monday and Tuesday.

He accused my colleague, the member for Dartmouth, of being responsible for not achieving wage parity for the ships' crews workers. I want to remind the member opposite and I want to make sure that this is clearly on the record, that in fact it is the member for Dartmouth who, earlier this week, was able to get a commitment from the President of the Treasury Board that parity for east and west coast workers would be effective the date an agreement was signed; that it would not be something that needed to be negotiated at the bargaining table. I will have more to say about those discussions later.

An Hon. Member: Time.

Mrs. Catterall: I have no intention of concluding before 1.16 p.m., so we are into a continuing situation here, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Finestone: It is up to the Chair to call it.

Mrs. Catterall: The member for Dartmouth has admirably represented his constituents. We will—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brightwell): I regret to interrupt the member. She will indeed have time after the lunch break.

It being 1.16 p.m., I do now leave the chair until two o'clock this day.

At 1.16 p.m. the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, this government is becoming skilful at recycling, particularly when it comes to old promises. Take for instance putting into law an environmental assessment process. It was first promised in the 1984 election, then in the 1988 election, and most recently in the throne speech last April.

We learn now that Cabinet has put this proposal on hold. Apparently it is the their opinion that an environmental assessment law is not an urgent step. To make matters worse, it is reported today that when and if an environmental assessment law is ever approved, the Export Development Corporation would be exempted. Why? Does Canada plan to export polluting practices?

From day care to universality of pensions, from public consultation to foreign aid, from fisheries to sustainable development, increasingly this government's decisions fly in the face of its own promises.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE OF CANADA

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, the unfair treatment by this government of veterans' hospital and other federal workers under Bill C–49, the back to work legislation, is just another sign that this government is no longer listening.

The employees of veterans' hospitals work very hard. They treat our worthy veterans with care, compassion and give more energy to the comfort of their patients than most of us will ever know. Families of these patients want an end to the labour dispute, but they also want these workers fairly compensated for their unending, unselfish and dedicated efforts.

Instead the government is trying to resolve this dispute using a hammer, rather than an approach of fairness and honesty. The government should stop playing with figures in distorting the truth. It must accept the fact that these people deserve equitable wage settlements for the work they do.

Is there fairness in withholding pay equity, an insidious form of blackmail, until an agreement is signed, making it a reward instead of a right?

We call on the government to end its heavy-handed approach, settle for our veterans who are owed this respect and help, and settle for our workers who deserve fair wages. Families and friends of those in veterans' hospitals are very concerned about getting service back to normal for they know the work that is done and believe in fair compensation that is rightfully deserved.

* * *

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, coincidentally with the celebration of Human Rights Day last weekend, I am proud to advise that the Atlantic Human Rights Centre was formally opened at St. Thomas University in my home riding of Fredericton—York—Sunbury.

The purpose of this centre is to promote and carry out the ideals of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights among the citizens of the Atlantic region.

Its origin springs from a three-year pilot project in Atlantic Canada that revealed a compelling need for greater public knowledge and awareness about individual rights and freedoms as a foundation for peaceful and harmonious community life.

The Atlantic Human Rights Centre will mobilize our regional resources to advocate and stimulate the growth of social justice and equality for all citizens, thus encouraging the fight against racism, sexism and poverty.

As we have done in the past, the Atlantic region will continue to pursue leadership to eradicate cultural bigotry and racial discrimination.

On behalf of this House, I offer congratulations to St. Thomas University and all who have been involved in the establishment of this project.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE OF CANADA

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, I rise to applaud the striking ships' crews for the patience, perseverance, courage and dignity which they have shown in light of overwhelming and intolerable conditions.

In spite of the fact that the striking ships' crews are among the lowest paid members of the Public Service, in spite of the fact that ships' crews have been without a contract for two years, and in spite of the fact that this government has done everything in its power to ignore, isolate and discriminate against the ships' crews, last weekend the crew of the *Alert* downed their picket signs and ventured out into one of the most violent storms in Atlantic history on a search and rescue mission off the coast of Newfoundland. The entire crew was in great danger. Three crew members were injured and had to be airlifted to Halifax.

This is just one example of the bravery and integrity which our ships' crews have continued to show.

Given everything that this government has done and is continuing to do to the ships' crews, we should consider ourselves fortunate to have a group of people so committed to their profession and their country. I am proud to pay tribute to the *Alert*.

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[*Translation*]

PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

Mr. Jean-Guy Guilbault (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, December marks the second anniversary of the passage of Bill C-22, an Act to amend the Patent Act. With the implementation of these changes, which came only after much debate from opposition members and especially the Senate, we see very clearly that the government was right. Indeed, more and more research is now being done in laboratories, clinics, hospitals and universities in Canada. This new policy saved Canadian consumers $60 to $80 million on the price of drugs last year alone. In 1988, 57 research and development companies invested $164.5 million in Canada, including $72 million in Quebec. Thanks to the changes to the Patent Act made by the Conservative Party, the pharmaceutical industry can look to the future with confidence and optimism.

* * *

[*English*]

PENSIONS

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, I want to ensure all members know that the government

has initiated a new hotline to answer questions about the new Italian-Canadian pension agreement. Dial 1-800-263-8538. If you dare dial, the news is all bad.

First, this is likely the worst agreement that Canada has with any country.

Second, if you make less than $24,000—a grand sum indeed—your pension will be tax exempt.

Third, if you make $24,001 and have waited 40 years to collect a retroactive pension, Revenue Canada will collect 40 per cent of your pension after Italy has rightfully collected 10 to 15 per cent.

Fourth, despite the fact that the agreement is bad and has not been ratified it is fully operative.

Fifth, the Canadian government will collect $200 million from the 40,000 Italian-Canadian pensioners this year, even though they have no right to any of the money.

The deserved reply: *con le parole dei amici Italiaini: questo patto fra Canada e L'Italia fa scifo*. Translated, the reply means: This agreement stinks.

* * *

DISASTERS

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, this morning I learned that on Monday next at 10 a.m. a memorial service will be held at Sandy Point, Nova Scotia for the eight men lost at sea in the *Johnny and Sisters II*.

Whenever sailors put to sea their families know they may not return. But that does not make it any easier if they do not.

The north Atlantic is awesome and forbidding on a beautiful August afternoon. In the dead of winter and in a raging storm it can only be described as terrifying.

The courage of those who defy that terror to support their families through a life at sea in a small boat hundreds of miles from home in quest of fish is a kind of courage and commitment few others can understand, let alone contemplate.

Each time a vessel and its crew is lost we stop to reflect. What is even more sobering is the knowledge that as we speak and sit here today hundreds of other Canadian fishermen have their lives on the line in the north Atlantic. May God protect them so that the sadness now descended upon Sandy Point will not be repeated in other communities and on other families.

Monday next may all members of this place and, indeed, may all Canadians pause to remember the crew of the *Johnny and Sisters II* and the friends and families they left behind.

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[*Translation*]

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, the Americans refuse to release Richard Bilodeau, a trucker from Coaticook, on $50,000 bail following a road accident in which he was involved on November 29. The Americans are treating a Canadian citizen most unfairly.

The U.S. Embassy in Ottawa and the Americans persist in their unjust attitude towards this Quebec trucker. If we Canadians jailed all Americans involved in fatal accidents on our territory, they too would worry about coming here.

Mr. Speaker, as of today, the extradition treaty between the United States and Canada is no longer respected and I feel the Americans are acting in bad faith, unless their ambassador across the street has already left Canada to vacation in Florida. In any event, I call on all Canadian truckers to show solidarity with their Quebec confrère, Richard Bilodeau.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear.

* * *

• (1410)

[*English*]

CHILE

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, today is election day in Chile. Today we look to Chile with a renewed sense of hope for a democratic future in which all citizens of that country can live in peace and justice. However, hope is not enough.

We must not forget that not long ago the duly elected government of Allende was overthrown by a cruel military junta which for years brought horror and grief to the lives of many Chileans.

We must not forget that Pinochet will continue to wield power as the head of the military. We must do all we can to assist and uphold the will of the Chilean people who, through a great deal of solidarity and effort, managed to bring about these democratic elections.

* * *

ATLANTIC CANADA

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, it is no secret the Atlantic provinces are facing a number of difficulties. However, economic indicators reveal the economy of Atlantic Canada has benefited under this government's economic initiatives.

Farm cash receipts are up by 9.7 per cent. Sawmill production has increased by 56.3 per cent. Fish landings have risen by over 34.1 per cent in the past five years.

Since 1984, this government has been creating an average of 2,314 jobs a month in Atlantic Canada. That is a total of 118,000 new jobs for Atlantic Canadians.

Hollow words from the members opposite will not put bread on the table of Atlantic Canadians. It takes vision and leadership to arrive at long-term solutions to the economic realities of Atlantic Canada.

This government has shown its commitment to bring economic development to the regions of Canada. I commend the Prime Minister for his continued commitment to Atlantic Canadians.

* * *

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, in a letter to a Canadian taxpayer the Minister of Finance wrote:

> The GST is a stable, reliable source of revenue that will secure our plan for year-by-year reduction in the deficit.

Could this mean that we will see year-by-year increases in the rate of the GST as well?

On the other hand, the government is reported to have told Canadians that it will lower the rate of the GST by cutting $1 billion from government programs. We have also been told that the government had already cut non-essential programs. Does this mean that essential programs will now be cut?

The Chairman of the Finance Committee has once again blurted out senselessly inflammatory comments saying that the city of Ottawa must be trembling because of these proposed cutbacks. When will he stop abusing Canadians and start addressing their concerns about the goods and services tax?

When are the Canadian people going to get the straight facts about the goods and services tax?

* * *

ETHIOPIA

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, the devastating famine confronting the people of Ethiopia is caused not only by drought, but also by a civil war and a government that refuses to allow relief supplies to reach the drought-stricken rebel held territories in Eritrea and Tigré.

According to international aid agencies, the famine threatens the lives of more than four million people in the northern provinces. A massive international emergency relief program must be put in place immediately.

I call on the Canadian government to take a leadership role in developing such a program. I also call on the government to pressure the Ethiopian government to open up supply routes to the territories, to establish corridors of tranquillity. As it stands now, supplies have to go through Sudan to reach the starving in the north, a long and difficult route.

Canadian and international aid to Ethiopia must reach the people who need it. The Ethiopian government cannot starve its own people. Canada must drive home this point.

Canada and the international community also have to state clearly that the Ethiopian civil war must end. A ceasefire, genuine negotiations and democratic reforms have to be put in place so that future suffering is eliminated.

Oral Questions

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Willie Littlechild (Wetaskiwin): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to voice my concern for the youth of our country if a form of the proposed GST is not implemented.

If there is a primary reason for one to support the GST, it is to secure the well-being of the tomorrows for the children of today. It is indeed Canada's economic future that we must address. The GST allows us an optimistic economic future, one that we shall be proud to say we helped to shape.

The present economic situation necessitates a tax reform and a GST is a positive reform. It will raise productivity, improve competitiveness and lower the cost of capital goods and thus result in job creation.

It is estimated that as early as 1992, 60,000 new jobs will be created. This is the kind of outlook we want for the youth of this country. Implementation of a type of GST will achieve just that—a secure, promising, healthy economy for all the youth of Canada.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

TRADE

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

In December of last year in this House he had this to say to members of Parliament, "The free trade agreement continues the process of making trade more and more secure". Those were the Prime Minister's words.

Since this government was sworn in in 1984, we have seen our $20 billion trade surplus steadily fall to less than half of that in 1988, down to $4.4 billion for the first three quarters of 1989 and to a world-wide deficit of $421 million for the month of October—the first world-wide trade deficit since 1976.

We also have a reduction of $2.5 billion for the first ten months of this year in our trade surplus with the United States.

How can his government take comfort in these latest figures? Is this what the Prime Minister meant when he said to members of the House of Commons that his trade deal would make our trade more and more secure?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, as the right hon. gentleman knows, we have trade with the United States in the neighbourhood of $200 billion a year. It is the greatest trading arrangement between two nations anywhere in the world, and obviously there are fluctuations.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mulroney: I am surprised that a former Minister of Finance would either raise it or is chuckling about it. Our trade remains in solid balance. We have a $4 billion surplus as we speak today.

On the basis of figures for one month, the Leader of the Opposition is now projecting his usual doom and gloom. Why does he not share the optimism and the confidence of all Canadians in respect of trade with other nations and in respect of free trade with the United States, that will ensure growing prosperity? He knows better. He has been a Minister of Finance. He knows full well that it is very misleading to use one month's figures and try to project any serious results from those.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, this is just the latest month in a series in which the figures have shown a steady graph downwards over the past five years of our trade surplus for the world and with the United States.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, this trade agreement with the United States, negotiated by the Prime Minister, proves that our government has abandoned our economy to the United States. Not only are our trade figures deteriorating, we see a restructuring of business across North America which tends to benefit the U. S. worker, at the expense of the Canadian worker. Plants are closing down one after the other, and the number of lay-offs is rising steadily: Gillette in Montreal, Ford in Windsor, Gerber in Niagara Falls, General Electric in Toronto, Indal Limited in Toronto, Inglis in Toronto, Burlington Canada in Toronto, Northern Telecom across Ontario and Dominion Textiles in Quebec. How can the Prime Minister

justify this threat to Canada's interest, all because of the free trade agreement with the United States?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, again, the Leader of the Opposition surprises me. He knows perfectly well that the Canadian economy is modern and dynamic. There are structural changes and job changes taking place. I believe the Minister of Employment and Immigration indicated that between 25 and 40 per cent of the Canadian labour force changes jobs in the course of one year. This reflects the reality of competition and the rapid technological changes that our economy and all economies have to cope with. I am surprised to hear the line of reasoning taken by the Leader of the Opposition, because since January 1, instead of jobs being lost in this country, 216,000 new jobs were created, and 73 per cent were full-time jobs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Mulroney: I find it hard to understand their position. The Minister for International Trade tells me that the exact figure is 232,000 new jobs created since the elections, last year. Why does he keep saying the economy is going down hill? Our job creation rate is already impressive, and we will try to maintain it at this level, despite the obstruction and the reactionary views of the Liberal party.

• (1420)

[*English*]

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): I can understand your impatience, Mr. Speaker. Nobody really believes that stuff any more.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): We told the Prime Minister when he came back from telling the American bankers in New York that Canada was open for business again that this country should not be up for sale. This Prime Minister has put Canada on the auction block.

As part of the trade deal the government also sold out our fish processing industry on both coasts. There is now a crisis in the industry, as we described yesterday. Fish plants are closing down at an incredible rate. It is estimated that approximately 6,000 jobs are going to be lost in the industry in the next few months.

The Prime Minister keeps telling us he has a plan to meet this crisis. What is the plan?

The Prime Minister keeps telling us that there is a special cabinet committee. Where is the report of that committee?

Where are the programs to assist the workers and families of our fishing people on both coasts, both at sea and in the fish processing plants?

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is fulfilling the prophetic statement of his erstwhile finance critic, the member for Etobicoke North, who said—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Ms. Copps: We've heard this before.

Some Hon. Members: Boring!

Mr. Mulroney: They can dish it out but they bloody well can't take it. They better get used to it because they are going to get a lot more from us.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mulroney: The finance critic of the Liberal party said, "The strategy of the Liberal party and the leader of the Liberal party is very simple. We are going to blame every sparrow that falls on the free trade agreement."

Ms. Clancy: The sparrows have fallen.

Mr. Mulroney: That is exactly the policy that you are following today. It was dishonest then and it is dishonest today. The Liberal party should be ashamed of itself for not having a policy for job creation in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: This is where they really deserve the A for hypocrisy. The leader of the Liberal party has the nerve to stand up today and ask what we are going to do about hard-pressed fishing villages in Atlantic Canada when we have introduced a bill that will make it easier to draw unemployment insurance in some areas.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mulroney: The Liberal Senators have received instructions—

Ms. Clancy: Read the bill again.

Mr. Allmand: You've got to be kidding. That's why every Atlantic government is opposed to the bill—even the Conservative government in Nova Scotia.

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker—

Some Hon. Members: Sit down!

Mr. Mulroney: That bill will provide for unemployment insurance at 10 weeks. The Liberal Senators want to keep it at 14 weeks. You are betraying the poor people who need unemployment insurance in Atlantic Canada. You should be ashamed of yourselves!

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mulroney: What a disgraceful bunch of hypocrites.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

* * *

FISHERIES

Mrs. Coline Campbell (South West Nova): Mr. Speaker, let me assure the Prime Minister that the people in the Atlantic do not want unemployment insurance. They want work and a good fishing industry. They do not want your unemployment, and they do not want the policies of that Minister of Employment.

My question is for the Prime Minister.

To top off a week when an American scallop dragger flagrantly violated our maritime sovereignty, when the European Community proposed new quotas that continue to rape our fish stocks, when fish processing plants are closing all over the place, and now the President signs a bill that effectively wipes out a $30 million lobster industry, will the Prime Minister begin to take effective action to protect Canadian interests in the Atlantic fishery?

When is he going to come to the realization that the free trade agreement will be of little help in dealing with American attitudes that allow a bill such as the President signed this week to be passed?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am intrigued by the statement of the hon. member who says that the people in the depressed areas of Atlantic Canada do not want unemployment insurance.

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): They want work.

Mr. Mulroney: They want work, the hon. member is right. That is why unemployment since this government was sworn in has decreased in the provinces of Atlantic Canada by 4, 5 and 6 per cent from where it was left by the Liberals.

Ms. Clancy: Tell them in Canso.

Mr. Mulroney: I think it is disgraceful that the Liberal leader allows the Liberal Senate to hold up an unemployment insurance bill that would give more money to the poor fishermen in Atlantic Canada. I think he should give instructions today to Allan MacEachen to call off his troops and pass that unemployment insurance bill now because it is designed to benefit the people of Atlantic Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Clancy: You would get arrested in Nova Scotia after this.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the right hon. Prime Minister could complete his answer shortly.

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: I would ask the right hon. Prime Minister to complete his answer.

Mr. Peterson: He's finished.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for South West Nova.

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): Mr. Speaker, I would assure the Prime Minister that the statistics he has on unemployment insurance do not take into account the people who did not have enough work to get unemployment insurance—those fishermen who only had eight and not ten weeks, those workers who did not have 17 or 18 weeks of employment in order to qualify. Put them into your statistics.

Mr. Charest: That's the point.

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): This past Tuesday the Prime Minister asked for a quick reference to a bi-national panel under the free trade agreement regarding a size restriction on lobsters by the United States legislation. So much for the assurances of the Prime Minister and the President that other discussions would be held.

Is it now the Prime Minister's policy to allow the free trade agreement to manage our fishery every time there is a problem with the Americans pertaining to fish?

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, not at all. I have indicated to the President of the United States that not only have we already begun to contest that decision, but we are considering instruments of retaliation to protect the lobster industry in Atlantic Canada. This is the way it goes under the GATT, and this is the way it goes under the free trade agreement.

I have also indicated our plans to assist the Atlantic fishing industry in a very major way. But I must say that I am surprised, because it was pointed out today that delay of the unemployment insurance bill beyond January 6 means that people in areas of high unemployment would have to work 14 weeks to qualify for benefits instead of 10 weeks.

If the member really is concerned about the well-being of people in Atlantic Canada, then give instructions to those non-elected Senators to pass that bill now because it benefits the poorer people.

* * *

• (1430)

TRADE

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the right hon. Prime Minister. For the past two years, the Prime Minister has tried to promote the trade deal to Canadians saying he was going to assure Canadians that this was going to give us secure access to the U.S. market.

Since this government was elected, we have seen our trade surplus shrink by $19 billion, our Canadian dollar go to 86 cents, the Atlantic fishery virtually close down, and tens of thousands of jobs lost in the manufacturing sector. Today, Statistics Canada released figures that show the manufacturing trade balance is in a deficit for the first time in thirteen and a half years.

Is it not time for the Prime Minister to admit that the winners in this trade deal were the Americans, who got secure access to Canadian jobs and Canadian markets, and the losers are Canadian families and Canadian workers who have lost their jobs?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, it is hard to take seriously a question like that which tries to ascribe to an agreement—which was to take place over 10 years—such alarming effects already in just 11 months.

Mr. Rodriguez: What other reasons are there?

Mr. Crosbie: I want to point out to the House that exports in October rose slightly from September but there was a substantial rise in imports. One of the reasons there was a substantial rise in imports is that we are importing considerable amounts of machinery and equipment to increase our capacity to produce, to become more productive.

One of the reasons for the diminishing trade balance is conditions in other countries because international trade is with other countries, it is not with your own country. This shows the weakness in the economies of other countries, not in our economy.

Mr. Peterson: It's their fault!

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: We had a very slow Question Period yesterday. I intend to hurry it along. Perhaps the minister could answer the question.

Mr. Crosbie: To summarize, Mr. Speaker, the good news that can be drawn from these figures is that exports and imports are continuing to grow despite indicators of a slackening pace in some aspects of the economy. The continuing investment of Canadian business in new machinery and equipment will make provision for a more competitive future. That is the good news that comes from these figures.

Ms. McLaughlin: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to talk about machinery and all of the machinery that is coming in. I want the minister to tell the 1,900 people—

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the hon. member could put her question.

Ms. McLaughlin: Mr Speaker, I think the minister should talk to those 1,900 people who have been laid off at Canadian Airlines International. He should talk to those 150 people from Gerber who have been laid off in Niagara Falls. He should talk to the 200 people who are going to be laid off in Montreal at the General Electric lamp factory. Those are the people he should talk to. Those people have families and it is their lives we are talking about.

In the course of the televised debates during the election campaign, the Prime Minister told Canadians that the trade deal was merely a commercial arrangement, cancellable on six months' notice. Since it is evident that the trade deal is only giving pink slips to hundreds of thousands of Canadians, is it not time for this government to give the pink slip to the United States?

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the New Democratic Party does not want to talk about machinery and equipment. That apparently bugs her, as does much of the New Democratic Party bug her as well.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): You better talk to your mother, John and get some good advice.

Mr. Crosbie: I forgot to check with mommy.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, Oh!

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Yukon.

[*Translation*]

Ms. McLaughlin: Mr. Speaker, this series of figures is cold comfort for the poor who are unemployed. People are not interested in statistics. People want work. They want a pay cheque, not welfare.

An Hon Member: Exactly!

Ms. McLaughlin: They want to feed their families and give them a comfortable future. They want to know what this government is going to do to find them a job so they can live in dignity.

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, we have tremendous sympathy for all Canadians who become unemployed, whatever the circumstances. In fact, that is why the federal government has made broad-ranging retraining programs available to all workers. In August in Quebec, the unemployment rate was at its lowest in ten years. So far, since January 1, 216,000 new jobs, 73 per cent of which are full-time jobs, have been created, and 72 per cent of these jobs are held by women. Now that is progress! The Leader of the New Democratic Party should stop saying we are losing tens of thousands of jobs, because we are in fact creating hundreds of thousands of new jobs here in Canada.

[*English*]

FISHERIES

Hon. William Rompkey (Labrador): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Trade. The European countries fishing off our east coast continue to thumb their noses at us. We told the Europeans, through NAFO, that they could catch no cod at all off the coast of Newfoundland and the coast of Labrador. They say now that they are going to catch 27,000 tonnes this year. That is a job loss of 750 additional jobs because of European overfishing in eastern Canada.

The question is very simple: When is the government going to stop pussy-footing? When is the government going to get tough with the Europeans? When is the government going to do something to protect the jobs that are being raped by the Europeans off the east coast of Canada?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman knows that we have had an intensive campaign with respect to the European Community and its ignoring NAFO quotas in the last six months or a year with some considerable success.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Big success story, John.

Mr. Crosbie: The quotas that the European Community announced for itself yesterday are a very considerable improvement with reference to flatfish stocks, but still deficient in the area of the cod stocks that the hon. gentleman mentioned, but all in all, below the catches of last year and a very great improvement from previous years. It is still not good enough. We are still not satisfied, but it is a very considerable improvement.

When the hon. gentleman's government was in power in the 1960s and 1970s, the Europeans took 800,000 tonnes of cod from the North Atlantic: 800,000—not 27,000—and the hon. gentleman's government did nothing for 12 years to stop that. Now he suggests that we can somehow, by some miracle, do something to stop what the Liberals could not do when 800,000 tonnes a year was taken from the North Atlantic.

Mr. Rompkey: Mr. Speaker, if the government cannot do something about the fish outside 200 miles, I want to ask the Minister of Fisheries if he can do something about the fish inside the 200-mile limit because he has jurisdiction and this year he has given away 8,000 tonnes to the French. That is 220 jobs. That is 220 jobs lost to the French. You have direct control. What are you doing, Mr. Minister, to stop the job loss to Atlantic fishermen?

• (1440)

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I believe the hon. member would recall when his government was in office giving the French—

Mr. Volpe: We want to know what you are doing. You are the ones who administer.

An Hon. Member: Let's talk about the Gulf.

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): You have got the power. You use it on the GST. You use it on other things. Use it in fish!

Mr. Mulroney: You let them in the Gulf and you let them take 800,000 tonnes; that's what you get.

Mr. Speaker: I would ask the right hon. the Prime Minister and those other members on the opposite side of the House who are engaged in a brilliant conversation with the Prime Minister to keep in mind that there are other members who wish to ask questions in this Question Period and I would ask for some co-operation. The Hon. Minister of Fisheries.

Mr. Siddon: As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, I believe the hon. member opposite would recall that when his government was in office it granted the French 20,000 more tonnes in Canadian waters than this government does, and the Liberal government granted Europeans quotas of our non-surplus stocks for 15 years.

I should point out that since the implementation of our $750,000 fines, the arming of our patrol vessels, that has dropped to virtually zero, with the exception of the last few weeks, partly because of the intransigence of opposition members in not being willing to get our fisheries patrol vessels back in the water.

Ms. Clancy: Not so!

TRADE

Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Trade. Tomato farmers in Norfolk, Brant and Elgin counties have just been told that after 25 years Campbell's no longer needs their tomatoes.

With the ongoing tariff reductions in the free trade agreement, Campbell's plans to import from the U.S. some of the tomato paste that was previously processed in Canada. This will replace a net loss of 7,000 tonnes of tomatoes because of the closing of its Mississauga line and will put Canadian farmers out of work.

Will the minister now admit that all his government's talk of free trade, harmonized markets, and industry rationalization, means nothing more than Canadians losing their jobs?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, there is no one in the country being fooled by this attempt to pick out individual companies and allege that they are all reducing their operations because of the free trade agreement.

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): There won't be anything left. It's as simple as that.

Mr. Crosbie: Is this is a Question Period, or do we have to outshout the people who ask us questions?

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Look who's talking.

Mr. Speaker: In answer to the hon. minister's question, it is Question Period. Perhaps the hon. minister could complete his answer.

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker, let me say that in November, 1988, 4,883,000 people had jobs in Ontario. A year later in November, 1989, 4,987,000 people had jobs in Ontario, which is a very considerable increase over the beginning of the year.

Ms. Clancy: We are talking about tomatoes.

Mr. Crosbie: Now, if all the hon. gentlemen and all the hon. ladies opposite who bring forward these individual instances were correct, the reverse would be true. There would have been a tremendous decrease in jobs. Get your act together for heaven's sake and stop getting up in the House with juvenile points like this.

Mr. Speller: Mr. Speaker, my question was about tomatoes. I will direct my supplementary to the Minister of Agriculture who represents farmers in this House, the same minister who promised Canadian farmers that free trade would be good for them. The minister should be aware that the farming industry and the food processing industry in Canada are under siege because of this free trade agreement.

Will the minister now tell the tomato farmers of southwestern Ontario what specific programs he has to help them with the loss of their livelihood because of this free trade agreement?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member were to look at the facts, he would find this past year the investment in the food processing sector has increased by some 15.4 per cent; 40 per cent in the bakery industry; 23 per cent in the cereal industry; 21 per cent in the biscuit manufacturing industry—

Mr. Allmand: What about tomatoes?

Mr. Mazankowski: —73 per cent in the red meat industry. When you go through the application of the free trade, Pillsbury is expanding, Canada Packers is expanding, General Foods is expanding, J.M. Schneider is expanding, MLM Flour Products is expanding, CSP is expanding, the meat processing is expanding, all because of free trade and a buoyant Canadian economy.

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RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. Yesterday, he and his minister of industry waxed eloquently and enthusiastically about the sale of Connaught BioSciences and Canadian R and D to France, and about the sale generally of Canadian industry to foreigners. Yet, his own national advisory board on science and technology has said that on R and D Canadian jobs depend and that "the high level of foreign ownership of Canada's industries contributes to our low industrial R and D spending".

Who really is timid and timorous, as the Prime Minister described yesterday, those of us who are concerned about the Canadian future, or his government which refuses to act to protect Canadian R and D, Canadian jobs and the Canadian future?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, as I pointed out yesterday and have said before in the House, it is regrettable that Connaught was not able to find a Canadian suitor with which to join forces in order to ensure its future.

In fact, in the applications, we were able to obtain from both applicants for Connaught assurances that there would be very, very substantial increases in R and D, whichever suitor ended up controlling Connaught. We have those guarantees. It is in the press release which I am sure the hon. member has. In fact, the transaction will result in significant increases in research and development in this important area in Canada.

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HEALTH

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, my question is also about Connaught and it is directed to the Minister of Health. Connaught is the leading supplier of influenza vaccines in Canada. During the next imminent world-wide epidemic, it will be the only Canadian supplier capable of producing the five million or so doses needed here.

When Connaught was owned in Canada it responded to a health and welfare emergency request to supply vaccine sometime in 1976. I want to ask the Minister of Health, why did he fail to obtain a guarantee of supply in times of emergency from the foreign buyer of Connaught for such vaccines?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact, one of the reasons why Connaught felt it was necessary to join forces with another suitor with deep pockets, as it were, was in order to ensure it had the processing capability to meet the demands for vaccines, including polio vaccines. The technology that Mérieux brings to these circumstances will help ensure that Connaught will be able to meet the demands of Canadians for polio vaccines and indeed for a whole host of other vaccines which are important to human health.

FISHERIES

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Trade. Reference has already been made to the infamous U.S. lobster bill, and I commend the Prime Minister and the government for moving quickly to advise President Bush that the law is simply unacceptable to Canadians and that we will apply for an FTA panel on it.

However, lobster prices are falling already and time is of the essence. Can the minister advise as to when we might reasonably expect a panel decision, and as to what countervailing measures Canada will take during the interim to let President Bush and the Americans know that we expect them to live up to the spirit, as well as the letter of the agreement, and to show Canadians that the FTA process works?

• (1450)

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have a truly concerned question about the fishery.

Luckily, we have the free trade agreement so this matter can be proceeded with and adjudicated upon in a few months rather than the year or longer it might have taken under the GATT. Thank heavens, we have the free trade agreement.

The government has already taken preliminary steps. We did not wait for the President of the United States to make up his mind whether he would sign this democratic bill or not, a bill sent to him by the democratic majority in the Senate and in the House. We have had consultations. We have had the matter before the Trade Commission, so we have saved weeks by doing that. We are now seeing if we can get an expedited process.

We were talking to our U.S. colleagues to see if they will agree to a quick process. Even if they do not agree, we can reasonably expect that there would be a decision, and by the middle of May there should be a final report, if we go with all due expedition as we can under the agreement. It could be quicker if we can have an expedited process as we did in the case of the B.C. salmon.

We did not wait for the President to make his mind up. We started long ago on this process, and we have advice that we have a very strong case. We are going to press it in every agency that we can press it in. We are going to go on with the support of the House, I trust, to see that this trade distorting measure of the United States is found to be trade distorting.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister, and it is very simple.

The government agency, Stats Canada, reported today that our trade surplus with the United States is down 21 per cent over last year, that the investment income deficit is up 25 per cent over last year, but the trade in services is down 21 per cent over last year.

I want to ask the Prime Minister this simple question. Does he agree with the comic logic of the Minister for International Trade that this is good news, or does he recognize that this represents a serious challenge to the economic well-being of this country, and that this government has got to do something to repair this serious situation?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the point of view expressed by members of the ministry that, clearly, interest rates are high and that is taking a toll on the economic situation. Imports are high and that is impacting negatively on our exporters. The state of the dollar is doing that, and we recognize some important structural difficulties in the economy. Productivity is not as high as it should be.

The object of the policy of the Governor of the Bank of Canada and the Minister of Finance is to squeeze out of the economy the inflationary pressures to avoid what I am sure my friend wants to avoid, a repetition of the tragic situation of 1981 and 1982 when inflation got out of hand and crippled the economy for five years.

We believe that while there have been figures that have been out for one month the Canadian trade balance remains in a favourable posture by something in excess of $4 billion. We believe that the policies set out by the Minister of Finance and the Minister for International Trade are valid.

We have not heard any alternatives to them whatsoever that make any sense from the opposition. We have delivered now almost six years of economic growth and prosperity second only to the economic growth of Japan which led the world. Canada was number two. We

believe those policies are right and we are going to pursue them.

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Speaker, I say through you to the Prime Minister, Sir, you do not have a government, you have a flat earth society. You are not looking at the reality of our economic situation.

Mr. Speaker: Given the time, I would ask the hon. member to put his question.

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Speaker, I put this question directly to the Prime Minister.

In light of his recognition of the serious structural difficulties in the economy, will the Prime Minister instruct his Minister of Finance to take actions to bring down interest rates and the exchange rate so we can begin exporting again and represent our full responsibility as world traders?

What is happening is that this government is going into recession.

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, if there is anyone in this House qualified to discuss recessions, it is the hon. member and his colleagues.

Mr. Peterson: Then why don't you listen?

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member refers to the flat earth society in reference to the policies we have followed. Last week the OECD produced a report which indicated that it was in full substantial agreement with the policies followed by the Government of Canada. In August, the World Economic Forum from Geneva indicated that Canada's competitiveness had increased from number 11 position where we were in 1984 to number 4 today, indicating major strides by Canada to achieve a better competitive situation.

In Canada, 1,555,000 new jobs have been created. There have been record profits, record job creation, record reinvestment, record jobs for women, 750,000 people have been taken off the poverty roles. There have been good times, not perfect times, but good times all around, infinitely better times than those of the Liberals and we want to keep them going.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—St-Michel): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister.

How can the Prime Minister continue to pretend that assessment of human rights policies and practices are a concrete factor in decision making in Canada on our aid determination, while numerous international and Canadian non-governmental organizations have condemned the El Salvadoran government for human rights violations, for death squads and for the murders of six Jesuit priests? How can his government receive representatives of the El Salvador government this week in Ottawa to discuss new aid programs for this country?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Secretary of State for External Affairs has made very clear the position of the Government of Canada with respect to any attacks on human rights in El Salvador, Central America and elsewhere. It is a policy that has been very, very consistent from the beginning. I think it is an enlightened and effective policy.

Further, I think my hon friend will applaud the fact that in the area of human rights, yesterday the government announced the appointment of the Hon. Ed. Broadbent to be in charge of the International Institute of Human Rights. I think that is probably a good move as well.

Mr. Ouellet: I think the Prime Minister should listen to the question and try to answer it. We are talking about El Salvador, with a representative of this government being here in Ottawa to meet with officials of External Affairs to discuss new aid programs, at the very moment when the government in El Salvador is universally criticized for violating human rights.

In the past week, the Salvadoran air force dropped thousands of pamphlets from the air urging the killing of international aid workers it accuses of supporting the FMLN guerrillas. Dozens of churches, humanitarian and community groups have been forced to close their offices after they were raided by security forces.

Karen Ridd who appeared before the Parliamentary Committee on External Affairs this morning confirmed this, and said that while she is now back in Canada, she still receives death threats.

What is the Prime Minister going to do in light of all of this evidence that shows certainly the Canadian government should not continue aid to this government?

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, if my hon. friend is referring to the delegation that is visiting at the request of the government of El Salvador, there are at least two meetings with the government that will be held with the Acting Under Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Raymond Chretien, and the Acting Vice President of CIDA for Latin America. The visit provides them with the unique opportunity of conveying the position of the Government of Canada to them, receiving their point of view. After these meetings, the government looks forward to receiving specific recommendations from the Under Secretary of State, Mr. Raymond Chretien, in whom we have great confidence.

* * *

• (1500)

HOUSING

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Housing. This government has cited Project Haven as an example of action it is taking to combat violence against women. Well, some action.

The government promised over 18 months ago that within four years it would provide shelter for 500 more battered women each day. To date, a year and a half later, there are 22 more shelter beds in all of Canada.

Will the minister tell us when this government will take concrete action to lessen violence against women and keep his and his government's promise to battered women?

Hon. Alan Redway (Minister of State (Housing)): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member is aware, the government has made a commitment under Project Haven to provide the capital funds for shelter beds for victims of violence: women and children.

Some $22 million was committed to be put in place over a period of time. Proposal calls have been put out for that. A number of those proposals have been accepted and put in place. Others are in the process of being put in place. Some of the provincial governments involved have raised concerns with respect to providing the maintenance funds to look after those shelters once they are put in place, and that has been a factor which has delayed the process.

Mr. Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member. I would have preferred to go on longer but we are out of time. The hon. Minister of Justice.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): I rise on a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker. There have been discussions among the House leaders with respect to the most appropriate method of dealing with communications which have been received from all parties regarding testimony given before the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General relating to police investigations of certain members. Those discussions have included yourself and officers of the House.

This is a matter of grave concern to all of us as members of Parliament and we have searched long and hard for an appropriate solution. We have arrived at a two-part solution which will address the current situation and assist the House and its members in the future.

First, I will propose a motion to be jointly moved and seconded by myself; the member for Windsor West, the Official Opposition House leader; and the member for Kamloops, the New Democratic Party House leader to deal with the request for a question of privilege raised by members from all three Parties. The motion will read as follows:

> That the Standing Committee on Elections, Privileges, Procedure and Private Members' Business be empowered to study the rights, immunities and privileges of members of the House of Commons.

We also feel that it is appropriate to review our current practices and therefore following the passage of the motion which I just suggested I would move the following motion, again jointly moved and seconded by myself;

the member for Windsor West, the Official Opposition House leader; and the member for Kamloops, the New Democratic Party House leader:

That a special committee of the House be appointed and empowered to review the Parliament of Canada Act regarding the powers, duty and obligations of the members of the House in relation thereto and regarding the authority, responsibilities and jurisdiction of the Board of Internal Economy;

That the said special committee shall have all powers of a standing committee pursuant to Standing Order 108(1);

That the said special committee shall report its findings and recommendations no later than March 5, 1990;

That the said special committee be chaired by the Deputy Speaker; and that seven additional members be recommended by the striking committee.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that you have a copy of the first motion.

Mr. Speaker: The House has heard both the motions put forward by the hon. Minister of Justice. Is there agreement?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Motions agreed to.

[*Translation*]

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITY OF MEMBERS

Mr. François Gérin (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead): Mr. Speaker, I raised a question of privilege after what happened last Tuesday before the Justice Committee.

We have listened carefully to the proposals made by the Leader of the Government which met with the agreement of the House, and we are very pleased with these proposals. The Quebec caucus had been considering the matter for several weeks, and it proposed this long-term solution in the form of a special committee as provided under Section 53.1 of the Parliament of Canada Act.

It will be an opportunity for us to clarify the jurisdiction of the Board of Internal Economy and to suggest publishing the rules of internal economy by which we are probably governed. The special committee will also give us a chance to consider not only the rights but also the obligations, privileges and duties of members of Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, our main purpose in seeking this long-term solution is to preserve the independence members of this House need to do their work, which is not always easy. The budgets we are given are not only tools, they are absolutely essential.

We also asked for this to be a public debate, and we want to thank all parties in the House of Commons and all members of this House for agreeing to this solution. The committee's proceedings and the entire review process, will be public and open. That, Mr. Speaker, is what Canadians expect of their members of Parliament.

We need the co-operation of all concerned, especially and including RCMP authorities and members of the force.

Mr. Speaker: I want to thank the hon. member for his comments.

* * *

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

WEEKLY STATEMENT

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I think it would be appropriate to ask the government House leader to give the usual weekly statement of business.

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise the House that tomorrow at 10 a.m. the House will consider Bill C-28 at report stage.

After Routine Proceedings at twelve o'clock we will deal with Bill C-40 and it is expected we would complete second reading. We will then move to Bill C-47 in all stages; that is the amendments to the Elections Act.

We are still negotiating to try to find appropriate business which could be proceeded with on Monday.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, in discussing the business to come up, I think it is fair to say, concluding from exchanges earlier in Question Period, that Bill C-21 may likely not receive Royal Assent by the New Year.

Of course we are concerned about that because of the variable entrance rates for qualifying for unemployment insurance. I simply wanted to say to the government House leader that usually at this time of the year we give rapid passage to a bill to continue the variable interest rates.

I want to offer our co-operation again to pass without debate legislation that would continue, until this legislation is eventually passed, the variable entrance rates that are presently in place.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, before the Minister of Justice gets up again I would like to raise an issue with him. He wants Bill C-47 passed tomorrow. Could he assure the House that no Canadian elector will be barred from running in a by-election by the passage of this legislation?

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, in answering the second question first, I would advise the House that the amendments to the Elections Act which are before the House at the present time in Bill C-47 are simply to correct a section of the Elections Act which was left out of the Revised Statues of Canada in error.

I am not prepared at this time to give a legal opinion on my hon. friend's question. I will certainly take that under advisement. If he has any specific questions he wishes to ask on that issue, I think those would be best addressed to the Chief Electoral Officer.

* * *

• (1510)

MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S. O. 52

ATLANTIC FISHERY—SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair received this morning an application under Standing Order 52 for an emergency debate. I have given careful consideration to the request made by the member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso and at this time the debate will not be granted.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT SERVICES RESUMPTION ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. de Cotret that Bill C-49, an act to provide for the resumption of certain government services, be read the third time and passed.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, when we adjourned for the lunch break I was responding to some of the points made by the hon. parliamentary secretary while speaking in support of the bill. I was just commencing comment on his statements on the role of my colleague, the member for Dartmouth, in the discussions on this bill that have taken place.

The hon. parliamentary secretary stated quite clearly that my colleague has in fact not well represented his constituents and that he is responsible for the matter of parity of pay between east coast ships' crews' workers and west coast ships' crews' workers not being granted.

I had alluded to the failure of the memory of the hon. parliamentary secretary. He is well aware that it is my colleague from Dartmouth who was responsible for ensuring to the best of his efforts that pay equity would be a given, that it would not be something that would be referred to the conciliation board, that it would be decided and accepted by the President of the Treasury Board before the conciliation board was even struck, before the conciliation board even met, and that it would not be included in the matters to be decided by the conciliation board.

My colleague, the member for Dartmouth, had assured those ships' crews' workers that they would finally have—not out of the goodness of the heart of this government but because of the position he took—parity on the signing of this contract, that it would not be used as blackmail or as a tool to pry from them concessions on any other matter to be dealt with in those negotiations.

I think it is unfair of the member who spoke to relate what happened in a way contrary to the events that actually took place. I hope that perhaps he might consider seeking professional advice for the obvious lapse in his memory.

The lapse in his memory has applied to other things as well. I think I am being kind here and within the rules of parliamentary procedure. The member also referred to the meetings of the legislative committee that took place last Sunday at which members of the government were not prepared to accede to the request of members of the Official Opposition for information on the severity of the situation.

Neither he nor his colleagues would accede to our request that we have before us the Minister of Transport who could give first-hand information on the situation in the Seaway, on the situation on the Saguenay River, on

the situation in the Great Lakes, and on the situations on the Atlantic coast and on the Pacific coast.

Members of the government were very clear that their intention was to have this committee meet for a matter of a few hours and to have its business over and done with. They would not give permission for the Minister of Veterans Affairs to come before the committee and provide us with accurate information about what was really going on in the Veterans Affairs homes and what was really going on in National Defence hospitals.

The government members of the legislative committee wanted to make sure that a request by the Liberal opposition to hear from the chairman of the Public Service Staff Relations Board was not acceded to. I challenge members of the committee to say that they felt that they were fully aware of the provisions of the Public Service Staff Relations Act and fully aware of labour law and the positions that the courts had taken on various matters relating to collective bargaining within the Public Service.

I certainly did not feel that I was and my colleague from Dartmouth certainly did not feel that he was. We both felt that we needed the counsel of the Public Service Staff Relations Board, the impartial advice of the chairman of that board, to advise us as to the implications of certain aspects of this act. This very clearly interferes with the normal collective bargaining process. This very clearly sets in place a process that abrogates some of the normal rights to negotiate which workers enjoy within the Public Service of Canada.

Government members of the committee had a majority and indicated every intention of using that majority with a heavy hand to ensure that the committee did not have a careful and close look at that bill. They had every intention of ensuring that this bill was reported back on Monday morning to the House, regardless of whether or not the committee had completed its deliberations.

The legislative committee, on Sunday afternoon and Sunday evening, did hear from the Public Service Alliance of Canada, the union representing the workers in both these strikes. The Public Service Alliance of Canada put before the legislative committee certain amendments that it felt did not make this a good bill, did not make it a palatable bill and did not make it a bill that it wanted to see adopted or passed by this House. But it did put before the legislative committee some reasonable amendments that would at least represent a token acknowledgement of the normal process of collective bargaining.

Government members of the legislative committee, with their majority, chose not to consider in detail those recommendations of the union representing 3,600 workers. They simply said: "We have not got time for this. We have not got time to seek the advice of people within the departments, people from the justice department. We have absolutely no way of knowing if these are reasonable amendments or acceptable amendments or not".

They said that in general the amendments did not seem to be a problem. They were not going to give this committee established by this House of Commons the time to consider each of these amendments and to get the advice of professional Public Service employees, advice that would allow us to word the amendments properly, to determine whether in fact they were acceptable to the government.

• (1520)

They were not even prepared to allow that process to take place because they were so anxious to ram through this bill. They were intent on bringing it forward and reporting back to the House on Monday.

I think that is a real abandonment of duty when there are amendments before a legislative committee. The responsibility of a legislative committee is specifically to review in detail the provisions of a bill and to recommend back to the House what if any changes should be made to that bill. It is the obligation of that committee, whether government members or members from this side of the House, to review every clause to assure themselves that that clause is proper, that it accomplishes what it is intended to accomplish, and that it does not put in place something which in fact is going to defeat an otherwise worth–while objective of the legislation.

However, government members of the committee chose not to do that. They quite blatantly said that they did not want to take the time to look at these proposed amendments. They did not even want to consider the representations of the alliance that represents over 160,000 Public Service employees; that is over half the people who work for the Government of Canada. They did not think they had anything worth while to say to us

on this. That is certainly not the way the Official Opposition feels about it.

Instead of the careful and due consideration that the Standing Orders require them to give to the bill, government members said that if we wanted to suggest these for consideration they would agree that they be considered and that the appropriate wording would be developed by the government.

We saw yesterday how much consideration they got. The fact is that these amendments were put one by one for discussion by the committee. In every case there was agreement that they would be considered, that an appropriate wording would be worked out, that members such as myself from the opposition on that legislative committee would then have the opportunity to move those amendments in the House, and that perhaps by then the officials of the Treasury Board, of Transport Canada and of the Justice Department, having had due opportunity to consider those amendments, might in fact be prepared to support them.

My hon. colleague across the aisle has suggested that something quite different happened at that legislative committee, but we did have an agreement—and it is recorded in the minutes—on each and every one of those motions. I know because either myself or my colleague from Dartmouth put forward each and every one of those motions for consideration. We did have an agreement that they would be considered and that the wording would be seriously reviewed by the government as to whether they could be incorporated into the legislation. The parliamentary secretary himself made it quite clear that there was no real and serious objection to these amendments.

We obviously have seen that those assurances to the opposition members of the legislative committee really were not taken seriously by the government members of the committee. If they were, we would have had quite a different outcome yesterday afternoon on the amendments and we would have had quite a different bill before us today.

I have dealt with some of the points made by my colleague opposite.

I think it is fairly important in this House that we all try to reflect as fairly and as openly as we can what discussions really have taken place at various times, and not in any way to have a convenient lapse of memory so that we can place our colleagues in an undesirable situation or attempt to place them in an undesirable situation simply to save our own necks.

I want to go now to the words of the Minister of Justice, the hon. government House leader. I took his comments of Monday, December 11, at approximately 11.20 a.m., quite personally because I have been involved in the issues related to this strike since last April, shortly after entering the House of Commons, as Public Service employment critic for the Official Opposition.

The hon. Minister of Justice demanded to know what a member from Ottawa could possibly know about the situation on the east coast, about the situation on the Seaway, about the situation in veterans' homes and hospitals across the country. He demanded to know how the Liberal opposition could possibly be opposing this bill when it should understand, if it had any responsibility at all, how important this bill was.

The member for Ottawa West knows because she listens, something this government does not do. This government could well learn a lesson about listening. This government could well learn a lesson about listening to Canadians when it comes to the punitive effect something like the goods and services tax would have.

I cannot believe that I heard the Prime Minister of Canada stand up in this House today and say that it is okay if well over 1,000 fish plant workers in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and throughout Atlantic Canada are without jobs because we are giving them better unemployment insurance. They do not want unemployment insurance; they want jobs. They want this government to do something to stop its destruction of the fishing industry, its destruction of their livelihood, and its destruction of their very communities. They do not want better unemployment insurance because unemployment insurance is a pitifully low level of income to live on. These people want to live with dignity and they want to know that their government is doing something to save Atlantic Canada from being lopped off from the prosperity that a good part of Canada enjoys and set adrift in the Atlantic Ocean. The government could be listening to that.

The government also could be listening to people when it talks to them about the clawback of seniors' pensions. It could be listening to people who are saying: "We have saved all our lives. We have paid through our taxes for our old age security. We have made plans for our retirement. We have invested in certain ways so that we can enjoy retirement in comfort and not be dependent on the state to support us in our retirement".

It could be listening to pensioners who say: "Yes, I get a little more than I need right now but I know that the likelihood that I am going to die before my wife is very high and I know that my pension dies with me. I know that that leaves her dependent on nothing but old age security and the guaranteed income supplement and, if that is all she has, that still leaves her at a poverty level income".

The government should listen to the pensioner who says: "I have provided for my old age. When my children were little they did without things. When they were in high school they did without things. We lived in a smaller house. We did not have a car. We sacrificed so that now in retirement years we would not have to face poverty". He says: "I do not want my wife to face poverty after I am gone".

What the pensioner says, and what he wants this government to listen to is: "I want to be able to take what I have now that is over and above my immediate needs and to be able to ensure that my wife does not become one of the two-thirds of elderly women who are alone who are living in poverty". This government is robbing those pensioners of that opportunity to provide for their spouses after their death. That is another example of where this government does not listen.

• (1530)

On Monday morning the Minister of Justice challenged my ability to understand the situation. I suggest that it is the Minister of Justice who does not understand the situation. If he and the government understood the situation they would have taken far more seriously the need to negotiate and reach a settlement with their workers, they would have known that the daily cost of this strike is far more than the yearly cost of settling this strike, having these people back to work and happy to be there because they know their government has recognized their right to a basic and decent wage for the work they do.

The member for Ottawa West knows what this strike is about because she listens. She also understands basic democratic rights. These rights are enshrined in the International Declaration of Human Rights. They are rights that are enshrined in other conventions to which this country is signatory. We see those rights being shattered here. They are rights that apply right across this country, whether it is in Bull Harbour on the north tip of Vancouver Island, or in Cambridge Bay where that imaginary line comes down and if you dock on one side of the dock you get $1,600 less for doing the same work than if you dock on the other side, or if it is Hamilton Harbour, the right of workers to organize, to negotiate and, if necessary, to withdraw their services so that they can negotiate for a proper recompense for the work they do is not something that applies to, or depends on, or should depend on, the whims of this House or the whims of the government of the day. These are basic human rights.

They are a basic human right because there are times in every labour situation when the right to withdraw your services becomes the only means of equalizing the balance of power between the employer and the employee. The employer has much power over the employee, the right to hire, the right to fire, the right to promote, the right to lock out and the right to pay less than is required to provide for one's family or for one's own survival. That economic power is a tremendous power. The government has that power over these workers. The only thing they have to counterbalance that power is the right to say "this isn't fair, this isn't just, and I choose not to work for those kinds of wages in those kinds of conditions for this employer".

The member for Ottawa West understands this situation because she recognizes the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. She recognizes the right of people to be paid the same for the work they do if the work they do has the same value. She recognizes the right of women to be paid the same as men for doing the same work. That is one of the fundamental issues at stake in this strike. Without that issue there would be no strike.

Finally, the member for Ottawa West knows enough to listen to her colleagues who have spoken eloquently in this House. If there is any misapprehension on the part of the government, any member of the government, the parliamentary secretary or the President of the Treasury

Board, that the position taken on this side of the House is in any way to continue to prolong a situation that is becoming increasingly grave by the moment, then the minister and the government do not understand the situation.

If there is any misapprehension that somehow my colleagues from Atlantic Canada, the west or along the St. Lawrence Seaway are somehow being dictated to or bludgeoned into accepting the debate on this back to work legislation, who want to see the grain moving, of course they do. People want to see their constituents back to work a couple of weeks before Christmas and having a half decent paycheque coming into the house.

The statement by the Minister of Justice suggests that in fact he has not been listening in this House. If he had been listening, he would have heard the people who represent these workers who live by the ocean and know what 10, 20 and 30-foot waves are like, who know what going out on the ocean in 100-mile-per-hour gales is like, who know what going out on the ocean in 16 degrees below zero is like. The people who have spoken in the House know all these things. They know what is going on in our hospitals because they have been in touch with their constituents.

I have been to the veterans home on Smyth Road in Ottawa. I spent time with those veterans, long before this strike was an issue, long before I knew what hospital service workers were. I spent time in that home and I know the needs of those veterans. I know the ones who are confused and a little out of touch with reality. I know the ones who cannot control their own bodily functions and, therefore, need constant care and attention to ensure that they have basic cleanliness. I also know the people who look after them. I know that this job is not done for the miserable $16,000, $17,000 or $18,000 a year they get paid. It is a job that is done out of love and compassion and caring and wanting these people in their retirement years to be well looked after.

There are people at this home who have spent virtually their whole working life there because it is work that is meaningful and matters to them. I can almost believe that the government knows that is the way they feel about their work, that their patients matter to them, whether they are working in the laundry making sure the sheets are clean, in the tailor shop to keep things in good repair, in the kitchen to prepare nutritious and tasty meals, or whether they are stripping the soiled bedsheets and making sure the elderly patient is clean and comfortable.

I cannot help but wonder if the government does not know that they do those jobs out of love and real concern for those patients and that, therefore, they withdraw their services very reluctantly, and despite the low wages they will continue to work in that job because they are dedicated and committed. For nearly a decade they have been waiting for fair recognition of the value of work they do, despite a decision of the Human Rights Commission in 1987 that these people have been underpaid by, at that time, an interim amount of $28 million. This was not something the government did out of the kindness of their heart. It was simply returning to them what was and should have been theirs by rights all along. The member for Ottawa West understands perfectly the issues before us today and for the last week.

• (1540)

I want to go back to the words of the Minister of Justice on Monday morning. I want to go through them very carefully and point out just how lacking his own understanding is of the issue. He states at page 6725 of *Hansard:*

> I think everyone—except if one lives in a large city in central Ontario such as Ottawa—who has any experience with the weather and the transportation system in this country appreciates the dangers of the oceans at this time of year.

Well, yes we do. All my colleagues from Halifax, Dartmouth, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and New Brunswick have spoken eloquently on this matter. What they fail to understand is why the government does not understand these dangers. We raised these matters in the House before the strike ever began, and several times since and the government has not understood the urgency of reaching a settlement that would get these people back to work.

My colleague from Dartmouth, particularly, asked about the 1,700 lobster fishermen putting out to sea at a dangerous time of year and under dangerous circumstances because there is a great rush to get to those

lobster grounds. It can be dangerous. There is no question about that. The minister was not concerned about that. His reply in the House indicated clearly that he was not concerned. I think that was the day he talked about contingency plans being in place to take care of any eventuality.

It is obvious there were not contingency plans or we would not be dealing with this legislation today. Again, I am confused about whether the ocean became more dangerous before this bill was introduced last week than it had been the day before or the day the strike began, or than it had been two weeks before the strike began when we raised the issue in the House, or than it had been, in fact, two years ago when this contract expired and throughout the two years since when it has been subject to negotiation.

I think we in the Official Opposition well understand the dangers of the sea. The member for Ottawa West has not experienced it personally but she certainly listens to and is supported by colleagues who have.

The Minister of Justice also talked about the possibility of some 41 ships, which would be a record, that could be caught in the seaway as a result of the actions of the Liberal and NDP parties stalling this legislation. The one inevitable result of being a Canadian is that you prepare for winter. Every year winter comes. Every winter it gets colder. Every year ice forms on the waterways. Every year it snows. If there is anybody who lives in this country and does not know that, they obviously have not been outside in 100 years.

Mr. Harvard: You haven't been to Winnipeg, Marlene.

Mrs. Catterall: Yes, I have stood at the corner of Portage and Main and I do know that that corner exemplifies what Canadian winters are all about. In case the government did not know that, we made a point of letting them know. We let them know before this strike began. Before the government thought of this legislation, we made a point of letting them know. My colleague from Leeds—Grenville did stand up and remind the government that there is $6 million worth of navigational aids in the St. Lawrence Seaway and that if those aids are not brought in before winter, they are lost. They are destroyed by the ice.

I guess the government did not hear him, or chose not to respond. It certainly had many, many weeks after we were aware of the problems to make itself aware of the problems and to get back to the bargaining table and say: "We had better get these people back to work". It chose not to do that.

The minister on Monday also said: "It doesn't bother anybody from Ottawa because they don't have empathy for the people out on ships." I think I have said enough on that particular point. The Official Opposition well understands that the government obviously does not care about the problems of people out on ships.

Then the Minister of Justice said: "Maybe I could ask the member from Ottawa to have some concern for our veterans and the people in veterans hospitals." If I did not have personal experience at those veterans hospitals, I only had to listen to the co-workers of the hospital services workers from Ste. Anne de Bellevue in Montreal who came to this city yesterday to show their support for the hospital services workers who work with them. These were not the people on strike. These are the professionals—the nurses, the dietitians, the doctors, the X-ray technicians. They are not on strike. They are the ones who are keeping the hospital running. They are the ones who are working 12 and 13-hour shifts, being bribed, cajoled, coerced and threatened into crossing picket lines and keeping the hospital going, working to the point of exhaustion.

They are the members of the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada, the union whose president wrote a letter to the President of the Treasury Board. The President of the Treasury Board used that letter in this House to imply that the professional workers in that union were in support of this back to work legislation. In fact, what they were supporting and urging was that the government get back to the bargaining table to recognize the legitimate claims of these hospital services workers and to reach a settlement with them.

The people who came here from Montreal yesterday to sit in and watch this debate, to meet with myself and with other members of the Official Opposition, came because they completely understand the value, which the government does not, of the work these workers perform, its importance to veterans in Canada living out their last years in those homes. They understand that

their work as nurses is much more difficult. In fact, it is impossible without the assistance of nurses aids.

The dietitians understand that their work is impossible and meaningless without the support of the dietary assistants who are among the workers on strike. The nurses know that if there are no clean sheets to put on the bed, their patients will not be healthy and will not be comfortable.

They came here yesterday because they have seen those workers on the picket line for two weeks in freezing temperatures. They know them personally. They know how much the families suffer from lack of adequate income. They wanted to show their opposition to this piece of legislation, and their support for the government's return to the bargaining table, where it has not been since Sunday afternoon, and has not successfully been for over two years. They want this strike settled so things in their hospital can get back to normal.

They talked to me about the cost of keeping that hospital running without these workers. The cost being incurred by the government and the wastage of taxpayers' dollars to keep the hospital running without the hospital services workers exceeds the cost of settling the strike.

The Minister of Justice said: "If my hon. friend from Ottawa thinks that veterans should be inconvenienced that way, then I hope members have it in their hearts to think about other people." I challenge this government to think about other people. I challenge the Minister of Justice not to sit there and lecture me about thinking about other people. The Minister of Justice said: "I see some members here who represent ridings with people at risk on the seas, and I don't know how they are going to face their people back home if there are any accidents." The Minister of Justice knows perfectly well that the ships' crews workers on strike, those people represented by my colleagues about whom he was talking, have gone above and beyond the call of duty. They have ignored the heartless and arrogant way in which they have been treated by this government in not reaching a settlement. They have ignored all that and put the welfare of their fellow citizens first. They have kept themselves ready 24 hours a day, leaving home to be where they could be ready on a moment's notice to put out to sea, whatever the weather, and to respond to any emergency calls.

• (1550)

There are people working full time through this strike because they figured out that that was necessary to ensure the safety of those who put out to sea. Do you know what they are doing? They are not collecting their salaries, but are turning them over to the Public Service Alliance. They are accepting strike pay just as their other colleagues who are on strike because they do not want the fact that they are working to protect the public to put them in a better economic situation than those who are on strike and fighting for their rights.

That kind of self-sacrifice has been evident in other ways throughout this strike. It shows that the workers have a better understanding of the needs of their colleagues than the government. The west coast workers have said that they are prepared to accept a wage increase in this contract that is below what the rest of the Public Service is getting, provided their colleagues on the east coast, who take the same risks and have the same responsibilities, get the same wage.

They know that it is not right that one person's life is considered more important and more valuable than another. They know it is not right that if you live in Halifax the responsibilities and the risks you take are worth less than if you live in Vancouver. They know that able seamen in the private sector are now getting well over 40 per cent more than they or their colleagues are getting. They want to see those inequities corrected.

If the Minister of Justice wants to talk about those members who have constituents at sea and to tell them that they "just might think about that", he should be aware that they have just thought about that, thank you very much. I think it is the government who should just think about that.

Then the Minister of Justice chose to talk about Kingston and chose to point out to the members on this side of the House that Kingston is on the Seaway. We know that. We have the member for Kingston and the Islands and the government does not any more.

He pointed out that there is the odd big ship going by Kingston, just in case the members for Ottawa do not know that. Well, we know that because we talk to our colleagues on this side of the House.

Then he said: "In case of an accident—". What has the government done "in case of an accident"? How has it let things get to this stage?

The minister even went so far as to suggest that the member for Kingston and other members along the Seaway might talk to the members from Ottawa and tell them that it may be a big thrill to hold up legislation that puts people back to work, but if you live somewhere where there is risk at sea, you might have a better appreciation for it.

I wonder what kind of big thrill the government, the Minister of Justice, the President of the Treasury Board and the parliamentary secretary who spoke to us this morning are getting out of hammering people who are earning $16,000, $17,000, $18,000 and $19,000 a year, withholding from them salaries that they are entitled to, salaries to feed and clothe and house their children properly. Is the thrill of the exercise of power so tantalizing that you cannot even see justice in the situation, that you cannot move to give these people justice? Are you prepared to risk the shipment of grains from the prairies? Are you prepared to risk a chemical transport ship in the St. Lawrence? Are you prepared to risk, hon. parliamentary secretary, those people setting out on the high seas from your own community?

I have to ask: where has the Minister of Transport been in all of this? He was not allowed to come before the legislative committee. How strong were the submissions he made to the President of the Treasury Board about the need to settle this strike? Was he anticipating the closure of the Seaway? Was he anticipating more than 100 ships being trapped in the St. Lawrence Seaway or in the Great Lakes at a cost of millions of dollars a day? How did he think he was going to cope with that when he was standing here telling the House that there was no problem with safety and security.

We did not hear from the Minister of Veterans Affairs. Where has he been for the last two years? Has he been encouraging the President of the Treasury Board to settle this strike? Has he been speaking on behalf of the people who run his department's veterans homes? Where has he been while these workers have been dragged through the courts instead of being at a negotiating table and dealt with fairly?

The Minister of Justice, in what my grandmother liked to call "high dudgeon" says: "I did not want to speak for so long." Well, I don't either, Mr. Speaker, but I am going to. The Minister of Justice said: "I got incensed at the insensitivity of members opposite". Where is the sensitivity of the members on that side of the House? Where is the sensitivity of members toward workers who have won the legal right through the Human Rights Commission to equitable pay and still do not have it two years after that Human Rights Commission decision?

The Minister was talking about "political posturing, which may gain some points in Ottawa". If we have ever seen political posturing there has been two years of it through these negotiations and through these people not having a contract settled with their employer, the Government of Canada. There has been political posturing that promises, tantalizingly, that there will be a settlement of this pay equity issue. There has been political posturing, dragging the issue through the courts instead of sitting down and solving it. There has been political posturing that somehow the government thinks the public of this country will support that the lowest paid workers in the federal public service are going to continue to be underpaid, are going to continue to be paid less than colleagues doing exactly the same work. And not a little bit less, but an average of $3,000 a year less.

One person involved in that human rights tribunal settlement was paid $40,000. That is the amount by which that person had been underpaid. That is the amount of money that family had been deprived of and, despite that human rights tribunal ruling, members opposite are quite content to sit there and let that unfairness and that inequity go on, to let those workers continue to be deprived of a fair wage level to which they are entitled. Now that is political posturing.

• (1600)

The minister wondered at the stalling of the opposition parties. We are not talking about stalling. We are talking about a few days of honest and fair debate on this matter. Stalling? I will move on to stalling in a moment and the people can be the judge of who is stalling.

The government has moved closure at every stage of this bill. It has moved time allocation, and used every rule it can use to limit debate to as little time as it can possibly get away with. We are not stalling. We are not the ones who have been sitting at the bargaining table and playing with people's lives. We are not the ones who have been taking people to court and delaying that whole

bargaining process even getting started. We are not the ones who sit in a legislative committee and say: "We do not have time to take seriously the representations and the motions put forward by the union that represents over 160,000 people who work for the Government of Canada". This is a shameful example for the largest employer in this country to be setting for other employers.

I want to read a letter I received, because I think this kind of letter speaks far more eloquently than I can. It comes from a person in Atlantic Canada who writes on behalf of herself and her family. She is the wife of a ships' crew worker who is on strike. She writes, "Your speech warmed my heart, to see that someone in government cares about us. The so-called leaders of our country feel that we are the little people and should be paid and kept the little people".

I will just read a few of the more poignant sentences from this letter. "My wish is that the government members who are against us would have to spend a month on strike, especially at Christmas, with no pay and children wondering if they will have a Christmas. This is the time of the year for goodwill, something the Progressive Conservatives do not have, or even know what it is". She says, "I am ashamed that the member of Parliament for the region I live in is a government member and after talking to us voted against us". That is the feeling of the people in Atlantic Canada. I think the parliamentary secretary would know that better than anyone.

I have accused the government of stalling, and I think it is important that I expand on that statement so the members of the caucus can judge for themselves whether they think their ministers, in particular those involved in this whole negotiating process, have acted fairly. I urge them to listen carefully, because if they do not think this is a fair process, they have an obligation on behalf of their own constituents to urge the President of the Treasury Board or through him, the parliamentary secretary, or the Minister of Transport, or the Minister of Veterans Affairs or the Minister of Public Works, or the Minister of National Defence and the ministers of several other departments for whom these people work, to get to the bargaining table to deal fairly with people, to settle this strike in the way a good, responsible employer settles it, by negotiating, not by forcing people to work.

If the government does feel people's services are essential to the safety and security of Canadians, it has the legal tool to ensure that those essential public services continue. That tool is called designating people. The government has the ability to designate people as "essential". But in its arrogance, in its sloppiness, in what was called by the Public Service Staff Relations Board its own administrative negligence—and the Public Service Staff Relations Board had a few other choice words—this government failed to do that. Now, that is irresponsible.

The government knows when a contract with its employees is going to end. Most contracts are for four years, so from the moment a contract is signed it knows when that contract is going to end. The government knows that after the end of that contract, when the union has given notice that it wishes to begin bargaining a new contract, it has 20 days in which to designate those employees it wishes to have declared as "essential" employees. That is a tool the government has to keep people from going on strike and to keep them from withdrawing their services as a bargaining tool. Every department involved with essential services employees failed to meet that deadline. Treasury Board and the President of the Treasury Board failed to make sure that that legal requirement was met.

Once you realize that you have goofed, you admit it and say, "Okay, now what can we do to deal with the situation?" The thing to do is recognize that negotiations have started. And having bungled, you had better darn well sit down at the bargaining table and try to solve your problem another way. In early 1987 the government knew that it had failed to use the one tool it had to stop these people from going on strike. It knew that it had broken the law, that the winter of 1989 was coming, that negotiations were coming and that it had a couple of options.

At that point the government could have said, "Okay, we have goofed. What contingency plans can we put in place to make sure that those essential services continue if we do not reach a successful conclusion, if we do not manage to settle with these people and if they do exercise their legal rights, which we have left them, to go on strike?" That, it seems to me, would be a responsible approach by the government. The government should

say, "Okay, the minister should take charge of this". The minister should say, "We have goofed. How are we going to handle our goof? How are we going to make up for it? How are we going to make sure it does not hurt the Canadian people"?

In fact the minister, weeks after the strike had started, was still denying that there was any problem. If there is no problem, why do we have this legislation in front of us? The government did not choose to take the productive path and say, "How can we manage responsibly and how can we ensure that things are done properly and that the public is protected"? Instead, the government said, "How can we get these workers? How can we put it to them? How can we skewer them? How can we prevent them from exercising their legal right"? The government spent over a year and a half doing that, instead of trying to settle this before it became a problem.

• (1610)

The government went to the Public Service Staff Relations Board and said, "Yes, we know we did not listen to the law and we know we missed our deadline but we still want to designate these people. We really do not want to have to deal fairly and up front with people who are on strike because we know we will be under a little bit of pressure to reach a settlement. We did not do what we were supposed to do but we want you to let us do it now". The Public Service Staff Relations Board, unfortunately, said, "All right".

The government has ignored this law before. It said Parliament did not really mean "shall", when it said "shall". Surely Parliament does not mean to tell the Treasury Board what it must do. Surely Treasury Board and the President of the Treasury Board are above and beyond the laws of Parliament when it says "shall" be done within 20 days.

But this time the union got smart. This time the union took them to court and asked the court to rule on whether "shall" means "shall" or may, or could, or might if you want to, or if you get around to it, or if you feel like it. This time the court said that when Parliament says "shall", it means "shall". It does not mean that it is your option, it is your choice Charlie Brown, do it if you feel like it, but do not worry too much about it because it is just a law of Parliament. The court said that when Parliament says "shall", it means you must do it. That is what any other normal citizen understands by "shall" in law. It means it is something I have to do, but the government does not seem to understand that.

Despite this, the Treasury Board then went back to the Public Service Staff Relations Board and tried to argue that it should be allowed to designate these people anyway. Of course, the Public Service Staff Relations Board, faced with a court decision said, "I am sorry, but the courts are very clear. You have not done what the law says you must do and therefore you cannot designate these workers as essential workers". It had some very unpleasant and very critical things to say about the way the government had handled this whole situation.

Mr. Speaker, you would have thought Treasury Board, back in June, would have said, "We better get on with the business of planning for a strike contingency. We better get on with the business of sitting down and seriously bargaining with these people". Oh no. Treasury Board controls the purse strings and so Treasury Board was able to say, "How many thousands of dollars—is it tens of thousands or is it hundreds of thousands—will it take us to drag this out for another three or four months and let it get into September before we have to start doing any contingency planning?". So they took it back through the courts to say, "Surely, you didn't really mean 'shall' means 'shall'. Surely, you really meant that we can do it anyway". The court simply reiterated its earlier decision and finally in September said to Treasury Board, "No, we meant what we told you in the first place. When Parliament says 'shall', Parliament means 'shall'. It does not mean you can mess around with it and do whatever you want".

What had happened in that period of time was that settlements had been reached with the Public Service Alliance and the bargaining groups across the country were voting on the aspects of the agreement that pertained to them. It was either late May or early June when the government knew that the hospital services workers said "no" to this agreement. The ships' crews workers said no to this agreement. They said no for some very good reasons.

You would think a wise employer would say, "I had better get serious about this bargaining business and find out what it is they really want and how we can sit down and reach a settlement with them so they will be back to work. We will then not have a disruption of essential services or a disruption of grain shipments. We will not have an undermining of international confidence in the St. Lawrence Seaway. I would think that that is important as we are trying to build up our trade and signing new export wheat deals with Russia and other countries. I think it is kind of important that the reliability of the Seaway be well known internationally and that the international companies and the international markets know they can trust us". Apparently this is not important to the government. Instead of spending June, July, August and September when a settlement of this could have been reached, they chose to again go off to the courts at great cost to the taxpayers of Canada. I am sure you can imagine how these trips back and forth to the courts would poison the atmosphere for negotiations.

Is it any wonder that in October, when a conciliation board was finally appointed to try to reach agreement between these two parties it could not reach agreement? It just said, "The two sides are too far apart. There is no possibility of a settlement here." That is one part of the story. That is the part of the story that applies to both of these groups and, I must say, it also applies to a third group. Remember the welfare program workers, the parole officers inside our prisons, the training officers inside our prisons? They were on strike, too. They were on strike for very much the same reasons. The government had dragged them back and forth through the courts instead of sitting down at the bargaining table and negotiating in good faith.

The other side of the story is the hospital service workers. Although it will not do any good in this debate, because we know that the government has every intention of forcing this legislation through and that there are no open minds, open hearts or open ears even, I suspect, on the other side of the House. This issue of pay equity for the hospital service workers has been around for a long time. Going back to last spring I have had substantial correspondence with the President of Treasury Board on this problem.

The issue really is that people who are doing identical work are being paid different amounts of money, and substantially different amounts of money. That is contrary to the Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms. It is contrary to the pay equity policy that this government enforces on private sector employers and it is not a matter of debate. Or is it? It has been to the Human Rights Tribunal. It has been decided that, in fact, one group of workers called "hospital service workers" do the same work as another group of workers called "general service workers" but they do not get paid the same. One of the reasons they do not get paid the same is because it is largely a female group.

That is a fundamental problem of pay equity. It is why, in the government, women get paid 67 cents for every dollar a man earns. It is why women do not get into senior management positions at the same rate as men do. It is why, after 10 years, women are still not getting promoted in the scientific and professional categories. They are still at exactly the same state as they were at in 1976 despite policies, laws, and stated good intentions from the other side of the House. That is a reality for women. They do not get paid as much for the work they do.

They pay the same price for a loaf of bread. They pay the same price for a car. They pay more for a haircut. But, for the basic necessities of life they pay the same price as men but they do not earn as much to pay for them. So, they do without things more than the population, in general, does.

I wrote the President of Treasury Board about this first in July of 1989. It is over two years since the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruled this way. What has been done to give these people the classifications and the wages they deserve? He wrote back and told me all the bureaucratic hoops that this has been going through for two years. It was, I must say, a very informative and helpful letter that helped me understand why bureaucracies do not always get things done that are fair and just and right.

• (1620)

I wrote back and said: "It does not seem fair to me that in the time these people have been trying to seek justice, many of their children have grown from pre-schoolers to adolescents. They have done without and they have been deprived of many of those things and many of those comforts that children should have as they are growing

up, because their mothers and fathers are not getting paid what they deserve". The Human Rights Tribunal has said that. I am not making this up. I am not pulling it out of the air. I am not on some rant and rave about equal pay for work of equal value. We have got the Human Rights Tribunal saying this.

What I was questioning was this idea of equalization payments. I thought when the Human Rights Tribunal said people should get paid the same amount as certain other people, that it meant they should get paid the same amount. But that is not the way they do it in government. They do not give them the wage to which they are entitled. They give them their same old wage and then they add what we call an equalization payment on top. The problem with the equalization payment, of course, is that it does not roll into the contributions to their pension. It does not roll into the amount of pension they are entitled to and it does not, in fact, have the same status as wages.

Therefore, you have these workers, even though they are getting more money through equalization payments, which by the way, they are not getting yet, even two and a half years later. But even if they were getting them, they would still end up poorer when they are old, as compared to other workers doing exactly the same work.

The President of the Treasury Board wrote to me and said: "We cannot deal with wages under the Canadian Human Rights Act, only under the Public Service Staff Relations Act, because that is where wages are negotiated". Well, I kind of knew that. I wondered why these negotiations that have been going on for two years had not managed to come to grips with this issue. That is where these things should be dealt with, at the bargaining table. Yet the employer, knowing full well that this was a crucial issue for which these hospital services workers had been fighting for nearly nine years, that is a fair wage, as the Human Rights Tribunal had said they should be receiving, refused to address that issue in its bargaining. It has known for two years that if that issue was not addressed, there would be a strike.

So do not accuse me of being insensitive to the needs of the veterans in our hospitals. Where have the government members who have veterans homes in their ridings been? Where has the Minister of National Defence been while the needs of these workers have been ignored? Where has the Minister of Veterans Affairs been while this issue has been sitting on a shelf, going through layers and layers of bureaucracy?

In 1987, $28 million was paid to these people. That was not the gracious gift of a generous government. It is the amount by which they had been underpaid. The President of the Treasury Board stood in the House and said: "We have got another $10 million". Well, that is what he told me in a letter back in August, that there was $10 million, and that the departments had been instructed to get this out to these people as another interim payment, not a final settlement by any means of the problem or the decision of the tribunal, but as an interim payment. It still has not been done. I ask, why not? Is that $10 million being held over their heads? Has it been withheld from them deliberately for over four months, in fact for over two years, as a bludgeon, a pry, as some way of forcing them to accept less than a fair settlement? That is the only conclusion I can come to. It is their money and it should be in their hands. It should be putting shoes and clothes on the feet and the backs of their children and food on the table, not sitting in government coffers gaining interest.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On a point of order, the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Speaker, I do not mean to interrupt the hon. member but I notice that the clock is working now and according to the order that was passed earlier would suggest that we have to put the question at a quarter to the hour. I am wondering whether the hon. member would indicate whether she is prepared to conclude her remarks so that a member of the New Democratic Party can participate at third reading stage, because the vote has to be put at a quarter to five.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I hear some members saying that this is not a point of order. Technically speaking, it is not a point of order. It is more in the form of a question to the member who has the floor. I will hear the member for Halifax West. I gather that it is on the same point.

Mr. Crosby: In a sense. On the same point of order, if it relates to speaking time, because it may well be that the member from Ottawa West does intend to wind up her remarks. Before she does I thought it might be

important to clarify a matter which has arisen in debate, that is, between the hon. member and myself.

Mrs. Catterall: Let him take his turn.

Mr. Crosby: I thought you needed a rest.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Ottawa West has the floor.

Mrs. Catterall: I must say that I do appreciate that the letters from the President of the Treasury Board are always informative, always accurate and always complete. But, I do not always like what they say.

What the President of the Treasury Board said I found quite disturbing. He said, "Unlike the pay equity legislation in Manitoba and Ontario, there is no requirement for a collective agreement to be re-opened and negotiated wages to be incorporated and pay equity to be incorporated through negotiated wages". The President of Treasury Board also says, "Our legislative provisions do not demand a corrective process when there is a matter of pay equity".

I have said this a number of times in this House and I am going to keep on saying it. I think the government, as the largest employer in the country, on environmental issues and on issues of equity, has an obligation to do not the minimum the law demands but the maximum that justice demands. I have no tolerance for a government that says it is not going to be fair and it is not going to be just because the law does not say it has to.

There have been interjections from the other side of the aisle about the problems being created. I shall conclude, when I conclude, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On a point of order, the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan.

Mr. Angus: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I fully appreciate that the standing orders, the rules of this House, allow the official spokesperson for the Official Opposition to have unlimited time. I accept that as one of the rules. However, we are in a closure situation and I just want to point out that clearly what the Liberals are planning on doing is preventing the New Democratic Party from speaking on this important matter.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Prud'homme: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the same point of order, the hon. member for Saint-Denis (Mr. Prud'homme).

Mr. Prud'homme: Mr. Speaker, I would not want to get into an argument with the hon. member, but I could quote a number of instances in the past when a similar request was made but the roles were reversed, and the member who was speaking at the time refused to oblige. He said: I am sorry, but it's not my fault, I have the floor, and I have a few more things to say. So I am not anxious to hear about all the precedents, but there are precedents. That's just the way it is.

• (1630)

[*English*]

Tough luck, but that's life. She has the floor.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Ottawa West has the floor.

Mrs. Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I think by this action, by bringing in this legislation and by its absolutely intransigent bull-headedness and stupidity over the last two years the government has probably done more for collective bargaining in the Public Service and more for worker solidarity than has been done in many decades. It has brought a cohesiveness to these workers that I think they have never felt before. Often it is true of the lowest paid workers in any environment that they find it hard to come together, to work together and to feel good about their association with each other because they are too worried about the necessities of life. But I think the government by its actions has in fact brought these workers together. They are out there in the freezing cold on the picket lines. They are determined to support each other until there is a reasonable and equitable settlement of these contracts.

That is what happens when you try to beat people into submission. I do not know why this government always picks on the lowest paid workers. I do not know why it is always the clerks at the bottom salary scales in government who go out on strike and get left there for month after month. I think it is because the government knows that strike pay is no picnic and you can only survive so long when you earn so little and you have so little saved because everything goes on the necessities of life. So it is easy to pick on these vulnerable workers, the ones who work in the laundries, in the sewing shops and in the kitchens of the hospitals, and the ones who go out to sea

for miserable, lousy wages that this government should be ashamed to pay.

We have heard about the problems being created by this strike. We are well aware of the problems being created by this strike. Those problems are on the head of this government because it refuses to treat its employees with decency, with dignity and with the respect of sitting down across from them at the bargaining table with a determination to reach a just settlement.

Private sector employers are learning lessons that this government needs to learn, that bargaining with people and a co-operative relationship with your workers is more productive, more satisfying and a more profit-producing way to go than to hammer them with your power. This government needs to learn that lesson, but it has not. It prefers to treat this like a game in which winning is more important than solving problems.

I do not know who gets the kicks out of this. I do not understand the President of the Treasury Board sitting in this chamber saying: "I am waiting for the union to call me. All they have to do is pick up the phone". He is the employer. It is his responsibility. It is several ministers' responsibility to make sure that service to the Canadian public continues and that people are paid a decent wage for the work they do.

The government has created this problem. I do not think it is fooling anybody when the problem has been in its hands for over two years. It has known it was there. It has chosen to do nothing. It has chosen to waste taxpayers' dollars going to court. It has chosen to leave ships tied up on the Seaway and on the Great Lakes to the tune of $2 million a day. It has chosen to waste $6 million worth of navigational aids on the Seaway by having them destroyed by ice rather than getting people back to work.

I doubt if many members on the opposite side even know that this will cause problems this spring when the Department of Transport will not have enough navigational aids in the spring to start the ships moving through the Seaway. It is irresponsible to suggest that the responsibility for that lies anywhere except with the government side of this House.

Despite this and despite the fact that normally the opposition would not support back to work legislation, but at least assist its quick passage, we have chosen not to do that. We have done that because we know it is the government's fault that this situation has arisen. We will not co-operate in the breakdown of collective bargaining in the public service.

We did have discussions with the government and the other party in opposition about how we could expedite this legislation and try to use the seriousness of the situation to try to get this legislation improved to the point where we would be prepared to give up a few hours of debate and let it go through. The government failed to do that.

I want to spend just a couple of minutes on the amendments that were wanted to this legislation, amendments that the union representing these employees wanted.

Very simply, it wanted recognition of the bargaining agent as the party to the collective agreement. The government somehow forgot and left that out. In the legislation it sets up the individual employees as the other party with the employer to the collective agreement. That is not what the courts have ruled. The Public Service Alliance wanted what it believed to be an oversight corrected. We thought the government was agreeable to that, that, in fact, it was an oversight and it should be corrected.

The union wanted the ability, which is theirs legally, to agree to the chair of the conciliation board. They did not want to go into a situation where the government had picked two out of the three members of the board. For heaven's sake, who would go into a stacked game like that?

If the government had any fairness and any willingness to send these people back to work with a shred of hope that they might be able to get a decent settlement out of this binding conciliation process, it would have agreed to that.

It would have agreed that the matter of pay equity would be referred to this conciliation board. But it did not.

It would have agreed that parity between the east and west coast workers would be settled before this conciliation board started its work.

It would have agreed that this contract should not be allowed to go on for whatever indeterminate period and it would have amended that clause to make it clear that

this contract had to conform with the other contracts in place in the Public Service of Canada.

We had discussions, and I would not have referred to them in the House today if the parliamentary secretary had not done so. I am going to put on the record what happened in those discussions.

We had discussions throughout Monday to say: "Look, if you will accept these amendments which at the legislative committee you agreed were reasonable, but which we just did not have time to consider the details of, then we are prepared to expedite passage of this bill. We are prepared to agree that it can go through quickly and that the ships can be put back to work, the people can get back to work in the veterans' homes and hospitals with a bill that is not good, not acceptable, not palatable—that is in fact outrageous after the government's two years of bungling—but they can get back to work with a bill that at least gives them a chance of coming out with a decent settlement".

These issues were all agreed to on Monday. We felt that we had achieved for those workers out there changes to this bill that were going to give them at least a half decent chance of getting a fair settlement, not something that was imposed by conciliation boards dominated by government appointees. Do you know what one sticking point was, Mr. Speaker? The President of the Treasury Board was not prepared to unequivocally say that the matter of pay equity was before the conciliation board. This is the question of the wage equity that these people have been waiting for since 1981.

• (1640)

These are the amendments that the government members opposite voted against yesterday. The amendments recognized the bargaining agent as a party to the agreement and set up a fair conciliation board where all parties agree on whom the chair will be. These amendments recognized that all parties are equal in that process. They would have set up a situation in which there would be pay equity, and would get rid of an open-ended section that could have had the contract go on for five, six, seven, eight or nine years unlike contracts in the rest of the Public Service.

The people who really blew it for the workers in this case are the members of the New Democratic Party. I regret very much that members of the New Democratic Party, knowing that this bill was going to go through by tonight at the latest, were not prepared to say: "We want to get a bill that is better for the workers. We want pay equity on the table. We want the issue of parity between the east coast and the west coast off the table. We want that settled and not a matter for negotiation. It is a matter of right. We want to see a matter for a balanced conciliation board."

We resent that they chose not to send a member of Parliament into those negotiations, but that they chose to send a staff person. That will never happen again.

We resent that the Leader of the New Democratic Party in Nova Scotia was misrepresenting the nature of those negotiations to a couple of hundred ships crews workers in Halifax earlier this week. We resent that the New Democrats were implying—and I want this on the record—that the Liberal opposition was talking to the government without them being involved at all. We had no negotiations and no discussions that they were not involved in. They misled the leader of their party in Nova Scotia. She, in turn, unknowingly misled the ships' crews workers in Halifax.

Those ships' crews workers know who has been standing up in this House fighting for them long before their strike even started.

I regret very much that the members of the government yesterday chose to be vindictive by saying: "We didn't get our way and so we're not going to agree to amendments that we know are perfectly reasonable, perfectly rational, fair and just." They chose to say: " We're going to take our bats and balls and go home because we didn't get our way." That is wrong.

They know those amendments were right. When vindictiveness gets to the point where the minister responsible for the status of women can sit there and not support a motion that is in favour of the issue of pay equity being put before a conciliation board, which is the only place it can be included, then I wonder who in this Parliament and who in this government speaks for the women of Canada and is responsible for the status of women in Canada.

The arrogance, the vindictiveness and the meanness of this government throughout these negotiations and its willingness to pick on the most vulnerable people has

become its hallmark. The people out there know that that is what is happening.

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I am impressed that the hon. member has dared to let me have a minute—a minute—to rebut the charges she has made.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Angus: The hon. member who has just spoken at length saying the same thing over again in order to prevent the New Democratic Party from responding to the charges that she laid in this House about what we did and what we said—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I have a number of points of order.

[*Translation*]

By seniority, the hon. member for Saint-Denis comes first.

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely shocked at the hon. member's insinuations about our colleague's intentions. We all know this is highly irregular and against the Standing Orders of this House, and if he would care to rise in the House and apologize—-

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but it being 4.45 p.m., pursuant to order made Tuesday, December 12, 1989, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and to put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill now before the House.

[*English*]

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:

(*Division No. 157*)

YEAS

Members

Anderson	Andre
Atkinson	Attewell
Beatty	Belsher
Bertrand	Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)	Blenkarn
Bosley	Bouchard (Roberval)
Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)	Brightwell
Browes	Cadieux
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)	Cardiff
Casey	Chadwick
Charest	Chartrand
Clark (Brandon—Souris)	Cole
Collins	Cook
Cooper	Corbeil
Corbett	Côté
Couture	Crosbie (St. John's West)
Crosby (Halifax West)	Darling
DeBlois	de Cotret
Della Noce	Desjardins
Dobbie	Domm
Dorin	Duplessis
Edwards	Fee
Feltham	Ferland
Fontaine	Fretz
Friesen	Gérin
Gibeau	Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Greene	Grey (Beaver River)
Guilbault	Gustafson
Halliday	Hawkes
Hockin	Hogue
Holtmann	Horning
Hudon	Hughes
Jacques	James
Johnson	Jourdenais
Kempling	Koury
Langlois	Larrivée
Layton	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lewis	Littlechild
Loiselle	Lopez
MacDonald (Rosedale)	MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Marin	Martin (Lincoln)
Mazankowski	McCreath
McKnight	Merrithew
Monteith	Moore
Nicholson	Oberle
O'Kurley	Plourde
Porter	Pronovost
Redway	Reimer
Ricard	Richardson
Robitaille	Roy-Arcelin
Schneider	Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)	Shields
Siddon	Sobeski
Soetens	Stevenson
Tardif	Tétreault
Thacker	Thompson
Thorkelson	Tremblay (Rosemont)
Tremblay (Québec-Est)	Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Turner (Halton—Peel)	Van de Walle
Vankoughnet	Venne
Vien	Vincent
Weiner	Wenman
White	Wilbee
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)	
Winegard	Worthy—129

NAYS

Members

Althouse	Angus
Assad	Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	Baker
Barrett	Bellemare
Berger	Black
Blackburn (Brant)	Blondin
Boudria	Caccia
Campbell (South West Nova)	Catterall
Clancy	Copps
Crawford	Dionne
Duhamel	Ferguson
Finestone	Flis
Gagliano	Gauthier
Gray (Windsor West)	Harb
Harvard	Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hopkins	Hunter
Karpoff	Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Kristiansen	Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)
Lee	MacLellan
McCurdy	McLaughlin
Milliken	Mitchell
Murphy	Nault
Nunziata	Nystrom
Pagtakhan	Parent
Parker	Peterson
Phinney	Proud
Rideout	Riis
Robinson	Speller
Stupich	Vanclief
Wappel	Whittaker
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—61	

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Bill read the third time and passed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It being five o'clock p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS—MOTIONS

[*English*]

HEALTH

ELECTRO-MAGNETIC FIELDS

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of studying the effects of electro-magnetic fields created by high voltage power lines on human and animal health and reporting the findings to the House.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the issue of electro-magnetic fields created by high voltage power lines and its effect on human and animal health is one of some interest to Canadians wherever they live when their residences are located near these power lines.

In researching this issue I found that in 1984 the World Health Organization produced a report which concluded that "it would be prudent in the present state of scientific knowledge not to make unqualified statements about the safety of intermittent exposure to electric fields".

The report also indicated: "It is recommended that efforts be made to limit exposure, particularly of members of the general population, to levels as low as can be reasonably achieved". You can see how carefully worded the conclusions of the WHO report are.

In September 1986 we discovered that the New York State health department launched some 16 studies to investigate possible links between high voltage lines and cancer among children living near such power lines. The conclusion of these studies were published in July 1987 and indicated that children with leukaemia or brain cancer are more likely than healthy children to be living in homes where the exposure to the magnetic fields generated by electric power lines is high.

In addition to the increased risk of childhood cancer, the study suggested that exposure to a magnetic field causes behavioural changes in laboratory animals. However, the researchers noted that they could not explain the higher incidence of cancer and that the study did not establish a direct cause and effect link.

In Canada this issue had some repercussions among the population in September, 1985. At that time Ontario proposed a 500-kilovolt line through a part of Canada known as Bridlewood. The line would follow an existing 230-kilovolt right-of-way which passed closed to two parks and a new primary school. The New York State study results, when they were subsequently made public, caused a considerable amount of anxiety, and understandably so, among the families living in Bridlewood.

• (1720)

Ontario Hydro argued then and still does that there is no health hazard posed by its high voltage lines, with good reason, because if a link were to be found the implications for all utilities are enormous.

More recently, in September of this year we have the following headline appearing in *The Montreal Gazette*: "Deformed rabbits become symbol in British Columbia debate on power line safety".

We learned that some rabbits born in rabbit hutches stacked near high voltage lines were born missing half or all of their ears with oddly twisted feet or curved spines. There were also a more than usual number of stillborn. According to the owner of the rabbits, these birth defects never happened until the hutches were placed near such power lines.

A spokesman for B.C. Hydro denies any link between birth deformities and power lines but adds that "it is unfortunate the community has been stressed; people are literally terrified by these fields".

In a newspaper story which appeared on November 30, 1989 in *The Ottawa Citizen* we find this headline: "Scientist finds possible power line–cancer link". From that story we learn that Dr. Genevieve Matanoski of Johns Hopkins University seems to have found a possible link between cancer and exposure to electro–magnetic fields from power lines. Dr. Matanoski is reported as saying that while her findings require further testing, the study results have changed her view of the theory about the cancer link to power lines. She stated: "I thought before the theory was wrong. I am not so sure any more".

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, there has been sufficient controversy about this issue so much so that a book has been written about it by Paul Brodeur entitled *Currents of Death*.

According to a review in *The Winnipeg Free Press* dated December 2, 1989, Mr. Brodeur details the counter campaign by the electrical industry and the military, stressing that there is no purity in the politics of science and in the interpretation of science by the military and industry. The author concludes that there are sensible steps that we can take to reduce exposure to electro–magnetic fields, including restringing or burying neighbourhood power lines. It is the technology of restringing and burying that needs to be examined closely and would require economic resources.

Only this morning at the environment committee, we learned that the TransAlta Utilities in Alberta is the only Canadian utility among more than 50 utilities participating in a North American study of the occupational health effects of exposure to electro–magnetic fields. Exposure measurements for some 2,000 volunteers are being collected over two three–month periods. We all look forward to the outcome of this study and urge through this motion the Minister of National Health and Welfare to match this effort with a government sponsored study of potential health hazards to people living near high voltage power lines.

Why do we do that, Mr. Speaker? It seems to me that a government sponsored study would be the most objective one rather than leaving the study in the hands of utilities that for understandable reasons of course would have a vested interest in the outcome of such a study. Therefore the neutrality of the sponsor is of enormous importance for this particular type of investigation.

In conclusion, increasingly transmission lines affect the lives of literally millions of Canadians and millions of people around the world. It is important to be able to determine whether there is a real threat, particularly with regard to the health of children. In that type of investigation it is also important to find out what remedial or mitigating action or even what avoidance type of action can be put into place. Bridlewood School in Ottawa and the experience in Courtney on Vancouver Island are two examples of the national nature of this issue which therefore requires the attention of the national government.

Evidently there is no clear consensus on the part of the scientific community as to the health effects of the magnetic fields created by high voltage transmission lines. It seems to me that the Minister of National Health and Welfare has an obligation to study this particular thorny problem which affects Canadians from coast to coast and advise the public, the government and this Parliament on the necessity and the content of the necessity of such a strategy or plan so that action is taken to counter any health threats that such power lines may pose to human health.

Mr. Jack Shields (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the proposal before us today is to consider the advisability of studying the effects of electro–magnetic fields produced by high voltage power lines on human and animal health and reporting the findings to the House.

Generation, transmission and use of electricity are associated with human exposure to electric and magnetic fields, not only under high voltage power lines but also in homes and offices. On a daily basis, most Canadians are exposed to electric and magnetic fields produced by household wiring and lighting. There are electric and magnetic fields wherever there is electric power. When we consider what effects these fields may have on our health, we must concern ourselves not just with power lines but with all other sources of these fields.

Power lines are certainly highly visible, but our daily exposure comes mostly from the use of electricity in our homes and offices. Even in houses close to power lines people may be exposed to weaker fields than people far away. Many factors determine the actual exposure. Recognizing that we are practically continuously exposed to electro-magnetic fields, it certainly is important and prudent to consider whether these fields may detrimentally affect our health.

Public concern about high voltage power lines developed in the late 1960s as extra high voltage lines comprising large towers were built. The initial concern was about the aesthetic and ecological impacts and various nuisance effects.

The nuisance effects are audible noises, radio interference, and shocks and sparks when people touch ungrounded metal objects such as trucks or farm vehicles close to power lines. By the late 1970s and early 1980, some scientific evidence emerged that electric and magnetic fields could affect living organisms and that possibly some of these effects might prove to be harmful to man.

• (1730)

The Department of National Health and Welfare recognized this problem a few years ago and has done a thorough review and assessment of the existing scientific evidence. Let me briefly review this evidence for you.

Health effects of electric and magnetic fields produced by power lines have been studied in the U.S. and Europe for over two decades with intensified efforts during the last five years. Until recently conventional wisdom has held that these fields pose no threat to human health. Two reasons are behind this thinking.

First, the fields are low energy and unlike X-rays and other ionizing radiation they do not break chemical bonds, and unlike microwaves they do not cause heating.

Second, all cells in the body have large natural electric fields across their outer membranes.

However, despite the low energy electric and magnetic fields at power line frequencies can cause biological effects. While very many studies have showed a lack of effects, some research has unequivocally demonstrated that under some conditions these fields interact with biological systems.

Evidence today indicates that electric and magnetic fields can affect critical changes to cells in laboratory experiments. Examples of such changes are the modulation of ion flows, interference with DNA synthesis and RNA subscription, interactions with hormones, enzymes and neurotransmitters and perturbations to the immune response of cells and interactions with cancerous cells. The observed interactions with cancerous cells suggest a possibility of electro-magnetic field effects on tumour development as promoters or co-promoters with other agents such as toxic chemicals.

This hypothesis appears plausible because electro-magnetic fields have been shown not to cause genetic effects and cell mutations. What makes it very difficult in evaluation of these effects is that more is not necessarily worse, as we used to think.

It has been observed for some effects that a stronger field does not cause a specific effect while a weaker field does. It must be kept in mind that it is hard to predict whether and how these biological effects on cells in the laboratory translate into health effects on the animal or man.

On the level of studying the whole animal, as I mentioned before, many studies do not show any effect. Most animal experiments were screening experiments looking for all kinds of effects.

Very many studies were performed with very strong electric fields, higher than those encountered under high voltage power lines. No effects were found on blood and the immune system and on the reproductive system of rodents, but malformations in chick embryos were observed under some conditions. The best documented effects in experimental animals are shifts in daily circa-

dian rhythms and associated hormonal changes, changes in response to drugs and some changes in behaviour.

Regarding humans, laboratory experiments with volunteers showed that people can usually perceive an electric field above 7 kilovolts per metre, but some individuals can perceive fields as weak as 2 kilovolts per metre. Magnetic fields are believed not to be perceived by people.

In a carefully conducted study it was found that exposure to fields did not change most vital signs, physiological parameters, daily life activities, memory span and fatigue. But small changes in the heart rate, slowing by 3 beats per minute, were observed in some individuals. Also, small effects on alertness and reaction time were observed.

Limited epidemiological studies have indicated an increased incidence of cancer, particularly leukaemia and brain tumours in children living close to high current wires, presumably producing above average magnetic fields in their homes. Studies of workers in so–called electrical occupations have found an increased risk of cancer. Because of limitations of these studies, this evidence can be judged only as suggestive.

It is also known that electro–magnetic fields are used in medical practice for treatment of broken bones which do not want to unite for a long period of time. Other beneficial medical uses are being currently tested such as the prevention of osteoporosis, wound healing and nerve regeneration.

In conclusion, regarding health effects of electro–magnetic fields, we have found the available evidence inconclusive and inconsistent. The emerging evidence does not allow us to categorically assert that there is no health risk, but on the other hand it is not sufficient to prove that there is significant risk. If exposure to fields does not turn out to pose a health risk, it is unlikely that high–voltage power lines will be the only or even the main source of concern. Electrical wiring in buildings, appliances and light fixtures are much more common and could play a far greater role than high voltage transmission lines in any public health program.

In this complex situation we did recognize a few years ago that both more departmental involvement in this area and, even more important, more research was needed. In the fall of 1986 we formed a working group of electric and magnetic fields. The groups consists of representatives of labour, utilities, academia and provincial and federal governments. The purpose of the group was to assess health effects, to foster research and to educate the Canadian public. In the spring of this year we received their report which will be published shortly. Their assessment of the current status of knowledge is quite similar to ours as I earlier outlined. The report also calls for an increased research effort and departmental involvement.

Another important action that we have taken is the signing of an agreement with two Canadian utility companies, Ontario Hydro and Hydro Quebec, to sponsor an important animal study. The National Health Research and Development Program has allocated over $400,000 for this study to take place over a three year period. The study concerns effects of chronic exposure to magnetic fields on cancer development. The study will be done by an independent university research team and will be subject to a strict peer review process.

In our laboratories we have also just finished the first stage of a pilot animal study which we are planning to continue. This project deals with the possibility of cancer promotion by magnetic fields.

In summary, this government recognizes the importance of resolving through research the issue of health effects of electro–magnetic fields as underscored by our recent increase in research expenditures. This enhanced level of activity will be assisted also by an ongoing effort in the U.S. and Europe which we are closely monitoring. We anticipate that in the next three to four years a better data base will be available. At that time we certainly will further reassess the score of Canadian research on the issue.

We therefore wholeheartedly support the principles behind the hon. member's bill but we would suggest that the government's activities show a real concern in this area and represent the best route at this time.

Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with the member who proposed this motion. I have listened with a great deal of interest to the statement from the government and look forward to reading it in more detail to try to learn what it is all about. I appreciate that the government is paying attention to this and I am pleased that the government

is, but I am not exactly sure what it is doing. I would like to, as I say, read that report before I decide.

• (1740)

The member suggested in his statement that it might be that very low voltages or very low amounts of power might do or could do more damage than the very high voltage lines. The whole statement was riddled with this idea that something could happen or could not happen. It might be worse, it might not. Obviously all the member was really saying to us is that they do not know, and we appreciate that. There is not enough known about the subject and that is why the motion was moved, urging that something be done to make sure that more is known about it.

There is concern about this on Vancouver Island. A lady has gained some international fame trying to raise this issue and trying to make more governments aware of just how serious a matter it can be. Can be, I say. It may not be. There may be other reasons for the instances we have heard about, read about, and been told about, where there is an apparent effect on people who live near high voltage lines. That may not be the reason at all. It may be that it is the low voltage lines that are worse than the high, we just do not know.

In these days when people are much more concerned about and much more aware of what we are doing to the environment and the effects of human activity upon the environment in which we are living, it is important to know as much as we can. There is some apparent evidence. We have to examine that very closely. More studies can be done and I believe, from the statement that was just read, that studies are being done not only in Canada but in other countries as well.

I support this motion and urge the government to take this very seriously. We want to know, as soon as we can, just exactly how important this is. We want to know the risks. We want to know what can be done to protect our people, our animals and our plant life from the effects of living near low voltage or high voltage lines. Let's get with it, let's do everything we can to study this issue and let's gather some information that at least can be reassuring or can point out the ways in which we can protect ourselves because doing away with the high voltage lines just is not practical right now. Perhaps there are some ways of protecting ourselves and life in general from what may be the effects of living near high voltage or low voltage lines.

However, let us get the information and let us not say that we have all the time in the world to do this because we are building more and more high voltage lines and it is more and more important that we deal with this as an urgent matter and one that is capable of being studied if we determine internationally that it is something upon which we should work. We should certainly exchange information, co-operate with other nations in the world and try to get as much information and as much real knowledge as we can and then deal with it and make it public.

The statement tells us that all this work has been going on. I have heard, read, and been told about people who have experienced situations which they attribute to the high voltage lines, but until this moment I did not know that the government was studying it at all. Perhaps that is my fault, perhaps I should have known. If the government is doing anything, it is being very quiet, very reticent about sharing its activity, let alone its information with the public generally. Mr. Speaker, we support this motion.

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague for bringing before the House today this motion that the government should consider the advisability of studying the effects of electro-magnetic fields created by high voltage power lines on both human and animal health and report the findings to this House.

Electro-magnetic radiation is suspected to be damaging to the body's ability to fight diseases and to the central nervous system. Residents living near the lines have long complained about headaches, memory loss, more illness than usual, and a constant irritating hum.

I have to take issue with the parliamentary secretary who pointed out that perhaps there are enough electro-magnetic fields in homes with microwave ovens, various other appliances and the wiring of homes to have caused this. I would have to refute that because, if that is the case, why has it impacted on the health of animals that are grazing in close proximity to these lines or living in barns which are in close proximity? Why has the milk production of dairy herds dropped dramatically? When you move these herds away from these lines milk production eventually picks up again. There are also animals which fail to conceive until they are moved away

from the effects of these lines. There has to be an impact there. We know the signals are there and if it impacts on animals certainly it must impact on humans as well.

The list is really impressive. Often the argument that high voltage lines are responsible is dismissed.

A report of the Royal Commission on Electric Power Planning in 1980 states:

> As in the case of nuclear radiation there is controversy as to whether there is a safe "threshold" level below which there is no physiological effect of whether the effects of exposure up to any level no matter how low are cumulative over a person's lifetime. Until these questions are answered by research, reasonable steps should be taken to avoid the unnecessary exposure of individuals to electro-magnetic fields from transmission lines.

That was a royal commission which made that statement. I believe that the motion before us today ties right in with that recommendation.

Two case studies of the Denver, Colorado area, conducted by Nancy Wertheimer and Edward Leeper found a possible association between chronic exposure to magnetic fields created by high voltage transmission lines and the incidence of childhood leukaemia and adult concerns in 1979 and 1982.

A study in Denver by David A. Savitz, using a completely different set of cases, shows the apparent connection between childhood cancer and exposure.

Thus a growing number of studies suggest that long-term exposure to power line frequency magnetic fields may promote cancer and may accelerate the development of existing cancer cells.

Biophysicist Andrew Marino of Louisiana State University would not live in a house near an overhead power line. The chances of getting sick, he said, are just too great.

A Maryland study of 951 men who died of brain tumours between 1969 and 1982 turned up a high proportion of electricians, utility linesmen and electronic technicians. Fifty of the men, compared to the scientifically expected 18, died of two supposedly rare tumour types.

A civil court in Texas recently ordered a utility company that has complied with all existing state laws to shut down a new double circuit 345,000 volt transmission line and pay $25 million in damages, holding that the company had acted with callous disregard for the safety, health and well-being of the children in the building 60 metres from that particular line.

In Russia they do not allow these lines within a half mile of built up areas. Andrew A. Merio, Ph.D., Louisiana State University, puts the figure at 1,700 feet for 500,000 volt lines and 800 feet for a 230 volt line. Ontario Hydro states the sphere of influence for the 500,000 volt line is 246 feet.

According to the Federal Environmental Assessment Review Office spokesperson, to date electro-magnetic radiation has not been considered in their review, although he cautioned that to date no federal transmission project where FEDR has taken place has been near a populated area.

One of my concerns in this whole issue is a proposed line that will run across my constituency. It was originally planned to go through the villages of Alvinston, Inwood, Oil City and Brigden. The line is there already carrying 230,000 volts, but they plan to upgrade that line to a 550,000 volt line. I would hope that we will have studies done by this House in time to put the minds of those citizens at rest before that line is constructed.

One of the things that really bothers me is the fact that this will tie in, not only with the Bruce Nuclear Station and the big transmission lines that come out of that, but will also tie in with the Lambton generating station along the St. Clair River on the west side of Lambton County. That in turn is tied in with the electrical grid of the State of Michigan.

• (1750)

Consequently, we may very well be putting the lives of our citizens at risk in order to tie into a grid that will allow us to export power to another country. This is not acceptable. It is not acceptable to build these lines in close proximity even to our own communities if the power is to be used within Canada.

I am delighted that my colleague has seen fit to bring in this motion that I wholeheartedly support today. I know that he will have the support of the people in my constituency as well. I want to congratulate him on his effort.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Ferland (Portneuf): Mr. Speaker, today we have a motion before the House suggesting that it would be useful to study the effects of electro-magnetic fields created by high voltage power lines on humans and animals, and to report the findings to the House.

Electric power has been in common use for about a hundred years, and its presence has become increasingly widespread and indeed essential.

For more than ten years, public concern has been growing about the possible effects of electro-magnetic fields created by high voltage power lines. I may add that all electrical appliances, both at home and at work, create electro-magnetic fields. We are constantly exposed to these fields. High voltage power lines are only one source of électro-magnetic fields, and if we are concerned about high voltage power lines, we should be concerned about all electrical appliances.

Unlike X-rays, electro-magnetic fields are very low energy. They are incapable of modifying intercellular connections or even of producing heat like microwaves do.

So far, many studies on the effects of these fields on animal cells and human health have been made, both nationally and internationally. On the whole, cell studies have indicated that electro-magnetic fields can produce biological effects whose significance is not clear but which are not thought to be very serious. Some of these effects may cause cancer, although no specific mechanism has been identified to explain the cause and effect link satisfactorily.

There is an interesting hypothesis that has found favour among the scientific community. Today, Mr. Speaker, we know that cancers are created by cancer causing substances, in several stages. There are at least two: the first stage is the induction of the tumour and the second stage is its promotion. At the induction stage, cancer-causing substances can produce a malignant and irreversible change in the genetic systems of several cells. The change may be limited to only a few cells, and be overlooked and remain stable for a long time, even forever. However, at a given time, one may be exposed to certain promoter substances that could cause these malignant cells to multiply. This is the promotion stage of the tumour, when the cancer's presence can be detected. Some substances only act as inducers, other substances only act as promoters, while some substances do both. It is thought that electro-magnetic fields might be promoters of malignant tumours.

There are no valid data on studies with animals, which is unfortunate, since animal testing has been a unique way to provide scientific evidence when investigating a substance that is suspected of causing cancer.

Perhaps I should also mention that some animal experiments have shown well documented effects on the daily circadian rhythms and behaviour of animals.

Studies on humans have concentrated on the health of exposed workers and on children living near high voltage power lines.

In the studies on workers, various occupations were investigated such as electricians, electrical engineers, linemen, power station operators and workers in aluminum plants. Some of these studies show that certain types of cancer increased: leukaemias, brain tumours and melanomas. Leukaemias, however, showed a more consistent increase than other tumours.

Studies of exposed workers were recently reviewed.

In some analyses, the results of all the studies were combined and together they showed a slightly increased risk of leukaemia. Many unknowns prevent identifying the cause of this increase in cancer: workers' actual exposure to electro-magnetic fields is not known because valid dosimetry is lacking; that is, in the group of exposed workers, there might be some highly exposed individuals and some almost unexposed. But it is impossible to know whether or not the increase of cancer lies in the highly exposed workers' environment. This increase could be due to chemicals that are also present in the workplace.

The results of studies on those living near high voltage lines, more specifically, on children, are not unanimous. Some studies show no increase of cancer in children and others show a slight increase. Many methodological problems have been identified which might easily compromise the validity of the results of these studies.

The most recent study done in the United States, in 1987, is considered much more valid than all the previous studies because it corrected the errors of the past. It is based on a population of children exposed in their homes

to electro-magnetic fields emitted from electrical sources inside and outside the home.

You see that the focus of this study was not just high voltage lines but electricity in general. It must be noted, Mr. Speaker, that this study found a slight risk for cancer, particularly leukaemia.

In conclusion, the evidence of increased risk for cancer, particularly leukaemia, is slight, but it cannot be eliminated entirely. Any risk for leukaemia would be slight. But people's exposure to electro-magnetic fields is significant because we must include not only high voltage lines but also all the other electrical appliances that surround us everywhere all the time. What are the implications of all this for health?

Mr. Speaker, we are now at the stage of evaluating what must be done to shed more light on this problem.

The Department of National Health and Welfare has been studying this question for several years and a laboratory study on mice exposed to electro-magnetic fields has already been developed and is nearly complete. This study involves a research hypothesis specifically related to tumours allegedly induced by electro-magnetic fields. As well, we are in direct contact with various international researchers who also work in this field.

The department has set up a task force—it includes spokesmen from government, labour unions, hydro power companies and universities—to organize future research in this field. The task force's findings confirm the importance of closer department monitoring and the need for new research projects. The final report will be out shortly.

Two other major studies are now under way in Canada. The first has to do with the health of workers likely to be affected and it is funded by Ontario Hydro, Hydro-Quebec and Électricité de France. This project focuses on the use of a dosimetre which was developed in Quebec recently to give accurate readings on the degree of exposure of people working in such fields.

The other, sponsored by Ontario Hydro, Hydro-Quebec and the department, involves research on leukaemia hazards in mice constantly exposed to magnetic fields. Researchers in this on-going study will use exposures of varying intensity to determine whether the effect, that is incidence of leukaemia in mice, spreads as the intensity increases.

The project will cost in excess of $1 million, including a $400,000 contribution from the department's research and development program.

This study will be under the independent supervision of a research director chosen from the academic field. Both projects are very important even though the results of the studies will not be available before three years. We are quite confident that they will make a significant contribution to the scientific lore on this issue.

For a number of years now medical scientists have acknowledged that electro-magnetic fields have beneficial effects in the treatment of non-self-curing bone fractures.

• (1800)

Research is going on to assess the effect of those fields in preventing osteoporosis, and in healing wounds and nerves.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that in the department's views, research on the effects of the electro-magnetic fields on humans is important and relevant. We will be using improved and innovative research methods, Mr. Speaker, and take co-operative actions both nationally and internationally. For at least two years the government has been supporting those essential projects carried out by the industry. We have made a significant contribution to research in this area by increasing our links with universities and utilities.

I believe my time is up, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

Mr. Lee Richardson (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, we appreciate the concern of the hon. member for Davenport regarding high voltage power lines and the effect that their electro-magnetic fields may have on human and animal health.

This is a controversial issue and one that is of growing concern to Canadians and, therefore, to this government. I want to assure the hon. member and this House that no issue is of greater importance than the health of Canadians. This controversy was heightened by an article published a few months ago in the *New Yorker* magazine. In that article there are several serious claims about electro-magnetic fields and what they may mean to human and animal health.

Since then, the author's claims have been subject to much debate. While this is a relatively new area of concern, I would like to take this opportunity to inform

the House about what we do know about high voltage lines and their effects on animal health.

World-wide research is under way. As the hon. member for Athabasca noted, studies are being undertaken in Canada, United States, Sweden and in several other countries. To date, these studies have not yielded any conclusive evidence. There is still much to be learned about the specific effects of electro-magnetic fields on animal health, on growth, and on reproduction. I enter this debate not to diminish the concern but to put the matter into realistic perspective and in so doing perhaps relieve some of the unwarranted anxiety that unsubstantiated speculation may have aroused. It is my purpose to shine a light on this issue, to consider and encourage scientific examination.

Work in the United States and Sweden has so far suggested that there has been no ill effects on milk production or fertility as a result of long-term exposure of animals to high voltage power lines. A U.S. study on pigs has also indicated that there are no negative effects on fertility, growth or behaviour as a consequence of exposure to high voltage power lines and their electro-magnetic fields. Similar research with poultry has turned up no evidence of adverse effects in these areas.

Experiments have also been conducted under laboratory conditions. Scientists have looked specifically at growth, development, metabolism and the immune system of animals exposed to electro and magnetic fields. For the most part, there has been no effect on these areas or on over-all health of animals.

I would like to assure this House that the government will continue to follow this issue closely. It is the federal government's responsibility to set and enforce standards to safeguard human and animal health. It is a responsibility that we take seriously.

I would like to thank the hon. member for Davenport for raising this important issue and thereby allowing this opportunity to provide the House with information that has been substantiated to date. As more information becomes available, we will take what further action is required.

I think that the debate today has shed an appropriate light on this issue. It is a growing concern to Canadians and one that the government is actively looking at. The hon. member for Davenport has raised an important issue and the debate today has given this House and Canadians valuable information.

• (1805)

Mr. Girve Fretz (Erie): Mr. Speaker, the proposal before us today is to consider the advisability of studying the effects of the electro-magnetic fields produced by high voltage power lines on human and animal health and report the findings to the House.

Public concern about high voltage power lines developed in the late 1960s as extra high voltage lines comprising large towers were built. The initial concern was about the aesthetic and the ecological impacts and the various nuisance effects. The nuisance effects are audible noise, radio interference and shocks and sparks when people touched underground metal objects such as trucks or farm vehicles close to power lines. By the late 1970s and indeed, in the early 1980s, some scientific evidence emerged that the problem is more complex and of more concern.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, generation, transmission and use of electricity are associated with human exposure to electric and magnetic fields, not only under high voltage power lines but also in homes and offices. On a daily basis, most Canadians are exposed to electric and magnetic fields produced by household wiring and lighting. There are electric and magnetic fields wherever there is electric power. When we consider what effects these fields may have on our health, we must concern ourselves not just with power lines but with all other sources of these fields. Power lines are highly visible but our daily exposure has come mostly from use of electricity in our homes and in our offices. Even in houses close to power lines, people may be exposed to weaker fields than people in houses far away from power lines. Many factors determine the actual exposure. Recognizing that we are all practically continuously exposed to electro-magnetic fields, it certainly is important and indeed prudent to consider whether these fields may detrimentally affect our health.

Health effects of electric and magnetic fields have been studied in the United States and Europe for over two decades, with intensified efforts during the last five years. Until recently conventional wisdom was held that these fields posed no threat to human health. Two reasons are behind this thinking. First, the fields are of low energy and, unlike X-rays and other ionizing radiation, they do not break chemical bonds. Unlike microwaves they do not cause heating. Second, all cells in the

body have large natural electric fields across their outer membranes. This way of thinking has recently been revised as new scientific findings have emerged. These new findings show that electric and magnetic fields can interact with some biological systems at lower levels than it was previously thought possible. There are many scientific studies, some showing effects and very many not showing any effects or indeed any detrimental effects.

The Department of National Health and Welfare recognized this problem a few years ago and has done a thorough review and assessment of the existing scientific evidence. In addition, specific actions have been undertaken to address the issue.

To start with, let me briefly describe what scientific evidence we have on interactions of electro-magnetic fields with living systems. In general, the three types of studies have been conducted. These are studies on various cell culture preparations, studies on laboratory animals and studies on human volunteers and human populations. Scientific studies today indicate that electric and magnetic fields can cause critical changes to cells in laboratory experiments.

• (1810)

On the other hand, these fields do not cause genetic effects and cell mutations. Although observed interactions with cancerous cells suggest a possibility that electro-magnetic fields affect tumour development and that they may act as tumour promoters as co-promoters with other agents, such as toxic chemicals.

In evaluating scientific findings derived from experiments on separated cells, it must be kept in mind that it is not easy to predict whether and how these biological effects on cells in the laboratory translate into health effects on the animal or man. What makes this task even more difficult is that for some effects a stronger field does not cause a specific effect, while a weaker field does. This behaviour is contrary to our traditional thinking in the field of toxicology as we are finding that with electro-magnetic fields, more may not necessarily be worse.

Let us review now the studies on intact laboratory animals. Very many experiments were performed with very strong electric fields, higher than those under power lines. Fewer experiments so far have been done with magnetic fields. Some critical systems were not found to be affected by the fields. For instance, no effects were found on blood and immune systems.

On the other hand, mixed evidence exists in the area of reproduction. No effects were found for rodents but malformations in chicken embryos were observed under some conditions. The best documented effects in experimental animals are shifts in daily rhythms and associated hormonal changes, changes in responses to drugs and some changes in behaviour.

Regarding humans, laboratory experiments with volunteers showed that people can usually perceive an electric field above seven kilovolts per metre, but some individuals can perceive fields as weak as two kilovolts per metre. Magnetic fields are believed not to be perceived by people. In a carefully conducted study it was found that exposure to fields did not change most vital signs, physiological parameters, daily life activities, memory span and fatigue but small changes in the heart rate slowing by three beats were observed in some individuals. Also some effects on alertness and reaction time were observed.

A lot of attention and concern are associated with some of the epidemiological studies. Some of these studies have indicated an increased incidence of cancer particularly leukaemia and brain tumours in children living close to high current wires, presumably reducing above average magnetic fields in their homes. Studies of workers in so-called electrical occupations have found an increased risk of cancer. However, the studies suffer from many limitations such as small populations studied, weak associations, a lack of consistency and a lack of assessment of actual exposures. Despite the limitations, these studies must not be disregarded. At the same time, this evidence can be judged only as suggestive until we learn more.

It is also important to note that electric and magnetic fields are used in medical practice for treatment of broken bones which do not want to unite for a long period of time. Other beneficial medical uses are being currently tested, such as prevention of osteoporosis, wound healing and nerve regeneration.

To conclude, regarding health effects of electro-magnetic fields, we have found the available evidence inconclusive and we have found it inconsistent. The emerging evidence does not allow us to categorically assert that there is no health risk. But at the same time, it is not sufficient to prove that there is a significant risk. If

exposure to fields does turn out to pose a health risk, it is unlikely that high voltage power lines will be the only or even the main source of concern. Electrical wiring in buildings, appliances and light fixtures are much more common and could play a far greater role than high voltage transmission lines in any public health problem.

We did recognize the complexity of the situation and the importance of gaining better understanding and what risks are associated with our use of electricity. If there are risks, how we can eliminate or limit them. As a consequence, we have stepped up our effort.

Let me give you some examples. Are you indicating my time is up? My time is up. Mr. Speaker, it has been a pleasure to address you and the other members in the House today. I am grateful for the opportunity and thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I must inform the hon. member for Mercier that there is less than one minute left. The hon. member for Mercier.

Mrs. Carole Jacques (Mercier): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank my colleague for Davenport for raising this issue in the House of Commons, he has excellent information on a matter of interest to us all Canadians. In the opinion of this House, Mr. Speaker, the government should consider the advisability of studying the effects of the actual electro-magnetic fields created by high voltage power lines on human and animal health and reporting the findings to the House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member. The hour provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. Pursuant to Standing Order 96(1), this item is dropped from the Order Paper.

It being 6.16 p.m, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 6.16 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, December 15, 1989

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

INCOME TAX ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-28, an Act to amend the Income Tax Act, the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Federal Post-Secondary Education and Health Contributions Act, the Old Age Security Act, the Public Utilities Income Tax Transfer Act, the War Veterans Allowance Act and a related act, as reported (without amendment) from a legislative committee.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There are 10 motions in amendment on the Notice Paper for the report stage of Bill C-28, an act to amend the Income Tax Act, the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Federal Post-Secondary Education and Health Contributions Act, the Old Age Security Act, the Public Utilities Income Tax Transfer Act, the War Veterans Allowance Act and a related act.

These motions are standing in the name of the hon. members for Sault Ste. Marie, Mr. Butland, and Ottawa South, Mr. Manley. I have reviewed them and I am now ready to make a ruling.

Motions Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 10 are admissible and each of them will be debated and voted upon separately. Motions Nos. 4, 6, and 7 will be debated together but voted upon as follows: (a) an affirmative vote on Motion No. 4 obviates the necessity for a vote on Motions Nos. 6 and 7; (b) a negative vote on Motion No. 4 necessitates a vote on Motion No. 6. Any such vote would be applied to Motion No. 7. Motion No. 5 is identical to Motion No. 4 and therefore Motion No. 5 will not be selected. Motions Nos. 8 and 9 raise procedural difficulties for the Chair. As hon. members are aware, it is not competent within our parliamentary practice for a private member to move to increase the amount of tax or a charge on people in a bill which is based on ways and means motions.

In my view, both of these proposed motions are attempting to do just that by attempting to lower a deduction from $10 million to $1 million. I must therefore rule Motions Nos. 8 and 9 inadmissible. In this connection, I would refer hon. members in the House to the various citations of Beauchesne's Fifth Edition and May's Parliamentary Practice.

The hon. member for Kamloops on a point of order.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the member for Sault Ste. Marie in whose name the various motions have been put is not here. He is away on other business.

• (1010)

I wonder if I could seek the unanimous consent of the House to have the motions in his name be put in the name of the hon. member for Mission—Coquitlam.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of Christmas, kindness and generosity, we are more than happy to allow this.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is there unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier on a point of order.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I would like some clarification. You stated that Motions Nos. 4, 6 and 7 will be debated together, but a negative vote on Motion No. 4 necessitates a vote on Motion No. 6, and the words that I have a problem with are "any such vote would be applied to Motion No. 7".

I take it that it is the result of the second vote that would be applied to Motion No. 7, not the results of the first vote? Is that the correct interpretation?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): That is correct.

MEASURE TO AMEND

Ms. Joy Langan (for Mr. Butland) moved:

Motion No. 1.

That Bill C-28 be amended in Clause 7

(a) by striking out line 26 at page 12 and substituting the following therefor:

"April 26, 1990, other than"

(b) by striking out line 30 at page 12 and substituting the following therefor:

"Time, April 26, 1990 under which the"

(c) by striking out line 37 at page 12 and substituting the following therefor:

"1990,"

(d) by striking out lines 40 and 41 at page 12 and substituting the following therefor:

"Daylight Saving Time, April 26, 1990 and before June 12, 1990, subsection 16.1(1) of".

She said: Mr. Speaker, this proposed amendment to Bill C-28 is to change the date of implementation of the clause from April 26, 1989, to April 26, 1990. This clause is poorly drafted and the fear of leasing companies is that this change will cause many small leasing companies to go out of business, therefore, we should be taking a very careful second look at this clause.

The Income Tax Act amendments on leasing are an attempt by the Department of Finance to close off an area of tax revenue loss. The department feels that some firms are using leasing in preference to outright purchases because the leasing companies can capture some tax advantages that the lessee firms themselves cannot.

The strategy behind the amendments is to treat leasing companies as if they are financing companies making loans and to allow those lessee firms which can claim tax advantages to do so if they want to, but the assets are to be treated as a purchase of the lease asset for tax purposes.

The goal seems to be to make those lessees who were only leasing for tax reasons indifferent between leasing and buying with the purchase being financed by loan, and to put those lessees who were leasing for non-tax reasons in exactly the same financial position as before.

As I said earlier, the clause is poorly drafted primarily because it describes how lessees are to be treated under the new clause only, with the description of how lessors are to be treated under new income tax regulations as opposed to insertion of an entirely new clause into the Income Tax Act which is what clause 7 is.

The culmination of this new clause in the Income Tax Act and the new regulations introduce a fundamental change in the way leasing is viewed by the Department of Finance.

It is rather peculiar to do one-half of the changes through amendments to the Income Tax Act and the other half through amendments to the regulations.

The new regulations introduced a considerable change in the complexity of a leasing agreement. The calculations required are not of themselves difficult, nor do they require any information.

On the other hand, the old system is clearly designed to minimize bookkeeping by allowing aggregation over property classes. The new system does show a different approach by the Department of Finance to the ending of perceived tax abuses. Normally, the Department of Finance rewrites the act or regulations to stop the abuses directly by saying "you cannot". The new system for leasing requires the lessor to compare two options and choose the least favourable.

In the words of the legislative committee's researcher, it is not hard to believe that the conclusion of this computation is not foregone. If the Department of Finance had done its job of identifying loopholes in the tax system and found a mathematical formula that catches the abuse, then it is hard to argue that direct regulations or amendments could not be written that could equally well attack the abuse at lower compliance costs.

This confusing approach called "treatment by loan analogy" by finance officials has engendered fear within the leasing industry that the increasing administrative complexity it introduces will drive up costs.

On the other hand, companies that lease equipment fear that the disappearance of tax advantages for leasing as opposed to outright purchasing will constrain their cash flows. Both are problems, especially for smaller companies. The change of the date of implementation is designed to allow finance officials to implement the

change to lessors through either an additional amendment to the Income Tax Act or, preferably, to redraft the entire clause in a technical bill which they will introduce in either January or February.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The question is on Motion No. 1. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on the Motion No. 1 stands deferred.

Ms. Joy Langan (for Mr. Butland) moved:

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-28 be amended in Clause 18 by striking out lines 5 to 10 at page 24.

She said: Mr. Speaker, the reason for this change is to nullify the effect of the gross up. The gross up of a quarter on income earned from dividends has the effect of driving up many seniors' incomes solely for the purpose of income tax calculation, if they earn part of their retirement income through dividends. This means that even if they do not earn $50,000 a year, the threshold for the clawback, they will be pushed over this mark and, as a result, have part or all of their old age security taxed back.

The grossup was originally introduced in order to avoid the double taxation of dividends. Dividends are taxed both at the corporate level and at the individual level. By including the gross up in his or her income tax calculations, the individual taxpayer receives a tax credit to avoid being taxed at the individual level. This is not a problem until the introduction of the clawback which has the effect that I have just described.

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to add to the words of our friend from Mission—Coquitlam. The whole concept of the gross up is to create some fictional income for purposes of income tax. The hon. member has correctly described what the reasoning behind it is. The idea was to avoid any perception of double taxation on dividends, and individual taxing on dividends would occur at a fairer level since some of those dividends had already had tax paid on them at the corporate level.

• (1020)

As the hon. member pointed out, what we have here is a situation where, assuming that the pensioner has retired with stocks which yield him or her something in the order of $40,000, with the 25 per cent gross up for reporting purposes that becomes $50,000, and suddenly the pensioner is in the position of losing the old age pension through the clawback. It was not real income, they still have the $40,000 to spend, but for a bookkeeping nicety they lose their pension income. That is the reasoning behind the proposed amendment. Once government members and backbenchers have a few moments to think about it, they will see that this particular clause ought to be deleted in the interest of fairness to pensioners.

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, I have raised this matter of the dividend gross up a number of times in the context of questions to the minister in the House on the issue of the clawback. I am not sure that I agree with the amendment because I do not think it directs itself to the key issue. I think the amendment relating to the gross up in this context has to do with certain dividend rental arrangements that are provided for elsewhere in the amendments to the Income Tax Act contained in Bill C-28.

The point that my colleagues in the NDP are making with respect to the threshold and how it is calculated under the Income Tax Act for purposes of the clawback is an important one to make, that being that for the purposes of the clawback, which we will come to later on in the amendments, the threshold of $50,000 income is defined as income under Part I of the Income Tax Act.

That means that all dividends received from Canadian corporations will be grossed up by 25 per cent and that grossed up amount is the amount that is considered income for the purposes of the threshold of $50,000.

It has been pointed out by departmental officials that that is okay because to generate that many dividends, you have to have a lot of stocks, and that is true. But I would suggest that the essential inequity of treating different kinds of income differently for the purposes of the Income Tax Act undermines the integrity of the system. Whether we like the clawback or not, which clearly we on our side do not, if you are going to say that the threshold is $50,000 of income then let it be $50,000 of real income, not the notional gross up received on dividends.

Whether a senior puts his or her assets into interest earning investments or dividend earning investments should not make any difference in determining whether or not they have reached the threshold for clawback purposes. One of the most distressing things that has happened in this Chamber over the last 10 days is that the Minister of Finance in answering questions did not seem to understand what the dividend gross up was.

All of that being said, I do not think that this particular amendment addresses that problem. If there is going to be an amendment to address that problem, it needs to be done elsewhere in the act.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The question is on Motion No. 2. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Ms. Joy Langan (for Mr. Butland) moved:

Motion No. 3

That Bill C–28 be amended in Clause 47 by striking out line 1 at page 45 and substituting the following therefor:

"(a) 0.05 percent of tax payable under Part 1 by".

She said: Mr. Speaker, the reason for the changes in this clause which reduce the surtax from 5 per cent to .05 per cent, is to greatly reduce the amount of the surtax. The finance minister indicated that he would get rid of the 3 per cent surtax on individual income once sales tax changes were announced. Instead, as with many promises which have been made by this government, he has done exactly the opposite. In fact, he wants to raise it, despite the introduction of the goods and services tax, to 5 per cent.

Originally, it was suggested that the clause describing the surtax be deleted altogether. However, the Parliamentary Law Clerk has indicated to us that for technical reasons this would be very difficult. Therefore, we present to this House the proposal that the percentage be changed to a much smaller level to at least prove to be fair and equitable and certainly much closer and in keeping with the commitment that the finance minister made regarding getting rid of the 3 per cent surtax.

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak in support of this amendment. This amendment raises an issue that is very bothersome to many Canadians. When we had phase one of tax reform and were promised phase two, which was to be sales tax reform, it was clearly stated that phase two was going to be revenue neutral. This concept of revenue neutrality went through a whole series of phases. Revenue neutrality meant that the new tax was just going to replace the old federal sales tax, then revenue neutrality meant replacing the federal sales tax, eliminating the surtaxes, and reducing the middle–income tax rate, and there were other things thrown in. The concept of revenue neutrality, as far as the goods and services tax is concerned, became a moving target. Whatever the minister happens to feel like on a given day, is what revenue neutrality meant that day.

One of the principles behind revenue neutrality was that we were going to do away with the surtaxes, either temporary, for a special purpose, or they are an attempt to fool around with provincial revenues. Because as the government well knows, provincial income tax revenues are based on a percentage of the base income tax revenue collected under the federal income tax system for almost all of the provinces. To impose a surtax is a way of milking the taxpayer and avoiding letting the provinces get their fair share.

Bill C-28 is an attempt to make permanent the surtax, to avoid letting the provinces get their fair share of income tax revenue, and also to renege on a promise of revenue neutrality, and that promise should be respected. Canadian taxpayers are fed up with what they are having to pay. The goods and services tax, bad as it is, should be replacing the surtaxes so that we go back to a reasonable, comprehensible and fair tax system in Canada.

• (1030)

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief. On the lead up to tax reform the Minister of Finance indicated several times that he would get rid of these surtaxes as soon as he had a policy on sales taxes. The sales tax changes were announced in this past budget. It was announced that it would be 9 per cent. There are now some rumours that perhaps it will be 7 per cent. That is irrelevant. The fact is there has been a decision made to go to a sales tax.

I do not think, and I am sure my colleagues agree me, that we should put into the basic tax law as is being proposed here this 5 per cent surtax when we had a commitment by the Minister of Finance that this would be temporary. It is not temporary when you put it into the basic law. The minister can do what he wants to do by regulation, I submit. I do not think this has any place in here at all. We would have preferred to have deleted it altogether but apparently there were some procedural problems with that so we will make it to a fraction of a per cent and I hope that the House would concur with that move.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Yes.

Some Hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those in favour of the motion, will please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed, will please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8) the recorded division stands deferred.

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South) moved:

Motion No. 4.

That Bill C-15 be amended in Clause 73 by striking out line 14 at page 37 and substituting the following therefor:

"73. (1) The Minister shall constitute an".

Ms. Langan (for Mr. Butland) moved:

Motion No. 6.

That Bill C-15 be amended in Clause 75 by adding immediately after line 5 at page 38 the following:

"in consultation with the advisory committee,".

Motion No. 7.

That Bill C-15 be amended in Clause 77 by striking out line 24 at page 41 and substituting the following therefor:

"expiration of the period of seven years begin-".

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, the effect of this amendment is very simple. It is to delete the provisions of Bill C-28 that would introduce the clawback of old age pensions and family allowance benefits. I think it is fair to say that this one provision of Bill C-28 is the single most important social policy change in a generation in Canada. This, as the hon. member for Mississauga South, chairman of the finance committee has said, is the end of universality of social programs in Canada.

First, let me say that it is a disgrace this kind of social policy change is being made in the context of a budget bill so that there is no adequate opportunity for Canadians to debate this kind of change.

In January, 1985, that government issued a discussion paper under the name of the Minister of National Health and Welfare dealing with the universality of social programs and saying specifically that the clawback—it wasn't called that at the time—the idea of taxing back old age pensions, was unacceptable. It did suggest that maybe it was not so bad with family allowances, that is something we can debate, but it put it forward as a change in social policy that needed to be considered by Canadians, discussed and debated, in order to go forward with the evolution of social policy in Canada. That is the way it should have been done. It went to a parliamentary committee and nothing more was heard of it.

Then, in this year's budget, out comes the clawback as a fiscal measure. Yet it is changing a fundamental social policy in Canada. We could debate universality here, but we are not going to get very far in this forum on this kind of debate. Nor has there been an opportunity for the social agencies, for those groups representing the poor, those groups which are concerned with issues of social policy, to come forward and discuss this and give their input to it, given that it is put forward in a budget measure.

When you begin to change the principle of universality, the change goes far beyond affecting those few people who the government recognizes may be earning more than $50,000 a year at the present time. We believe that many of the programs that we offer, at all levels of government in Canada, should be made available equally to Canadians at whatever their income level. That has been true of the old age pension since 1952. That has been true of medicare. That has been true of education in the provincial jurisdiction. We say that Canadians should all receive the same basic social benefits, regardless of what their income is. That has been the principle. In abandoning that principle without full debate the government is doing a great disservice to Canadians across the country.

Government members will say, as the Minister has said, that this is not the end of universality. They think Canadians are so dumb that if they put money in one pocket and take it out the other, they will think they have been getting a universal benefit.

Let me put it to them this way. If this is not the end of universality, then what the government has introduced with this measure is a discriminatory tax. It is a tax not based on ability to pay, as our other income taxes are supposed to be, it is a tax based on age or family size. No other groups in our society pay 100 per cent of any kind of income except, after this is fully implemented, those over 65 and have $50,000 of other income or those who are families.

I know I have very little time on this amendment. On old age pensions the fact is that Canadian pensioners paid for this pension. They paid with a special tax that was on their income tax forms from 1952 to 1971. If you go back to the debates in this Chamber in those years and read the words that were then spoken, it is clear the intention of the House of Commons was to ensure that all Canadians, regardless of their level of income, were entitled to the old age pension and that they were paying for it. When we changed the system in order to simplify it in 1971, Mr. Stanley Knowles rose at that time and expressed his concern that this was the beginning of the end of universality. Promises were made at that time that it was not going to be the end of universality. But here we are in 1989, and that is exactly what the government is doing.

What the government has forgotten on family allowances is the basic principle of fairness that should underlie the income tax system of horizontal equity; the fact that taxpayers who may have the same level of income carry different burdens on the part of our society. Taxpayers with families, with young children, contribute greatly to the future of Canada and that burden of doing so should be borne by all Canadians. This clawback measure does several things.

First, it puts families who have one income on a different footing from those who have two incomes. Two income families, in which both spouses earn $49,000 a year, do not face the clawback. A one income family, in which that one parent earns $60,000 a year, loses all of its family allowance. Is that fair?

The second thing is that years ago the government froze the child tax exemption and it changed it to credits. The government has whittled away the support for families and now, for many families, it has eliminated the family allowance benefit. It is clear that this government no longer believes that all Canadians have a stake in helping families with young children to contribute to the future. It has forgotten the basic principle of horizontal equity, if it ever understood it in the first place.

• (1040)

There is only one solution for this bill and that is to remove the discriminatory tax, the clawback tax, and send it into a discussion on social policy where it should have been in the first place so that all Canadians have an opportunity to present their concerns about it.

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I speak in support of the amendment proposed by my colleague, the hon. member for Ottawa South. I would just enunciate the danger that if this clawback tax is allowed to pass it will end the principle of universality in Canada.

I spoke earlier on this bill and I called it an attack on the very principle that has made the people of our country secure and which has been the cornerstone of our social policy.

This morning I would like, as a last attempt to change the heart of the government, to read from some of the thoughts of the very people who will be affected by this proposed tax by the government.

The National Council of Welfare, in its press release of September 13, 1989, said: "The elderly have already paid for their old age pensions through a lifetime of paying income taxes".

A letter from the President of the Senior Citizens Federation to Prime Minister Mulroney on June 23, 1989 stated: "We view this proposal as a serious breach of faith by our government and an insidious effort to undercut the social security programs that you have on numerous times stated are a sacred trust".

One Voice Canada indicated: "That penalizes people who receive benefits, specifically pensioners and families, and destroys the universal nature of the benefit."

The Coalition of Quebec Seniors, in a letter to Finance Minister Wilson on May 24 stated: "Your proposal creates a steeper tax rate for seniors than for others at similar income levels. Seniors who, with great difficulty, have succeeded over the years in saving for their retirement are being penalized".

The Coalition of Quebec Seniors in essence truly reflects the voice of seniors across the country. Not giving up the fight, in a letter addressed to most members of Parliament on November 29, 1989, they again call to our attention that the implications of the clawback would be to reduce the purchasing power of seniors, to discriminate against them and to deal a death blow to the universality principle that we have so long cherished in Canada.

I would like to remind the government that the then hon. Minister for Health and Welfare, who is from my home province of Manitoba, promised on December 21, 1984, about this season of the year that: "All savings generated from any changes will be redistributed to social programs and will be applied to deficit reduction". And he continued: "The benefits from old age pensions will be taxed no differently from any other form of income".

That was a sacred promise of an hon. gentleman—whom I continue to esteem, a member of this government, a member of the cabinet in 1984—not so long ago, and this government today is doing just the opposite.

This government has broken a lot of promises and I submit that a litany of broken promises does not create a rosary of sacred trust. I am adamantly opposed to this clawback taxation of the pensions of the seniors of our country. I truly hope that in this spirit of Christmas there can be a change of heart, a change of mind and that the House will adopt the amendment proposed by my hon. colleague.

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to stand here this morning and speak to the amendment to remove the clawback portion from the bill. I have spoken on this previously in the House and expressed my point of view on behalf of constituents of my riding of Nepean. This morning I would like to read excerpts from letters. We have all received hundreds of letters speaking out against this dreadful proposal to clawback seniors pensions. These are from individual people, not from large organizations. This letter from D. Atkinson says:

> I am very disillusioned with the current trend by government to get itself elected by whatever means and by whatever promise. I want to speak out, however plaintively, of my outrage over how the government reneged in an '84 denial of free trade, and now in the recent denial of the campaign promise not to meddle with the universality of the OAS.
>
> I thought that Mr. Wilson was once our last bastion of integrity on this bill, now I am not so sure anyone is.

The next letter is from a P. Payne who says:

The Finance Minister's budget abolishes universality of old age pensions—. But that is precisely what the government solemnly promised not to do before the last election. Prime Minister Mulroney said that if the Conservatives did anything to old age pensions they would improve them.

I personally do not believe that the rationale behind the tax grab is sound. I do not think that the national debt versus the tax grab of OAS payments make sense.

But the fact that the people of Canada have seen that the Government of Canada has discriminated against people of 65 years of age is a significant point which they will remember—

This next correspondence from D'Ornellas reads:

Seniors of Canada expect that the integrity of the PM should be beyond reproach—.the PM promised that any government he led would improve pensions rather than downgrading them.

There are other vehicles government could utilize in meetings its objectives for reducing the national deficit instead of the unethical and illegal proposal to progressively increase the bite on seniors on fixed income.

The next letter is from M. Messel who writes:

We seniors are being asked, basically on a fixed income, to curb our standard of living so that the present government can have more money to spend, in my opinion much of it carelessly. Have the "members of Parliament" made any sacrifices personally to help the Canadian debt situation—if so what?

The next letter is from R. Paskell who says:

I must protest the proposed budget provision for the taxing of old age security pensions—

It is intolerable that this lack of trust now pervades both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance. Mr. Wilson has the nerve to maintain that this budget proposal maintains universality. How stupid does the minister think the electorate is?

—taxpayers have paid their premiums and if this were a private plan there would be no question of full entitlement regardless of other income.

This next letter was written by C. Monette to the Minister of State for Seniors and copied to me. It reads:

I am a chartered accountant, worked hard to earn a middle class income, contributed my services during my working years in the community and for my church, and gave as generously to charity as I could. I paid the old age tax from its inception.

The clawback gives the lie to election promises, and breaks faith with those of us who built this country after our services in the Armed Forces. —this is our reward for 45 years of service to the Crown and to the country!

Do you realize that we still must pay the old age security tax included in general taxes, plus showing the old age pension as taxable income—

If taxes must be raised, adjust the tax rates progressively against income, not against classes of people.

The next letter is from Mr. F. Reynolds:

We seniors paid for the right to have the old age pension at age 65 through our taxes in past years. I feel that just because many of us have through the years denied ourselves of some luxuries to provide a comfortable income in our old age, we should not be penalized for this. Had we spent frivolously and at age 65 had only our old age pension to live on, we would be entitled to the "Supplement". Under Mr. Wilson's proposed "clawback" we are going to suffer for being careful during our working years.

• (1050)

Mr. G. Tessier writes:

Why does the Government of Canada discriminate against seniors on OAS and on family allowances—

Under the Charter of Rights are we not guaranteed equal treatment? Since Canadian seniors and families making more than $50,000 a year are not the only Canadians to have contributed to the national debt, why should they be penalized?

A letter from P.R. Webb reads:

As one affected, I urge you to oppose the OAS clawback.

We've got to get rid of the right wing group manipulated by big business who are in the process of destroying Canada. I'm strongly tempted to pull out and join my daughter in Los Angeles!

Mr. McDermid: Oh yeah? Then see what her heart bypass costs her.

Mrs. Gaffney: Mr. and Mrs. Woodward write:

We are writing to express our objections to the clawback of the Old Age Pension—

Many seniors have declining health and must pay large amounts of money for additional help and transportation and to pay for expensive medication. Not all provinces give financial help with these.

Surely someone who has worked a lifetime and paid taxes all those years is entitled to what he has accumulated to use for his own living purposes. His planning for retirement has included the OAP which he had a complete right to expect to receive. This attempt at clawback is a breach of contract to be compared to a life insurance company's failure to honour the terms of annuity.

This next letter is a from Mr. and Mrs. Larocque who write:

My husband and I would like to add our names to the growing list of pensioners who are protesting the government's cutback—

> We understand that cutbacks are necessary, but we feel that attacks on the old age security payments are an unfair and irresponsible means of doing this.

The last letter is from a Mr. and Mrs. Neveu. They write:

> My wife and I wish to voice our protest against Mr. Wilson's proposed "clawback" of OAS payments. Even though these proposals will presently affect the rich—we believe that they will eventually affect those with much lower income.
>
> The universality of the old age pension should, in our opinion, be respected as a right of every Canadian.
>
> We believe the proposals made by the Minister of Finance threatened the financial stability of our retirement years. We have been retired for the past nine years and hope to be able to afford to stay in our own house for many more years.

These are not my comments, Mr. Speaker. I have expressed my comments before in the House of Commons. These are written comments of only a minute number of retired people within my community who have written to me as their member of Parliament. I am not the only one who has received hundreds of such letters. I am sure that everyone on the opposite side of the House has received hundreds of such letters as well but for some reason or other they have not got the courage to go against their Minister of Finance and vote out this clawback.

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I was concerned about some of the other clauses that we have been discussing this morning, but I am downright outraged about the proposed clawbacks of the old age security pension and the family allowance.

I have said before in this House, and I will say it again, that measures like the old age security and family allowance clawbacks are turning social policy into welfare policy and it is all being done in the name of harmonization.

My colleague, the member for Sault Ste. Marie, said that under the Prime Minister Canada's national vision has been replaced by a completely corporate vision. This government has sold off, shut down, privatized or cut back the best parts of that national vision. Air Canada, VIA Rail, Canada Post and CBC are only a few examples. Now, under this bill, the attack is on the most precious part of our national vision, universality of social programs.

Universal programs first attacked our old age security and family allowance. The question becomes what universal programs are going to be attacked second, third, fourth and fifth?

One of the members discussing this motion earlier talked about a CP wire story of 1984 which quoted the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister said: "Our position is simple and straightforward. We are in favour of universality in social programs and it shall not be touched". Has the Prime Minister lost touch? Has he lost control? Has he forgotten that promise?

I wanted to believe him during the last election campaign, as most Canadians wanted to believe him, that universality would not be touched. Seniors certainly wanted to believe him. But I submit to you, Sir, that actions speak louder than words. This legislation was introduced in a very secretive way, not through social policy as somebody earlier said, nor with any proper discussion in committees. It was in fact slipped through in this sort of catch-all of amendments in the hope that we would all forget and not notice. I suggest that this is not acceptable to Canadians.

Under the system of the finance minister, the income level at which the clawback starts will move upwards according to the same deindexing formula that exists in the tax system. In other words, a worker earning $40,000 a year and watching his or her income rise with inflation would be earning enough to put his or her income over the clawback level for family allowance of $56,309 by 1997.

For retirees the clawback is even more complex and phases in more slowly. But a simple rule of thumb is that a worker who earns his or her age, say a 28-year-old worker earning $28,000, or the average industrial wage today, will be hit by the clawback by the time he or she retires. This assumes that income keeps pace with inflation and that retirement income is 70 per cent of a pre-retirement income.

It follows that at $28,000 for a 28-year-old worker, $40,000 for a 40-year-old worker, $50,000 for a 50-year-old worker, within 20 years one in four Canadians will have all or part of their pensions clawed back. One million pensioners, within 20 years, will be caught in this clawback grab.

Mr. McDermid: If we got back to a balanced budget you wouldn't have to worry about it.

Ms. Langan: I am sure that the minister across the way who wants to interject will have an opportunity to speak to this too if he so wishes. The clawback will move our pension system closer to that of the U.S. where workers are covered by contributory pensions like RCPP and QPP or by means-tested programs like our Guaranteed Income Supplement, but not by a universal pension program like our Old Age Security. No pension exists in the United States, as a right of citizenship, for those over the age of 65.

It has been the finance minister's mission to shatter the universality barrier and once that principle is gone it will be a very simple matter to refine the clawback even further and make the programs more and more selective by taxing back higher and higher levels of benefits.

This clawback requires that some fundamental questions be asked. Why should an individual be entitled to receive $100,000 in capital gains, tax free, but lose the $4,000 he or she gets in Old Age Security simply because it was paid as a universal social benefit?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It being 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 35, the House will now proceed to Statements by Members Pursuant to Standing Order 31.

The member will have three minutes remaining for debate when the bill is next called.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

THE LATE ANDREI SAKHAROV

Hon. David MacDonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, Canadians and human rights activists around the world will mourn the passing of Mr. Andrei Sakharov. We will remember that more than 20 years ago Sakharov led that early fragile movement within the Soviet Union on behalf of human rights and international peace.

Sakharov was an individual who gave true meaning to the words of "courage" and "heart" and was concerned with his fellow men and women everywhere.

Sakharov, even in the last days of his existence, was challenging the present regime in the Soviet Union to move toward more progressive, open and democratic institutions. During his lifetime he challenged four separate Soviet institutions and in 1975 received the Nobel Peace Prize.

We mourn his passing. We recognize his great heart and his contribution to human rights world-wide.

* * *

THE LATE ANDREI SAKHAROV

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I too was deeply aggrieved to hear that Soviet human rights activist Andrei Sakharov died of a heart attack last night.

Mr. Sakharov, correctly called "the conscience of the Soviet Union", was recently elected to the Congress of the Peoples' Deputies and was working on constitutional reform of the Soviet political system when he died.

Mr. Sakharov in a real sense was a man of beautiful contrast. He built his eminence as a Soviet physicist who contributed to the development of the Soviet hydrogen bomb, but he did not allow that that tool of destruction should continue to be, for he later won a Nobel Peace Prize in 1975 for his advocacy of atomic disarmament, U.S.-Soviet co-operation in solving world problems and intellectual freedom in the U.S.S.R.

He was arrested in 1980 and sentenced to internal exile for his public opposition to Soviet foreign policies and for the Soviet government's suppression of dissidents and human rights activists. Later he was released. Despite personal persecution and exile, Mr. Sakharov worked tirelessly to promote the human rights issue in the Soviet Union and, indeed, the world over.

He will be remembered for his courage, his honourable principles and his selfless devotion toward peace. He died, but his mission to promote international respect for human rights as a guarantee of world peace will continue to live. We mourn his death. We are the beneficiaries of his mission.

THE LATE ANDREI SAKHAROV

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, today the world mourns the passing of human rights activist and Nobel Peace Prize winner Andrei Sakharov.

Sakharov will go down in history as a man dedicated to peace and protection of individual liberties. As we watch the swirl of change in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union we often associate that change with the name Gorbachev, but for most of his adult life Andrei Sakharov was persecuted for promoting greater freedom and democracy for the Soviet people.

From his forced exile in Gorky, Sakharov was a beacon of hope for his compatriots and a symbol of dissent for peoples from around the world. He not only criticized the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, but U.S. involvement in Vietnam, repression in the Middle East and racism in South Africa.

With his wife Yelena Bonner, Sakharov worked to change what was thought for so many years to be the unchangeable. Although we mourn the death of a great world figure and transmit our condolences to his wife and partner, Yelena Bonner, we take solace in the knowledge that Andrei Sakharov was able to see the fruits of his life work and long persecution.

The transformation of geopolitics we have experienced over the past months is a direct result of Andrei Sakharov. The world and our children's future are brighter for him.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, the minister of immigration recently responded to the forced deportation of Vietnamese refugees in Hong Kong by the British Government by criticizing their actions but did not offer any assistance on our behalf; nor did the minister show any international leadership to help the boat people who have been interned in refugee camps for years.

In fact the Canadian government's assistance to the Indo-Chinese over the next three years plans to accommodate only 16,000 people, which sadly pales in comparison to the 90,000 brought to Canada during the 1979-1980 period.

Conversely, under this government, the largest group of the wealthiest immigrants arriving in Canada under the immigrant investor program is from the same country in which the Vietnamese are presently being interned.

By refusing to assist the Indo-Chinese properly in their hour of need, the Minister of Immigration has set a course toward the rich and powerful. That is not only a dangerous course; it is also a colossal shame.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Québec-Est): Mr. Speaker, despite record economic growth and the increasing prosperity of Canadians, NDP and Liberal members are busy perpetuating the myth that Canadians have been worse off since the Conservatives came to power. According to the statistics, the opposite is true. The number of Canadians living below the poverty line today is three-quarters of a million less than the figure recorded in 1984. Poverty levels have declined since 1984, from nearly 17 per cent to 13 per cent. The average family income has reached its highest level ever, with an increase of 1.8 per cent over 1987, after adjustment for inflation. Low income levels for children under 16 declined between 1984 and 1988 from 20.1 per cent to 15.4 per cent. The number of adult women—16 years of age or over—living below the poverty line dropped by 30,000 last year, adding up to a total decline of 229,000 since 1984. Poverty levels for senior citizens dropped between 1984 and 1988, from 21.6 per cent to 17.2 per cent. This is good news, Mr. Speaker! Our economic recovery program works. I think we should tell Canadians, and I hope the media will help us explain what is really happening in our society!

* * *

[*English*]

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, on October 30 and again on December 6 constituents of Nepean and myself met in open fora to discuss the government's proposed GST. In addition, hundreds of letters have

been received in my office and, with the exception of a handful, all are opposed to the goods and services tax.

Nepean constituents are telling the government something very important. Despite the government's condemnation of people who dare to speak out against the GST and the assumption that they do not understand it, these people do indeed understand what the proposed GST is all about. They are vehemently opposed to it.

I find it appalling that this government seems not to care what the people are saying. I find it appalling that this government is ignoring the cries of millions of Canadians. I say these millions are right and the 167 members on the government side are wrong.

Canada is a democracy and Canadians are disillusioned and have lost faith because of the actions of this government. Canadians are saying: "Listen to us and drop this GST".

* * *

TRANSPORTATION OF GRAIN

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, the House should know that despite the rhetoric of several Conservative back-benchers, grain movement is proceeding normally off the prairies. Before freeze-up the Wheat Board always tries to empty Thunder Bay and leave lower St. Lawrence elevators full to meet sales commitments over winter.

Thunder Bay is still cleaning out. There are some 1.3 million tonnes of grain in stock; ample to fill the one ship loading, the two that are waiting and the six expected to arrive later in the week.

Lower St. Lawrence ports have plenty of grain to fill export demand. The flow to market has not changed.

There are problems within the seaway system with St. Lambert locks, as well as other operational problems, and recently the government has been unable to manage its labour relations. Back to work legislation only masks this point. Bill C-49 fails to live up to the government's own legislation on pay equity.

However, the bottom line is: the farmers' ability to deliver grain has not been affected. The Wheat Board has grain in position at the lower St. Lawrence in store and available for ocean ships. Thunder Bay will have space to receive prairie grain during the coming winter freeze-up.

[*Translation*]

ROBERT GIFFARD HOSPITAL

Mr. Charles DeBlois (Montmorency—Orléans): Mr. Speaker, the Robert-Giffard Hospital near Quebec City is one of the most prestigious health care institutions in Canada. It is now conducting major research on psychiatric risk factors in children. This study is part of the Laval University-Robert Giffard Research Centre's clinical epidemiology program and follows a ten-year pilot study of child behaviour.

Mr. Speaker, today I wish to pay tribute to researchers at Robert Giffard Hospital who, under the supervision of Dr. Michel Maziade, an internationally known psychiatrist, are making an impressive contribution to the advancement of our medical knowledge of mental illness.

The people of Quebec and Canada owe a debt of gratitude to the Robert-Giffard Hospital for helping to improve the quality of life of the mentally ill and of society in general. I also wish to congratulate the Robert-Giffard Foundation which, together with the Government of Canada, provides financial support for this major research project.

* * *

• (1110)

[*English*]

FISHERIES

Mr. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan): Mr. Speaker, I want to draw the attention of the House to the deplorable condition of wharfs in my riding such as Graham's Pond, Georgetown and Launching, to name but a few.

If repairs are not done immediately, these wharfs will be washed into the sea by next spring. The harbour at Launching is well on its way. Part of the sea wall has given way and sands are filling the harbour.

At MacAulay's wharf the disrepair is threatening the environment. Diesel fuel tanks are sitting on a section of wharf that is sinking and diesel fuel is leaking into the harbour.

Once again I implore the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to recognize the gravity of this situation, make Prince Edward Island fishermen a priority, and commit funds for the repair of wharfs today.

* * *

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago we were all shocked and saddened by the senseless killing of 14 of the cream of our youth in Montreal.

I wish to draw to the attention of the House today that every day, 365 days of the year, we are killing 12 Canadians in traffic related accidents. In other words, over 4,000 Canadians lost their lives on our highways last year. At this time of year the carnage usually increases due to darkness, poor road conditions and increased alcohol consumption.

I call on all Canadians to use extra care in driving at all times, especially during the holiday season.

I call on all levels of government to pass and enforce whatever laws are necessary to reduce this terrible carnage on our highways.

I also make a special plea for support for research to help solve this escalating problem.

* * *

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau—La Lièvre): Mr. Speaker, for years the world has been concerned about the flagrant situation of human rights in Iran.

Reliable reports indicate that 90,000 political executions have taken place. The Peoples Organization of Iran has published a list of names and particulars of more than 16,000 of these victims which exemplifies the dimensions of human rights violations by the ruling regime in Iran.

While human rights violations continue unabated and news of mass executions in public are reported every day, international pressures and efforts of the Iranian Peoples National Resistance are taking place.

Those are the testimonies from the people who have escaped from the prisons and appeared before the United Nations special reporters. What is basically happening is violations of human rights according to the United Nations Charter which are unprecedented anywhere in the world.

The Canadian government could offer its assistance to the special committee that will be going to Iran in a relatively few short weeks. The Canadian government could offer the help that is needed to substantiate all these charges against Iran and thereby call the regime in Iran to task to prevent such violations of basic human rights.

* * *

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, the United Nations Children's Fund in its 1990 report on the state of the world's children spelled out that 38,000 children a day die and 100 million children in the next decade will die from hunger and its effects.

One must question the Canadian government's commitment to the 1.2 million Canadian children living in poverty when the Canadian government continually threatens to break our deficit over the backs of our children through measures like clawbacks on family allowance, reneging on child care, an ill-conceived 9 per cent tax grab, and threatened cut-backs on transfer payments under the Canada Assistance Plan.

The U.S. spends $1.5 million a day on military aid to El Salvador; twice as much as would be required to ensure that all of the children who die in the world each day would have been immunized and fed. Yet our federal government turns a blind eye.

What kind of credibility can Canada have at the UN on the matter of children's rights when the government is so negligent at home and abroad?

* * *

[*Translation*]

TRIBUTE TO MARGUERITE BERNIER

Mr. Jacques Tétreault (Laval-des-Rapides): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Mrs. Marguerite Bernier, to whom I had the privilege of transmitting, on behalf of the Minister of National Health and Welfare, the Volunteer Canada Award's certificate of merit. The certificate is awarded annually to recognize and encourage the dedication of Canadian men and women who volunteer their time to improve the health and the quality of life of their fellow citizens.

Mrs. Marguerite Bernier has been a dedicated fund-raiser for the Eye Bank Foundation of Quebec, the Canadian Cancer Society, the Canadian Heart Foundation and the Multiple Sclerosis Society.

President of the Saint-Claude-de-Laval senior citizens club since 1977, she has given her fellow members a new lease on life by organizing recreational activities and providing the help they need to have a better quality of life.

Mrs. Bernier, who will be 80 years old on March 3, 1990, is still an active member of the Laval-des-Rapides meals-on-wheels program and has been since 1982.

* * *

[*English*]

CANADA-ITALY INCOME TAX CONVENTION

Mr. Vincent Della Noce (Duvernay): Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond to the comments made yesterday by the member for Sault Ste. Marie concerning the recent protocol amending the tax convention between Canada and Italy which addresses the taxation of certain pensions paid by the Italian state to residents of Canada.

At the outset I wish to indicate that the purpose of the new protocol was not to provide a fairer system of taxing pensions covered by the Canada-Italy Income Tax Convention.

Although the government believes that the protocol largely benefits Canadians in receipt of pensions from Italy, it should be pointed out that its purpose was not to secure a special or preferential status to a specific class of taxpayers but, rather, to ensure that the taxation of Canadian and Italian pensioners would be in accordance with Canadian tax policy.

An Italian pensioner with a small pension who is a resident of Canada receives the Guaranteed Income Supplement despite his level of other income.

To ensure that those in lower income brackets receive the exemption a threshold of $24,000 was provided. Residents earnings less than this amount receive their supplement free of tax; I repeat, free of tax.

For the majority of Canadian recipients Italy does not withhold tax. Where tax is withheld by Italy the Canadian resident can deduct the Italian tax from any Canadian tax payable on their pension. There is no double taxation; I repeat, there is no double taxation.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I would like to pose a question to the Minister of Finance.

Over the last several weeks this government has attempted to sugar coat the emerging economic crisis in this country. As the President of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association said yesterday, "there is clear evidence that we are slipping into a recession".

Is the Minister of Finance not alarmed by the fact that a Statistics Canada report points out that there will be 100,000 less jobs created this year than last year?

When is the Minister of Finance going to take his responsibilities seriously and correct the serious structural deficiencies the Prime Minister talked about yesterday?

When is he going to do something about the accelerating interest rates and the high exchange rates which are killing our exports?

When is the Minister going to start taking his responsibilities as the Minister of Finance and put some growth back in this economy, put some exports back in this economy, and do something about the people who are unemployed?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I think if one looks at the record of this government and the ability and commitment of this government to deal with issues and to deal with problems as they come up, one can seriously understand why we are doing the things we are doing and why we have been successful over the last five years in having growth that is second only to the growth of Japan and just marginally behind the growth rate of Japan which is the fastest in the major industrialized countries.

The hon. member mentions structural problems. Are we dealing with structural problems? Yes, we are dealing with structural problems. One of the ways is the goods and services tax.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Wappel: That's a problem all right.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Hon. members do not like me to mention this. The goods and services tax has been a major structural deterrent in the tax system for the last 50 years.

Mr. Gauthier: It's going to be in future years is what you mean.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): The hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier is giving me his advice.

• (1120)

Quite frankly, I will take the advice of the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development and the International Monetary Fund, which organizations are saying that the importance of moving from the existing federal sales tax to the goods and services tax is a major structural change, a major initiative of this government. I intend to have something more to say about this with a statement in the House next Tuesday.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree with the minister that the proposed GST is a major structural problem. It is going to force up the inflation rate. It is going to force up interest rates. It is going to cause even more unemployment.

We now see the Canadian dollar at the highest rate in a decade. Interest rates are way beyond the historical average of 4.5 base points above American interest rates. Yet in his remarks yesterday the Governor of the Bank of Canada showed himself to be totally oblivious to the fact that the high interest rate policy is acting as a major deterrent to our exports, is having a crippling effect upon our regional economies, and is pushing this country into a recession.

When is the Minister of Finance going to assume his responsibility as the chief public policy maker in finance and to start setting guidelines that will bring interest rates down, bring the exchange rate down and start putting this economy back on track?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, I think I have demonstrated over the last five years that I understand fully the importance of low interest rates. That was clearly a very important part of the strength of the economy during these past five years.

The hon. member says that the Governor of the Bank of Canada is oblivious to the problems. The person who is oblivious to these problems is the hon. member himself.

Let me quote from the report of the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development which states: "Recent Canadian economic performance has been impressive and has brought the economy back to full capacity utilization". However, it noted that inflation and the budget deficit remain problematic and need to be addressed.

These are exactly the two issues that we are addressing. We addressed them in the 1989 budget. We are addressing them through monetary policy. We are going to continue to address them until we have these two problems solved.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, it is a tragedy that we have a Minister of Finance who prefers to listen to international bureaucrats and refuses to look at the reality in his own country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, considering the latest alarming figures on Canada's international trade balance, will the Minister confirm that his government will not make any cutbacks in the export development program's budget? In other words, considering the major decline in our exports, would the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Trade not agree that any action to diminish the export development program would be disastrous?

[*English*]

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, I delayed standing because I wanted to give my colleague, the Minister for International Trade, an opportunity to say what we are doing to promote international trade. I wanted him to talk about the broad program he has put in place which is supporting trade development both in Europe and the Far East as well as in the United States.

These initiatives are all very carefully co-ordinated so that the Canadian exporting community will have good support from the Government of Canada in order to ensure that we are able to tap these markets and bring the jobs that will come from expanding international trade.

One key element of this is that we can have all the trade promotion in the world but if we do not have access to markets, then we do not get the trade coming back from it. The free trade agreement is so important to Canada in order for us to have access to the United States market and so that we do have the opportunities that will flow from that. That will come from the very aggressive trade promotion program my colleague has put in place.

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. To pretend that that free trade agreement has given us major enhanced access to the U.S. is a pot of nonsense.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Peterson: To pretend that the record level of the Canadian dollar is enhancing our exports is again misleading the country.

Is the minister not going to recognize now the new economic realities? We are into a recession. Is he not going to alleviate and get away from this stubborn, bull-headed, pig-headed, one-way track of high interest rates?

Is he going to change his policy, which he is taking out on the backs of the unemployed, the farmers, the fishermen, the manufacturers and the exporters?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, that sort of excessive language is not going to make his points any better than the comments of his colleague from Winnipeg.

Let me just make reference to what the Pace University study on U.S.-Canada business had to say. It was announced just yesterday. It states: "The free trade agreement has had an extraordinary effect in stimulating the Canadian economy".

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): It is going to continue to have an extraordinary effect on ensuring that the opportunities open to us in the United States economy will be there because of the free trade agreement.

The hon. member makes reference to monetary policy, as did his colleague in his earlier question. We understand the impact that this has on the economy, but we also understand that we have an inflation problem.

If the hon. member wants to look at the inflation statistics released just this morning, he will see that the inflation performance is still too high. We have to get this done because we know that far from having a temporary problem now with high interest rates we will have a long-term problem of lost productivity and lost competitive position. That will rob us of those opportunities in the United States on a long-term basis.

We learned some lessons in the 1970s. We on this side are not going to forget those lessons, not like the people on the other side of the House did. Clearly, they have forgotten the mess they got this country into in 1981.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Peterson: Mr. Speaker, with a record high Canadian dollar we are effectively shutting ourselves out of that American market.

The minister, in addition to giving us the second highest interest rates of all major industrialized countries in the world is also, according to the Prime Minister's statement in the House last week, on another type of economic mission: it is to increase the record level of foreign investment in Canada. We already have the world's highest record of foreign control over our economy.

Let us look at the facts about foreign investment. Statistics Canada has shown over the last 10 years that we have brought in $1.2 billion through foreign investment. The outflow to those foreign investors over that 10-year period has been $128 billion. If for every one dollar of foreign investment that is brought in there is $107 that flows out, who is benefiting, Canada, or is it the foreign investors who are buying up Canada?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member asks who benefits from investment. Canada benefits from investment by the jobs that are created and so on.

We applaud when GM expands its automobile plant in Oshawa. We applaud when Freightliner opens up a Greenfields plant in St. Thomas, Ontario. We applaud those investments.

Incidentally, Canadians are investing overseas in record amounts as well. However, over the last decade, in fact the percentage of foreign ownership in Canada has decreased, not increased.

The hon. member raises a valid question about foreign borrowings and the need to service that debt. He might ask the Government of Ontario about its extensive foreign borrowings, particularly the utilities. If you look at where the borrowings are occurring, it is more at the provincial level than at the federal level, particularly by Ontario and Quebec utilities.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

• (1130)

Mr. David Barrett (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance. I am not quite sure who he is, whether it is Mr. Crow or the member who is sitting there, but one of them can answer.

The government has created over one million fighters against inflation. There are over one million inflation fighters out there. The only problem is that they are all unemployed. I would like to know the minister's position on the following facts. According to the Canadian Exporters Association, every one cent increase in the value of the dollar costs us $1.3 billion in exports. In the lumber industry alone every one cent appreciation of the dollar costs us $100 million. This affects my province of British Columbia.

I would like to know when I go home and answer questions of people there who is running this show. Is it the minister or is it Mr. Crow? Who is responsible and who is making the decisions?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, it is a curious question the hon. member asked. They ask me that same type of question. They say: "Who is asking the questions, the member for Esquimalt or the President of the Canadian Labour Congress".

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): The simple answer to the question is that the government and the Governor of the Bank of Canada have extensive discussions on monetary policy. As a matter of fact, I had my regular weekly meeting with the Governor of the Bank of Canada just before coming to Question Period this morning. We have an ongoing relationship, an ongoing dialogue with the Governor of the Bank of Canada. We support the approach that the Governor is taking because we know the importance of getting the level of inflation down in order to avoid the problems that we got into as a country in 1981–82.

I remind the hon. member that the level of inflation was about 5.5 per cent in 1976. The government of the day forgot about that problem. It swept it under the carpet. Inflation started to creep up year after year. It reached a peak of 13 per cent in 1981. That led us directly into the huge mess that we got into with high interest rates of 20 and 25 per cent.

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): Every country did.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): The hon. member says every country did. The hon. member should go back and check the numbers. She will see that the recession that we got into in Canada was far worse than that of the other industrialized countries.

Mr. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, I am interested in hearing the minister respond by saying he met with Mr. Crow this morning and I am glad that he got his instructions from him. The instructions are what concern me.

Mr. Crow is suggesting that an unemployment rate of around 8 per cent is necessary to control inflation in Canada. Eight per cent will mean over 1.5 million unemployed in this country, all of whom will either have to go on unemployment insurance or social assistance.

Is it this government's policy to substitute a lower interest rate that would create jobs in this country by Canadians for Canadians? Is it the policy to substitute that for an increase in costs of welfare and unemployment insurance as a social and economic policy of welfare by the Canadian Manufacturers' Association and Mr. Crow?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, I understand the hon. member's frustration with high interest rates. I would like to get interest rates down as well. I know the difficulty of doing that in the face of the inflationary pressures in the economy today.

The growth in business credit was at 11 or 11.5 per cent in recent months. The growth in household credit, while it has come down from about 18 per cent to 15 per cent, is still high. Those two levels of growth of bank credit at a time when the economy is growing at a nominal rate of 7 or 8 per cent is clearly inflationary.

The hon. member is suggesting that we jack up this growth in business credit, jack up this growth in household credit. What will that bring, Mr. Speaker? A great big bout of inflation and that is something we have to avoid in this country if we want to get back to the level of sustainable non-inflationary growth that we had in the last few years.

Mr. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, it is a question of choices. The minister knows very well that by moving in the goods and services tax the government will move into the economy in a way that will draw more disposable income out of consumers' hands into the government's hands. That is number one. Number two, the minister knows very well that by keeping interest rates high the cost of borrowing by his government and previous Liberal governments continues to be high. That money is drained out of the economy as well. Therefore, you have to make choices.

The choice by this government is obvious. It would rather pay high interest charges, pay money out of general revenue to offshore borrowers and not create more wealth inside this country with manageable inflation figures. The choice is clear. I ask the minister: is it his decision, is it Mr. Crow's decision or is it the government's decision to keep paying high interest on borrowing and keep people unemployed in this country in order to serve some right wing mania?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question of the hon. member, but I ask him to reflect on his own record. When he came into office as Premier of the province of B.C., there was a hundred million dollar surplus. When he left, there was a hundred million dollar deficit. That is how much that hon. member knows about how he should run a government and run government policy.

The hon. member has said this is all about choices. Yes, it is about choices. There are very important choices to be made here and we have made those choices. I think the record stands for itself over the last five years of what we have been able to do.

The hon. member has pointed out high interest rates and the effect that can have on the fiscal position of the Government of Canada as well as on the economy. We understand this. There has to be a reason why we have chosen this course of having a government fiscal policy and a monetary policy which is designed to get inflation down. That is because we understand what inflation will do to this country. We understand what that will do to interest rates on an ongoing basis and we understand how high inflation will damage the competitive position and the productivity of this economy on a long-term basis. This is what we are trying to stop. That is the choice we have made and I will stand by that choice.

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AGRICULTURE

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg St. James): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. Prairie farmers are facing the worst financial crisis in 50 years. In my province of Manitoba it is estimated that next year farm income will drop, not just a few percentage points, but a whopping 87 per cent. These are the minister's own figures. This is the man who has to be held accountable. This is the man who slashed farm support programs. My question is this: what is this minister going to do about this impending farm calamity?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, just to set the record straight, between 1981 and 1984, when the Liberal party was in power, net realized farm income averaged $3.1 billion per year. In the last five years that average of realized net income has risen to over $4 billion, an increase of 30 per cent over the Liberal years. Therefore, Conservative years are certainly much better for the farmers of Canada than Liberal years.

In terms of direct assistance, between 1981 and 1984 under the Liberals some $500 million to $550 million in direct assistance was provided. Between 1985 and 1989 some $2.5 billion in direct assistance was provided. That is more than a fourfold increase.

We acknowledge that the projections for 1989 are not very good. It is a combination of low commodity prices, drought and a whole other host of factors. They are preliminary projections. We are as concerned as the hon. member. I appreciate him raising this. We are looking at it with the provinces. We are assessing it. As before, when the need is there, we will be there.

• (1140)

Mr. Harvard: Mr. Speaker, I will tell you what the record is. The record is that 8,000 farmers in Saskatchewan are facing foreclosure. In that province food plants have closed and communities are dying. One person leaves Saskatchewan every 23 minutes. In the province of Saskatchewan, farm incomes are estimated to drop 100 per cent next year, worse than Manitoba. My question is this: how can this minister rip the guts out of farm support programs when farmers are losing their land and losing their livelihoods?

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, when the Liberals were in office in 1984 there were some 550 bankruptcies occurring on the farm. That has dropped to around 200 in this year, which is still not good enough.

We have announced in the form of the Green Paper *Growing Together* the need for the establishment of new stabilization programs and safety nets. That is precisely what the agriculture conference this week was all about. That is a track that we are on, a program that we are proceeding with, in consultation with the provinces and with the producers.

As to whether there is a need for interim assistance, we are assessing that at the present time. As I have indicated before, the farmers know that this government has stood behind them in the past and it will stand with them again in the future.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. The President of the United States has turned thumbs down on Atlantic Canada lobster fishermen. So much for the Prime Minister's cosy relationship with the President of the United States.

The minister will know that as a result of this particular decision, lobster fishermen in Atlantic Canada will lose $30 million a year for the next three years. Since we are not certain as to what sanction might be imposed under the free trade panel, which this issue has now been referred to, I ask the minister specifically whether he is prepared to provide today compensation for those fishermen in Atlantic Canada who are going to lose as a result of this negative decision by the President of the United States under the auspices of the free trade agreement.

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the problem caused for the lobster fishermen of eastern Canada is a problem caused by the Congress of the United States, the Democratic majority leader in particular, Senator Mitchell, and the main delegation, who had Congress pass this particular law which the President signed for whatever his reasons were.

We have already taken steps to ensure that the matter is resolved as quickly as possible. We have asked the United States to expedite the free trade panel procedure so that we might have a decision at least a month earlier than would otherwise normally be the case. The estimate is that the damage to Canadian lobster fishermen could be in the area of $20 million to $30 million in a year. We hope to have the matter resolved in under a year.

With respect to the question of compensation, I am afraid this is not damage caused anyone by the Government of Canada. Therefore, there is no plan to give compensation to anyone in this connection.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, during the last election it was debated very vigorously by government members that we would have guaranteed access to the United States market. As a result of this decision by the American Congress, supported by the American President, that guarantee of access is no longer possible. This decision on the Atlantic fisheries is causing a major crisis, along with a lot of other issues in the fisheries.

I am fully aware of the representations that have been made and the fact that the minister is trying to expedite a decision under the free trade panel. We do not know what the sanction will be. As a measure of good faith, does the minister not think it appropriate, fair and just for him to place on the floor of the House of Commons an undertaking to Atlantic lobster fishermen to the effect that he will provide compensation up to $30

million to those who are losing as a result of a regressive, negative attack on Canadian fishermen, particularly those in Atlantic Canada? Will the minister give us that undertaking?

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker, the rhetoric of the hon. member is certainly very impressive. I wonder if he could refer me to any precedent of a previous government, particularly our Liberal predecessors, where such compensation was arranged in any case similar to this.

No country has an alienable right to export its goods to any other country. Each receiving country decides what its domestic laws are and what laws that country will pass. We are taking steps under the GATT and under the free trade agreement, which is an improvement on the GATT, to have this action by the U.S. Congress and the administration reversed. If we are successful and the Congress does not reverse this legislation, we will proceed in accordance with international practice to impose a penalty on American exports to Canada. That is why the system works, and that is the way we will be pursuing this vigorously and I hope effectively.

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NORTHERN ALLOWANCES

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): My question is to the Minister of Finance. As the industry knows, the minister has had for the last two years the northern tax benefit which has benefited many Canadians.

He also knows that many thousands of communities could be cut off from that benefit unless he makes a decision soon. As 1990 is only a couple of weeks away and the House is only sitting one more week, will he reassure Canadians in northern communities that they will have a full tax benefit next year?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, there has been a task force report. It has made some recommendations. Those recommendations are being considered by the government. I can say to the hon. member as well as to colleagues on this side of the House who have a concern about this that whatever decision is taken by the government, it will not affect taxation in 1990.

Mr. Murphy: In the same sense of fairness, will the minister assure those northern communities and a number of provinces right across the country which lost part of their benefits last year that they will receive a full benefit next year, a benefit they were entitled to two years ago.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, I repeat the same answer. There will be no change in the northern benefit in the isolated post allowance as it affects taxation in 1990.

* * *

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health. I made a statement earlier today in which I pointed out that over 4,000 Canadians have lost their lives on our highways in the last year. This amounts to 12 people every day who are killed on our highways. It is particularly true at this time of year. In the statement I implored all levels of government to do whatever they can to improve this record.

I ask the Minister of Health today just what the federal government is doing to reduce this carnage on our highways.

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's question is particularly timely at this time of year when issues related to impaired driving are particularly important.

Today my department is releasing a major survey as to Canadian's attitudes and practices in drinking and driving. One of the things that it shows is that in the year that preceded the survey, two and one half million Canadians had driven with a driver whom they felt was impaired, whom they felt had had too much to drink.

This also indicates the degree of danger that there is to the rest of us on the highways. The problem is particularly acute among young Canadians between the ages of 16 and 24 who represent only a small part of the total population. But when it comes to all impaired drivers, they account for some 36 per cent of impaired drivers. The federal government has a program on impaired driving which is designed to discourage impaired driving and to do everything we can, particularly among young Canadians, to ensure that highways remain safe.

NATIVE PEOPLES

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, my question is also to the Minister of Health. Canada's aboriginal peoples are living in this country as they do in the Third World countries.

My question basically is based on the fact that we have an undue amount of violence, alcoholism, drug abuse and suicide. Will the government now admit that the programs it has in place do not work? Will the minister immediately implement a government-wide strategy to support the aboriginal peoples of Canada?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, indeed we do have such a strategy. There are a number of elements to it. We have programs designed specifically to deal with problems related to alcoholism and drug abuse on reserves.

• (1150)

In addition, we believe strongly that a program of transferring responsibility for health services on reserves to the native populations allows local control in terms of planning and delivery of health services. We believe that something is vital.

There have been many examples, most strikingly in the Hobbema reserve outside of Edmonton, where there has been dramatic progress by the local community working to bring down, first, the suicide rate and, second, to dramatically bring down the rate of problems related to drinking and to drug abuse. It is an example of how things can be done. The department continues to work closely with native groups in terms of assisting them.

Mr. Nault: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is to the Minister of Justice. The horrible social conditions faced by aboriginal peoples is borne out over and over again in evidence brought before several judicial inquiries.

There have been many calls for a native justice system. Will the minister inform this House when the government will take steps to establish such a system?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the government has been following, with great interest the Marshall inquiry in Nova Scotia, the inquiry in Manitoba and also the inquiry in Alberta—I think it is on the Blood reserve—with a view to taking the information that comes from those inquiries and making whatever improvements we can to the justice system.

As far as a separate native justice system is concerned, that idea has been brought forward. At the present time the government has no intention of implementing a separate native justice system. We have every intention of doing what we can to improve the present system for native people.

* * *

[*Translation*]

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

Mr. Gilles Rocheleau (Hull—Aylmer): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Justice.

As you know, the American judiciary is still detaining trucker Richard Bilodeau, and there seems to be a great deal of confusion here in Ottawa about the extradition treaty.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to hear from the Minister of Justice whether today, the government, which been dragging its feet from November 29 to December 15, whether the Minister of Justice could inform the House whether he intends to do everything he can so that Mr. Bilodeau can go home, considering the fact that today, the court refused to reduce bail from $500,000 to $50,000, because of the federal government's failure to do its homework on the extradition treaty.

[*English*]

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the kind of exaggerated and unfair criticisms inserted in questions here are certainly illustrated by that question.

The government has been working and members of the government, including the Minister of State (Youth) and the Minister of Justice on this matter since Mr. Bilodeau was first detained in New Hampshire after the terrible accident in which he was involved. The case has been followed very closely.

I have instructed the embassy in Washington to review the judgment with the appropriate U.S. authorities with a view to finding a satisfactory solution as soon as possible. Our officials are maintaining consultation with our colleagues in Quebec. Several of our ministers have been in touch with the prosecuting attorney in the state that is involved. We have assured and reassured the

Americans that manslaughter is an extraditable offence under the legislation. Everything possible has been done to assist this unfortunate Canadian citizen, Mr. Bilodeau.

It is unfortunate that the hon. member wants to grandstand and get up with unfair and unjustified criticism. Everything possible has been done for the Canadian citizen in the United States who is involved with the judicial authorities there.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rocheleau: Mr. Speaker, I wish the government and the minister would remember that Mr. Bilodeau's wife and children are waiting for him to come home and that Mr. Bilodeau is bearing the brunt of this unfair situation which was created because the extradition treaty is apparently not crystal clear.

I want to ask the minister whether the Canadian government intends to underwrite Mr. Bilodeau's bail so that he can return home immediately, while the problem is being cleared up.

[*English*]

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker, I have just explained that ever since the government learned of this situation, it has been doing everything possible to assist Mr. Bilodeau so that he can have a reasonable bail hearing, reasonable bail set and return to his own home. He will of course have to show up for trial. It was a very serious accident that occurred and the judicial authorities in New Hampshire are entitled to proceed with the trial they have initiated.

The government is doing everything it can for him, his wife and family and because of our obligations as a government concerned about every one of our citizens. The Minister of State for Youth, the Minister of Justice and our department will continue to make every effort to see that Mr. Bilodeau is released because everyone is presumed innocent until they have been proven guilty.

CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): I have a question for the Minister of Housing concerning Mr. Jarvis, president of CMHC, and his failure to follow the very clear CMHC conflict of interest policy. On page 3 of his policy it states that a confidential report on conflict of interest must be provided within 60 days of employment.

Is it acceptable to the minister that Mr. Jarvis failed to file his confidential report until three months after the deadline and then only after I raised questions in the House and only after there was a public disclosure that he had not complied with CMHC policy?

Hon. Alan Redway (Minister of State (Housing)): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member I am sure is well aware, having examined the CMHC conflict of interest guidelines, the matter was before the board of directors of CMHC in June of this year and it was only in July of this year that it was finally approved and put into effect. Obviously there have been some delays in the filings in relation to those guidelines but, as the hon. member confirms, Mr. Jarvis has in fact made his appropriate filing at the present time.

Mr. Karpoff: He has made it within the last few days. I know that the minister, as a lawyer and a minister of the Crown, is very concerned about due and proper process. On page 2 of the conflict of interest guidelines it states:

> Before or upon employment board members must sign the certification documents certifying that they have read and understood the policy and that they will observe them as a condition of their appointment.

Did Mr. Jarvis sign the certification as required and if so, why did he continue to serve when he was in violation?

Mr. Redway: Mr. Speaker, most definitely I am absolutely concerned about compliance with all of the rules and regulations and conflict of interest guidelines. In this instance Mr. Jarvis has confirmed that he was certainly well aware of those guidelines and that he would comply with them. In fact, as a member of the board of directors which approved the guidelines, he obviously was aware of them and now has complied with the requirements as indicated.

ETHIOPIA

Hon. David MacDonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs or in his absence, the acting secretary of state, with respect to the very rapidly deteriorating situation in the northern part of Ethiopia, the resumed threat of famine to as many as 5 million people, the increasing civil conflict that prevents many of those people from being reached under the present circumstances.

In light of the call this week by the President of Kenya for open relief corridors into the most affected parts of northern Ethiopia, can the acting secretary of state indicate what actions the Government of Canada is taking to ensure that badly needed Canadian relief assistance and relief from around the world will get to these people who are so very much going to be in need in the early part of next year?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member who just asked that question of course has had extensive experience in Ethiopia and I know his concern is very genuine. We have been working with other donors. We have been working with UN organizations and international relief agencies to persuade the Government of Ethiopia to allow access to those who are starving in northern Ethiopia. We were encouraging the UN organizations to ensure that a co-ordinator, either in New York or Addis Ababa as was the case in 1984 and 1988, act as a focal point for the relief organizations and strive to win co-operation of the parties in Ethiopia.

• (1200)

Finally, the government has approved $17.7 million in food aid and emergency relief assistance to Ethiopia this year: $13.4 million to the Canadian non-governmental organizations and $4.25 million to the World Food Program and UNICEF.

I might also inform the hon. member that CIDA's country program manager for the Horn of Africa has just returned from a visit to Ethiopia and Sudan where he reviewed the situation on the ground. His report is being reviewed urgently to try to ensure that we have in place a mechanism which is adequate to meet the challenge. This is being given every attention and priority.

TIEM CANADA

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Employment and Immigration I would like to address my question to the Deputy Prime Minister.

TIEM Canada was a national company located in five cities including Winnipeg. TIEM was designed to assist small and medium sized businesses. It received huge amounts of public funds. In May this year it closed its doors.

Why did the ministers involved in providing huge amounts of public funds refuse to renew its contracts?

[*Translation*]

Why didn't those departments, including the Department of Employment and Immigration, the Department of Industry, Science and Technology and the Federal Business Development Bank, renew these contracts and why won't they give us the report on this company's performance?

[*English*]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I carried a file around for several months on that particular company.

I do not happen to have it here today, so I will have to take that question as notice and I will get back to the hon. member.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Vancouver East, followed by the hon. member for York West on single questions.

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IMMIGRATION

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Employment and Immigration. Federal regulations and bureaucratic delays are barring children of refugee claimants from attending school until their parents have passed the credible basis test. This can take up to four months in the Kitchener, Toronto, and Vancouver areas.

Will the minister of immigration waive the present regulations and issue a no objection letter as was done in the past to allow children to attend school while their parents are waiting?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to remind my colleague that schools are a provincial jurisdiction. However, we have an administrative agreement allowing us to reduce the backlog of applications.

Our officials send an information letter to school authorities and this normally gives very good results.

[*English*]

Officials are now working on regulations to resolve any remaining problems. The regulations will give such personal legal status as students. We expect the regulations to be ready in the very near future.

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of State for Employment and Immigration. It concerns her government's response to the forced deportation of Vietnamese refugees from Hong Kong by the British Government.

The minister has said to be against the forced deportation, but her planned levels to accept Indo-Chinese refugees for the next three years is only 16,000 which pales by comparison to the 90,000 accepted by Canada in the 1980 period.

My question is very straightforward and very simple. In light of these numbers, why is this government turning a blind eye to the boat people while at the same time embracing and extending an arm to the yacht people from the same part of the world?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): Mr. Speaker, our colleague knows full well that our immigration level is reviewed annually. Our policy has five components. However, we are contemplating flexible measures which could take new developments into account. The situation described today involves one component of our immigration policy and our government will consider any humanitarian aspect as it has in the past.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice on a point of order.

* * *

INCOME TAX ACT

NOTICE OF ALLOCATION OF TIME TO CONSIDER REPORT AND THIRD READING STAGES OF BILL C-28

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise the House that an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Orders 78(1) and 78(2) with respect to an allocation of time to the report stage and third reading stage of Bill C-28, an act to amend the Income Tax Act and the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Federal Post-Secondary Education and Health Contributions Act, the Old Age Security Act, the Public Utilities Income Tax Transfer Act, the War Veterans Allowance Act and a related act.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice of my intention to move a time allocation motion at the next sitting of the House for the purpose of allocating a specified number of days for consideration and disposal of proceedings at those stages of the bill.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

TREASURY BOARD

TABLING OF BRIEFING PAPER

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, a briefing paper completing the statement I will make in a few minutes.

* * *

[*English*]

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both

official languages, the government's response to several petitions.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

* * *

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, as a result of the government's expenditure review process, I am in a position today to announce a package of initiatives designed to make government operations more efficient and to save Canadian taxpayers $1.4 billion over the next three years.

These actions are the latest step in our constant efforts since 1984 to manage frugally. They follow the hard decisions announced last spring in the budget.

I would like to underline that the Minister of Finance and I will be announcing further reductions in spending in the new year. The government is continuing to review expenditures in order to adhere to our fiscal plan as we prepare early in the new year for the next budget and the Main Estimates.

When Canadians used to look at the federal government operations they would see red: red tape and red ink. The measures I am announcing today will help us make solid progress on both.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, the very real success we have had in bringing government spending under control is sometimes overlooked. Since 1984, we have taken a number of steps, often difficult and sometimes unpopular, to eliminate wasteful practices and spending by introducing a more businesslike approach to the operations of government. These have included expenditure and program reviews, reductions in payments to and privatization of Crown corporations, reductions in the size of the Public Service and cost-recovery measures.

As a result of these measures, we have kept annual growth in program expenditures to 3.6 per cent, well below the inflation rate. Compare that, Mr. Speaker, to the annual 14.1 per cent growth which occurred during the last five years of the Liberal administration.

• (1210)

We have met our objective of reducing the size of the Public Service. It is now the size it was 17 years ago, and that in spite of a heavier workload.

[*English*]

We have improved cash management. This alone has saved taxpayers nearly $1 billion since 1985. We have been leading the country in terms of leadership *vis-à-vis* wage settlements.

In the last round we have averaged an increase of 4.2 per cent per year for the total of the federal Public Service. We have reduced program spending to the point where we expect budgetary revenues to exceed programs spending by about $9 billion this year. That is a very significant improvement. We inherited on coming into office a $12 billion deficit in program spending, and we now have a $9 billion surplus.

This government has done more to control spending and to improve programs and services than any other government in recent history. We know that Canadians have not found it easy to accept many of the restraint measures that were necessary to manage the economy and ensure our future. I want Canadians to know that the government has been tightening its belt and will continue to do so.

Today's package is real. It is difficult. In fact it will not only mean doing better and more with less; in some cases it will mean doing without. However that is what leadership is all about and there is no better place to start than right here in this great institution.

This week the Board of Internal Economy which oversees the expenditures of the House of Commons reached an all-party agreement on a number of measures which will save Canadian taxpayers several million dollars. First of all we will save half a million dollars by cutting grants to parliamentary associations and by cutting budgets for foreign travels and visits by parliamentarians by 20 per cent.

We will save up to $730,000 by closing two parliamentary cafeterias and a private dining room and lounge for members of parliament, as well as reducing cafeteria operating hours. We will be raising prices to increase cost recovery from the parliamentary dining room and catering services.

We will save $300,000 by implementing a two-year freeze on certain aspects of members' non-salary budgets.

[*Translation*]

We will terminate a broadcasting studio service to Members of Parliament for an immediate saving of $300,000 and we will save over $1 million through a 20 per cent reduction in the cost of pamphlets which Members send to their constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate Members of all parties on the Board of Internal Economy for deciding to take these measures because they have shown their willingness to provide leadership during a period of fiscal restraint. In so doing, we, as Parliamentarians, are setting an example in our own house.

That is why the governmeent will reduce the budget of the National Capital Commission by $8 million a year. It will also defer expenditures on projects such as underground parking and statues on Parliament Hill.

Furthermore, we will reduce spending on Confederation Boulevard and official residences. Specifically, renovation of 7 Rideau Gate, the government's guest house, will not proceed. This alone will make it possible to save $3 million over the next three years.

Other major capital projects, totalling $3 million, at Rideau Hall, 24 Sussex and Harrington Lake are also being deferred.

[*English*]

We have ordered an immediate 20 per cent reduction in international travel by public servants.

In addition, we will sell two of the eight Challenger jets used by the government for ministerial travel. One reason we can do without the two Challenger jets is that ministerial travel has decreased very significantly since 1983-1984. The average number of flying hours per month has dropped by 25 per cent. The average number of flights per month has decreased by 37 per cent.

There is much more that we as a government will do to make major savings of taxpayers' dollars and make those dollars work harder and better. We have decided to extend by two years the two per cent cap on increases to the operating and maintenance budgets of government departments.

This 2 per cent ceiling has been in effect for the past four years and was due to expire. Extending the ceiling two more years will challenge managers in the Public Service to do better with less. In some cases it will lead to trimming in some programs and services. This measure, which is the largest single saving in the package, will require ongoing restraint in government departments and will realize roughly $450 million a year.

We have ordered a two-year freeze on construction projects worth some $460 million planned for the national capital region. Only those projects required for safety or health reasons or to maintain essential operations will be allowed to proceed with construction during this period. This will save $70 million over the two-year period.

We will reduce the operating budget of External Affairs by $70 million over the next four years. In addition, we will cut Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's administration and research budget by $3 million.

[*Translation*]

We will introduce a "blue box" paper recycling program and related measures which will improve the environment and save more than $1 million a year.

The government will also be taking a series of cost-recovery initiatives, totalling $390 million over three years. This reflects a new policy which gives departments the opportunity to retain a portion of cost-recovered revenue. The following initatives will be taken: we will increase fees for processing immigration and visitor visa applications and for entering and using national parks; we will add new administrative fees for processing student loans and improve the collection of overdue payments on those loans; and we will eliminate the $175 million annual subsidy to the Post Office and replace it with a better-targeted program of direct support to Canadian publishers. Part of the savings will be redirected to other programs of the Department of Communications.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. de Cotret: As I said earlier, these cost-saving measures will challenge managers in the Public Service to do better with less. A supporting component of today's package, therefore, is an important set of measures to improve the management and delivery of government programs and services. This includes incentives for more effective program and budget management, as well as the restructuring of several government agencies and organizations. A major innovation will be to allow Public

Service managers to carry over three per cent of non-salary operating and maintenance funds into the following fiscal year. This should allow wiser spending by putting an end to the pressure on managers to use funds at the end of the fiscal year just to avoid losing them.

[*English*]

We are also introducing an innovative concept of management in government called special operating agencies. These agencies are pilot projects to improve the delivery and cost efficiency of services offered by the government. They will operate within government in a business-like manner with flexibility that is necessary to achieve agreed upon bottom line results.

Some of these agencies will compete with the private sector as suppliers of services to the government and will have to give account for the results at the end of each year. We will convert the passport office, the government telecommunications agency and the Public Service Commission staff training program into special operating agencies. As a result they will have multi-year business plans and specific business goals.

• (1220)

We are merging the publishing and printing operations of Supply and Services Canada and the mapping service of Energy, Mines and Resources Canada. They will then become one special operating agency.

Two other divisions of Supply and Services—the Audit Services Bureau and the Bureau of Management Consulting—will also be consolidated and converted into one special operating agency.

We are closing down the government's exhibit production facility and the Canadian government photo centre.

We will use computer based systems to improve asset management. We will provide incentives to managers to dispose of surplus assets and to increase fees for service by allowing departments to retain a portion of the proceeds for reinvestment to improve the services that generate the revenue.

We will contract out the operations of the Canada Student Loans Program and increase contracting for translation services.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, these are all substancial measures. As I said earlier, they are designed to cut red tape and red ink.

Canadians have demanded that the government improve its performance and budget management. We have heard them loud and clear.

As the Prime Minister said recently when he announced the Public Service 2000 Program, it is essential that the Public Service be modernized to meet changing conditions and to provide better services.

He also rightly pointed out that the Public Service has to be improved as an institution that can offer careers to people devoted to serving their fellow citizens.

Mr. Speaker, the measures I have announced today are substantial, but more has to be done. That is why I say that today's announcement is part of an on-going process.

Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to more than the bottom line. It is committed, in a thoughtful and on-going way, to providing Canadians the quality of service and the quality of life which they so richly deserve.

I had the pleasure to table, in both official languages, detailed information on the package I have just announced.

[*English*]

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to respond this afternoon to the statement made by the President of the Treasury Board who henceforth will be renamed Ebenezer Bob. Ebenezer Bob has perpetrated the announcement this afternoon on Canadians just before the Christmas season.

In large measure this statement is a smoke screen announcement. It is to hide the real biggy which will happen next Tuesday, as admitted by the Minister of Finance a little earlier this morning in response to a question by one of my colleagues.

Next Tuesday, I predict, the Minister of Finance will be announcing the biggy to which I referred previously. It will be a sledgehammer on Canadians, his much dreaded GST which is known as the goods and services tax or perhaps more appropriately the grief and suffering tax.

The GST the minister will announce in a few days at whatever rate will be unacceptable to Canadians. The measures announced today will not camouflage or hide the fact that Canadians are displeased with what the government is proposing.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, there are in fact three main components in today's government statement. For openers, there is a reference to cut-backs in parliamentary services. I will get back to this point later on, but for now I want to point out that when services are reduced the immediate victims are always the people who are on the lowest rung of the salary scale. I have in mind the employees in the parliamentary cafeterias who will hear this news in a few minutes. Again the lowest-paid workers bear the brunt of these tragic circumstances. I hope none of them will lose his or her job.

Capital expenditures and public services will also be curtailed and, finally, higher fees will be paid by all Canadians.

[*English*]

Let me deal first with the cut-backs in the previously announced national capital region projects. Your Honour will notice that I said "national capital region".

I am going to name a few projects that are cancelled: underground parking and other measures on Parliament Hill, repairs to the Rideau Canal, new headquarters for the National Archives, new headquarters for the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, new headquarters for the Federal Court, and so on.

The one thing all these announcements have in common is that these were projects in the national capital area. I see the minister responsible for the national capital area here with us today. I say to him that this is probably not one of his better days as a cabinet minister.

In fact, all cut-backs in construction projects are in the national capital area. We are talking about cancelling projects to the Rideau Canal system, not the Trent-Severn system, not any other system across the country, but merely in the national capital area.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boudria: I hear some of the Tories across the way saying "Hear, hear". Let me read to the members across the way and remind them of something.

In *The Ottawa Citizen* of November 24, 1988 the hon. member for Mississauga South was interviewed. Here is what the article said: " 'If Ottawa voters felt neglected before, they don't know the meaning of the world', said Don Blenkarn, chairman of the commons finance committee".

Listen to this, Mr. Speaker: "Why would you bring any goodies to Ottawa? Why wouldn't you cut back on everything you could in Ottawa? Why wouldn't you take some departments that have good employees and move them into areas where there is some slack? Who's to care about a bunch of public servants who lose their jobs?"

Those are comments by the member for Mississauga South. Today those things are coming to pass.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Boudria: We are now seeing the face of the Conservative government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell has the floor.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I am upset by these announcements and by this attack on the national capital region on the part of the government across the way. I would be upset if any member of the government had done that. The President of the Treasury Board only a few years ago was the member of Parliament for Ottawa Centre. It is difficult for the people of the national capital area. The people of this city and this region will clearly not swallow that.

The Tories may have elected only two out of fourteen members in eastern Ontario, but the next time they will lose every single seat in this area. It is that kind of arrogance, combined with the failure of the few mem-

bers from eastern Ontario to defend the interests of this area, which will make it such, I predict.

Members opposite and the President of the Treasury Board were telling us a few moments ago how the number of public servants had gone down. They were saying what a great thing this was in their view. What a great thing it is to cut back on services to Canadians, according to the Tories across the way.

Just in case the government is trying to fool all Canadians, let me remind Your Honour of what was said in an article of *The Financial Times*—and I am sure it is a publication read frequently by the Minister of Finance and the President of the Treasury Board—as reprinted in *The Ottawa Citizen*.

This particular story, of which I have a copy dated December 5, speaks of the number of consultants which the government has hired at the same time as cutting back civil servants and pretending to save money.

• (1230)

The Department of Supply and Services—and the minister is right here listening to this—spent $143 million on consultants in 1986–1987. In 1987–1988, in the continuing restraint of the government across the way, it spent $247 million. Now, that is restraint from this government. What they are doing is cutting back on civil servants and hiring consultants, hiring friends of the government, hiring people on contract and otherwise, in an attempt to fool the people of Canada that they are cutting back when they are not. It is simply not true and that needs to be repeated in this House.

I want to discuss the individual cuts that have been made by the government. I mentioned a moment ago the freeze in capital projects that will be only in the national capital area, but nowhere else in the country. I also want to speak about the cutbacks at the National Capital Commission. I know my colleague for Hull–Aylmer is very upset about these cuts. We have built a beautiful museum across the way and now many of the ancillary facilities to surround it will be terminated or at least will be delayed.

We were told this morning that Canada Mortgage and Housing will be imposing user fees. As my distinguished colleague for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke mentioned at that time, this will cause additional charges to municipalities and others that need services from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. This is not a cut, this is not a saving, this is a transfer of the burden from the federal government to the municipalities.

Mr. Hopkins: Passing the buck!

Mr. Boudria: Passing the buck, as my colleague for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke has so eloquently stated.

There is one provision that the minister is trying to implement and I would ask him to withdraw it above all others. On page 6 of the minister's document, which was provided to us today, it speaks of mandatory direct deposit for government employees pay cheques. This will also apply to people on pensions.

I do not see how this government could in all conscience tell a 73 year old widow that she has to give her bank account number to the President of the Treasury Board or his staff, otherwise her cheques will be cancelled. That was what we were told this morning and it is not right. I ask the minister to consult with the Privacy Commissioner and with others and to please withdraw at least that provision.

We may disagree in certain policy areas, but on this particular one I hope that the minister will understand the impact that this could have on the individual rights and freedoms of Canadians. If I do not want to have a bank account or if a civil servant does not want to have a bank account, he or she should not be forced to have one and to provide the number of that bank account to the President of the Treasury Board or to anyone else. If the minister wants to impose such a measure on new employees, we could argue about that. To impose that not only on present employees but on people who have retired and are receiving superannuation benefits, is not right and I really question the legality of such a measure.

I hope the President of the Treasury Board is a fair person and that he will look at this measure again. I had some discussions with his staff this morning and suggested to them that they have a second look at that measure. I know that sometimes staff or bureaucrats prepare documents for us and when they are looked at again by someone in elected office they are seen in a different light. I ask the minister to do this in that regard.

[*Translation*]

Earlier today, Mr. Speaker, the minister said there will be cut-backs at Canada Post. Well, this is not quite true because if this is a reference to subsidies concerning publications it is in fact a subsidy offered to companies that publish magazines and small newspapers, mainly weeklies, to enable them to sell papers at prices Canadians in rural areas can afford to pay. Mr. Speaker, the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. de Cotret) is familiar with the town of Hawkesbury in my riding. Indeed I believe his wife was born in Hawkesbury and that he goes to my riding quite often. He would know just how important it is to publishers of small newspapers and magazines to do everything they can so that as many Canadians as possible have access to the news out of rural ridings.

I do not see this as a charitable gesture. I rather think it is intended to maintain proper balance between small newspapers in the various regions of Canada and the major dailies in urban centres. The same goes for magazines. Sure enough, the widely published magazines can do without government assistance, but most smaller Canadian publications will be hard-pressed to face higher costs.

[*English*]

A little earlier I consulted my colleague, the member for York West. He mentioned to me some features of this new so-called Immigration Cost Recovery Program. He reminded me that in 1984 when this government was sworn into office, the cost of processing an immigration document was zero. It was then set at $125 and today it is $250. A new Canadian or anyone else who wants to sponsor their brother, mother, or sister in Lebanon or another country will now have to pay $250 in order to be able to present an application to the government across the way.

Not all new Canadians are rich. Not all people applying to come to this country are rich. As a matter of fact, in many cases it is the opposite. They have, of course, many resources in terms of their energy and their willingness, but their financial resources are very often small. These potential new Canadians deserve our compassion and should be assisted in a fairer way than charging them $250 before we decide whether or not we want to roll out the welcome mat.

My colleagues, the member for Ottawa West and the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke and I will be making further comments later this afternoon on the cuts announced today and this cost recovery package.

I want to remind the minister of one topic where I think he is in error, and that is the cutbacks at External Affairs and International Trade. We learned this week that for the first time in many years, we now find ourselves with a trade deficit. That is all the more reason why the minister should look at the expenditures of those departments. But not to take the money out of the department, not to cut back. Reallocate it, make better use of it, and even increase those budgets in order to ensure that we can once again find our place in international trade and have the trade surpluses that we have had in this country in prior years.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I must say I could not believe what I heard from the President of the Treasury Board. What he said today in the House of Commons is an insult to the intelligence of Canadians everywhere in this country, to think that they are going to buy this kind of line. Here he is, the artful dodger of the cabinet. It reminded me of the old riverboat gambler who would play out and lose a couple of hands to lure in the gamblers and then put it to them.

He is trying to lure in Canadians today. If I had the opportunity, the first question I would like to put to the minister would be, how much is the government going to spend on convincing Canadians that these are serious cuts he has announced today? What are those expenditures going to be?

What is this all about? The government has on its hands a goods and services tax of 9 per cent or 7 per cent that has been rejected by people right across this country. Virtually every single organization that has spoken out on this issue has been against it. The government has to find some way to recoup and to try to convince, or fool with a snow job, a con job, a smoke and mirrors trick, to give the impression that the government is cutting back on its expenditures. The President of the Treasury Board has the gall to stand up and announce a number of these cosmetic cuts today.

We are trying to sell a goods and services tax that is unsaleable, that is unpalatable and unsavoury to virtually every Canadian, and the government is going to say: "Here is what we have done. We have cut back".

• (1240)

I noticed that the President of the Treasury Board did not mention the government propaganda machine. He has already spent $9 million trying to convince Canadians that the goods and services tax is good for them. God knows how many millions will be spent next year. Has he any cuts in that area? Has he any cuts in the advertising of government programs, or any cuts in the propaganda department? Not a single cut.

We notice that there are some cuts to the services of members of Parliament. Fair enough, Mr. Speaker. However, are there any announced cuts to the ministers' budgets? Are there any announced cuts to any of the budgets of one of the largest cabinets in Canadian history? No other government has had so many people in cabinet. Are there any announcements that the cabinet ministers are cutting back on their political staff and the huge entourages that surround them? No, there are no cuts there, and no cuts at all to the slush funds that the ministers have for handing out plums to their friends.

What about our Prime Minister? Here is a Prime Minister that gallivants around on the international stage trying to impress, not everybody in the world, but the people back home, with these huge shows that he conducts when he goes around the globe. He should be called the Mick Jagger of international politics, out there with a lot of flash, a huge stage and a lot of sound. He travels with a huge entourage and a number of planes wherever he goes. By leaps and bounds it is becoming the largest entourage following a prime minister that we have ever seen in this country. Are there any cuts there, Mr. Speaker? There are no cuts in those areas.

If the government was serious about sending a signal to the people of Canada that it was going to cut back on its expenditures, it would have cut back on the budgets of the ministers. It would have cut back on the gallivanting of the Prime Minister. It would have cut back on the massive advertising propaganda of the government.

There was one area that the minister did not even mention, and that is the whole area of corporate tax expenditures. If the government was serious and went through the list of not the hundreds of millions, but billions and billions of dollars that the taxpayers of Canada lose every year because of corporate tax expenditures, he could have come up with billions of dollars in cuts. Then the people of Canada would have applauded him. But no. He chipped away, for example, at the area for encouraging Canadian publishers. Canadian publishers are struggling under the threat of the free trade deal, trying to withstand the pressures from the United States. What does the minister announce? They are going to cut back on support to the publishers of Canada.

There is another group that has been hit right between the eyes. Time and time again, not only has this government cut back on support for universities, colleges, technical and vocational schools, they have cut back on the support for students in terms of loans and bursaries. Now they are going to add new charges to the student loan process, an administrative fee of 3 per cent to all new Canada student loans. Well, isn't that the perfect way to encourage Canadian students and send them a clear signal that we appreciate the efforts of young people to improve themselves in terms of post-secondary education by adding more fees to this area.

Obviously we are seeing the free trade agreement poking its head into the minister's discussion today. The Americans have said that they do not want to see the Government of Canada helping out Canadian publishers. So the government today announced that that is fine. Once again, like it did on the unemployment insurance area, the Government of Canada is backing off in the support it provides to those small Canadian publishers.

What about user fees to national parks? The fees for Canadians visiting a national park will go up. These parks are a common heritage of all Canadians, but slowly and surely as a result of privatization programs, user fees on the various aspects of the federal government's park programs are now making the parks not for all Canadians, but for those Canadians with money.

Let us talk about new Canadians and the doubling of the immigration application fee. While we have the entrepreneurial program that says if you have $200,000, you can just buy your passport, for those people who do

not have lots of money, we are going to make it even more difficult by doubling the amount of fees they have to pay simply to apply to visit and to enter Canada as a landed immigrant.

I could go on and on. If the minister thinks that this snow job is going to fool Canadians, this little smoke and mirrors show, this little cosmetic act that he has performed today in the House of Commons, which is an insult to the intelligence of every Canadian, is going to somehow say to the people of Canada that the government is cutting back on expenditures while at the same time smashing the people of Canada between the eyes with the goods and services tax, that this is going to make the selling of your goods and services tax any easier, you have something coming.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

STRIKING—TWENTY-SEVENTH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the twenty-seventh report of the Striking Committee.

If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence in the report later this day.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings*]

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SMALL BUSINESSES LOANS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Tom Hockin (for Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology and Acting Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-56, an act to amend the Small Businesses Loans Act.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Shall the hon. minister have leave to introduce the bill?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

STRIKING—CONCURRENCE IN TWENTY-SEVENTH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, I should like at this time to move concurrence in the twenty-seventh report of the Striking Committee presented earlier this day.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

PETITIONS

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand in the House, pursuant to Standing Order 36, and present petitions from many residents of my constituency of Nepean who are opposed to the establishment of a goods and services tax.

These petitioners come from all walks of life and yet their voice is as one. "Do not implement the GST", they are saying, and they call upon Parliament to reject the proposed tax implementation.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour and the pleasure to introduce a motion on behalf of Canadian citizens who are requesting the Minister of Employment and Immigration Canada and Health and Welfare Canada to revise the medical standards for admission to Canada with a view to compliance with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the enhancement of the human rights and dignity of persons with disability.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure, pursuant to Standing Order 36, to rise and present to you 96 petitions. In order to facilitate the perusal of petitions, they have been condensed into nine major petitions, but there are 96 petitions here with a total of 3,900 names of residents of the Okanagan—Shuswap area in British Columbia.

• (1250)

These residents are asking the government to reject the proposed goods and services tax, to consult with business, labour and consumer groups, in order to reach

a broad consensus on reform of the tax system before implementing any further changes, and to ensure that there is a process of fair tax reform that will provide a healthy climate for future economic growth in Canada.

Mr. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to stand in this House today and present a petition on behalf of my constituents and those, in particular, in the Montague area. My constituents feel it is grossly unfair that the goods and services tax be levelled on skating expenses, including instructional fees, rentals and purchases. Instructional skating is an educational service, therefore it should not be taxed.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 129, 134, 154, 155, 170 and 171.

[*Text*]

PAROLE HEARINGS ADJOURNED BY THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICE OF CANADA

Question No. 129—**Mr. Brewin:**

1. From 1985 to the present, have there been parole hearings which adjourned from month to month due to lack of case preparation by the Correctional Service of Canada and, if so, by region (a) has their number been growing (b) what proportion have been (i) full parole (ii) day parole hearings (c) has the same prisoner's case been adjourned more than once and, if so, what number of times (d) what number of prisoners are required to double-bunk with other inmates as a result of delays in Parole Board hearings?

2. What is the cost per day to keep a prisoner in (a) a medium-security (b) a minimum-security institution?

3. What is the estimated cost of hiring sufficient staff to perform the case studies and evaluations required by the Parole Board without undue delay to the parole process?

4. What number of new employees have been hired by the Correctional Service to prepare the assessments needed by the Parole Board?

Hon. Pierre Blais (Solicitor General of Canada and Minister of State (Agriculture)): 1. Yes, there have been parole hearings which were adjourned or waived, however, the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) does not have data on waivers available prior to the 1988-89 fiscal year.

(a) Yes, when comparing the period of April 1 to September 30 for the fiscal years 1988-89 and 1989-90, the total waivers issued, by region, were as follows:

Region	1988-89	1989-90
Atlantic	3	15
Quebec	72	58
Ontario	109	168
Prairie	8*	16
Pacific	11*	15
	203	272

* Full reports were not received from the Prairie and Pacific regions during the first quarter of the 1988-89 fiscal year.

(b) (i), (ii) Statistics are not kept in a manner to differentiate day parole and full parole hearings. However, a system to provide this type of information is currently being developed.

(c) It is not possible to isolate individual cases that have been adjourned more that once. In order to provide such information, a case-by-case review of every inmate's file would have to be conducted. CSC does not have the resources available to conduct such a review.

(d) Statistics on inmates double-bunked solely as a result of delays in the National Parole Board (NPB) hearings are not available.

Double-bunking is reserved primarily for newcomers. Inmates are moved into single cells as soon as they become available. Normally, inmates awaiting parole decisions would have progressed to single accommodations. 2. (a) The annual cost of maintaining an inmate in a medium security institution during the fiscal year 1987-88 was $40,783, thus resulting in a daily average cost of $111.73.

(b) The annual cost of maintaining an inmate in a minimum security institution during the fiscal year 1987-88 was $28,797, thus resulting in a daily average cost of $78.90.

3. It is not possible to estimate this exact cost as the case preparation work for NPB is only one segment of the total workload of case managers. Other factors include supervision, preparing regular ongoing reports,

intervening in crisis situations, suspensions and follow-up, liaison with different community members or organizations important to the parolee (i.e. family, employer, social agencies, etc.)

4. CSC recognized that additional resources were required and reallocated 28 person-years prior to 1989-90. For the next three fiscal years, 1989-92 inclusive, the following reallocations are planned:

1989-90—75.5 person-years

1990-91—47.0 person-years

1991-92—16.0 person-years

EMPLOYMENT IN METRO TORONTO

Question No. 134—**Mr. Heap:**

In planning for labour market needs, has the government made predictions as to employment in Metro Toronto and, if so, according to these predictions (a) what will the absolute number of manufacturing jobs be there in (i) 1994 (ii) 1999 (b) what percentage will that be of the current level (c) which ten manufacturing sub-sectors will experience the greatest net job loss over the above time-frames (d) what size will that loss be (e) what is the predicted employment level in the clothing industry for the above time-frames (f) what job categories, overall, are expected to have the greatest absolute increase through 1994 and 1999 (g) in each case, what is their average expected pay level?

Hon. Barbara Jean McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Employment and Immigration Canada has not produced any *official* projections relating to the industrial and occupational configuration of the Metro Toronto labour market to the year 1999. The technical difficulties, the most serious being the lack of reliable data, involved in such an exercise are many. Until these constraints can be overcome, small area projections, rather than providing a useful planning tool, may in fact give an unrealistic picture of the future Metro labour market.

"GREENPRINT FOR CANADA: A FEDERAL AGENDA FOR THE ENVIRONMENT"

Question No. 154—**Mr. Caccia:**

Is it the intention of the government to make an official response to "Greenprint for Canada: A Federal Agenda for the Environment", given to the Prime Minister on June 22, 1989 by the Greenprint for Canada Committee and, if so (a) by whom will the response be prepared (b) by what time and, if not, for what reasons?

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Minister of the Environment): a) Environment Canada Officials are presently preparing a response to the *Greenprint for Canada: A Federal Agenda for the Environment*. This document has been Central in establishing a proposed framework for the Environmental Agenda for Canada.

b) Environment Canada hopes that representatives of the Greenprint Coalition group will be able to meet with departmental representatives in a Pre-Agenda discussion before the end of this year.

MR. FRANCISCO NOTA MOISES

Question No. 155—**Ms. Hunter:**

Is it the intention of the government to conduct an investigation into the refugee status of Mr. Francisco Nota Moises and into the possibility of violations of the *Immigration Act* by him and, if so (a) on what date will the investigation commence (b) what are its terms and mandate (c) is the Department of External Affairs or the Canadian Security Intelligence Service to be involved in the investigation and, if so, in what way?

Hon. Barbara Jean McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): A careful and thorough investigation has been conducted regarding Mr. Moises who was granted refugee status. This investigation was conducted in conjunction with the Department of External Affairs and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS). No evidence was established to conclude that Mr. Moises' admission to Canada was irregular or that he could now be removed from Canada under the *Immigration Act*.

INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGED INFRACTIONS OF THE PARLIAMENT OF CANADA ACT

Question No. 170—**Mr. Murphy:**

Is it the policy of the government to investigate alleged infractions of the Parliament of Canada Act by (a) Members of the House of Commons (b) Senators?

Hon. Pierre Blais (Solicitor General of Canada and Minister of State (Agriculture)): The policy of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) is to investigate offences against any Federal Statute where a complaint has been received and there is sufficient grounds to believe that an offence may have been committed.

Should the RCMP receive a complaint relative to an infraction of the Parliament of Canada Act and the complainant provides sufficient evidence that an offence may have been committed then the matter would be duly investigated.

THE VOLUME OF WATER PER MONTH REMOVED FROM LAKE MICHIGAN THROUGH THE CHICAGO SHIP CANAL

Question No. 171—**Mr. Milliken:**

For (a) 1985 (b) 1986 (c) 1987 (d) 1988 (e) 1989 to date, what is the volume of water per month removed from Lake Michigan through the Chicago Ship Canal?

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Minister of the Environment): The Chicago Diversion, initiated in 1848, removes water from Lake Michigan at Chicago for the purposes of domestic, sanitary, navigation and hydro-electric power in the Illinois Waterway. The waterway connects with the upper Mississippi River. Diversion prior to 1900 averaged about 500 cubic feet per second (cfs). Upon completion of the Sanitary and Ship Canal, diversions progressively increased to a maximum of about 10,000 cfs in 1928. Due to challenges from other states (mainly Wisconsin), there have been several U.S. Supreme Court decrees issued (1922, 1925, 1930 and 1967). The 1967 decree limited the diversion to an average of 3,200 cfs effective March 1, 1970. A 1980 court amendment allows the use of a 40-year period in calculating long-term average diversion for compliance.

Lake Michigan is located entirely within the United States territory and is not considered as "boundary water" according to the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909. However, it is connected to, and flows into Lake Huron and downstream, thus affecting the rest of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River System. The present diversion rate of 3,200 cfs causes reductions in the flows in the St. Clair-Detroit River System by 1.7 percent, in the Niagara River by 1.5 percent, and in the St. Lawrence River by 1,3 percent.

The 3,200 cfs is equivalent to 7.8 billion litres per day, or 1.7 billion imperial gallons per day.

[*English*]

Mr. Cooper: I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The questions as enumerated by the hon. parliamentary secretary have been answered. Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Government Orders

MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S. O. 52

ATLANTIC FISHERY

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, I wish to resubmit the application I made yesterday. I believe you have my notice.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the hon. member. As hon. members will know, the hon. member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso has been rising repeatedly with requests for an emergency debate on fisheries matters in the maritimes and Newfoundland and Labrador. I am acceding to the request and I am setting the debate for eight o'clock on Monday night.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

BROADCASTING ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed from Friday, November 3, consideration of the motion of Mr. Masse that Bill C-40, an act respecting broadcasting and to amend certain acts in relation thereto and in relation to radiocommunication be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I wish to inform the House that because of the ministerial statement, Government Orders will be extended 39 minutes. Therefore, private members' hour will begin at 2.39 p.m.

When the House rose at three o'clock p.m., Friday, November 3, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Communications had completed his speech. The question and comment period following the hon. member's speech is now available. Otherwise, the Chair is prepared to recognize other members. The hon. member for Winnipeg.

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg St. James): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to take part in this debate. I consider it an important one. I must say at the beginning that I find the process extremely slow. There was a bill in the last Parliament and this bill is the successor to the one that died with the last Parliament. It did reach the House on November 3 and here it is getting close to Christmas and we are now just trying our best to finish second reading. I find the process slow and frustrating. I sometimes think

that the games played by government with respect to introduction of bills and the processing of bills are rather puerile and not becoming of grown up men and women. It is very little consolation to me that it is played by all parties when they are in power.

It goes without saying that broadcasting touches all of our lives and it is extremely important to this country. In my opinion, broadcasting is to the 1990s what the railways were to Canada in the 1880s. Broadcasting ties us together, it binds us, and it makes us one family. At least, that should be the result.

It is important to our parliamentary democracy, and if the system works well, broadcasting, in my opinion, gets a lot of credit for that and plays a huge role. Broadcasting is as important an institution as this institution right here in which I am speaking. That is the kind of rating I give it. It is little wonder that we refer to it along with newspapers as the fourth estate.

It is also important to our unity, and it is important to Canadian identity. If our unity is tenuous and a little weak, broadcasting has to take some small blame for that. If our identity is fuzzy, again broadcasting is partly to blame for that. In my opinion, broadcasting has not always done a very good job *vis–a–vis* national unity. That issue should be addressed in this particular bill that we are talking about today.

Before I deal with some of the specific provisions of the bill, I would like to discuss where we stand today in broadcasting. The statistics are staggering. Our children spend more time watching television than they do in school. Watching television is the favourite pastime of a vast majority of Canadians.

At the same time, 95 per cent of Canadians are radio listeners. More than half of Canadians say that broadcasting is their principal source of news and information. For these reasons, the legislation before us today is of critical importance as it will affect virtually every Canadian every day of the year. The ongoing problem of low levels of Canadian content in broadcasting continue. In fact, 71 per cent of all programs viewed by English–speaking Canadians on television are American. That is disturbing. Less than 7 per cent of television drama available to us in English is Canadian, yet we spend nearly half of our viewing time watching it.

In the face of technological change, the threat to Canadian content will only increase through more and more foreign programming entering our country via satellite dishes and other technologies. In my opinion, we must develop quality Canadian programming which can compete with the continuing onslaught of foreign programming in the years to come.

I want to turn my attention to some of the specific shortcomings of the bill as I see them. There is the matter of national unity which I referred to earlier. The current CBC mandate specifically refers to the development of national unity. This new act does not do that. I think that this is a serious omission and I find it disturbing. The new act refers only to the maintenance and the enhancement of national identity and cultural sovereignty. The word "unity" is gone, Mr. Speaker, you will not find it. I do not think that that is good enough.

Back in the days when the current act was drafted, which was 20 years ago, there was a perceived threat to national unity. You will remember those days, Mr. Speaker, as well as I do. There was restlessness in the country. Quebec had awakened. There was the B & B commission. There were many passions stirring in the country. National unity was on people's minds. The new Broadcasting Act of the day recognized and responded to that situation.

National unity is still on the minds of Canadians. It is still very much an issue. It is as worrisome as ever. For example, there are the stresses and strains that emanate from the Meech Lake Accord, and with the Prime Minister refusing to lead, constitutional difficulties grow.

I believe that in the absence of a strong federalist voice, strident provincial voices get louder. They do not get quieter, they get louder. Witness what has happened in the province of Alberta with a loud party called the reform party. Witness the proclamations of the leader of the Parti Quebecois in that province. Instead of all of us fighting for one strong Canada what we find very often is a free–for–all emerging, one province against another.

Consequently, in the midst of the inevitable discord we get last month a cartoonist in Quebec equating Manitobans with the Ku Klux Klan. I am sorry to say that the same has happened vice versa. There have been intoler-

ant expressions in so-called English Canada *vis-a-vis* Quebec. That does not make me very happy as a Canadian.

• (1300)

I believe national unity is very important and deletion of a specific reference to the development of national unity from the CBC's mandate is therefore of very great concern to me. The major function of the CBC in times when the country is divided over issues such as Meech Lake and free trade must be to foster national unity. So I suggest that we address ourselves to this particular weakness in the bill and I would hope we will spend a considerable time on that aspect when the bill reaches committee.

I want to refer to the CBC in somewhat greater detail. I was delighted, as I think most Canadians were, when I heard that Patrick Watson was appointed chairman of the CBC, a new position for the CBC. I think Mr. Watson is a great broadcaster. He belongs to the CBC family. I was once a member of the CBC family. He is a child of the corporation. He understands it, and I think that augurs well for public broadcasting in this country. I can tell you that when his appointment was announced it worked as a morale booster for the staff of the CBC. I think he is going to do a good job.

It bewilders me, however, that he was appointed as a part-time chairman. Here we have this man whom I could describe as a national treasure with respect to broadcasting, and we appoint him as a part-time chairman. Why? If we have this resource, why do we squander it? If he is worth half-time, I would suggest he is worth full-time. I think it was a serious mistake to appoint Mr. Watson only on a part-time basis.

There is another aspect of this which concerns me and it has to do with an appointment for only five years. As you know, up until now the president of the corporation has been appointed to seven-year terms, not five. Now, under this act, the government is proposing five years. I find that somewhat disturbing because I think it is better to have what I might call an overlap from one administration to another or from one Parliament to another. To me there is too much convenience in having a five-year term. It sort of fits with the life of a Parliament. I think that we may have changes from one government to another or from one Parliament to another and I believe that an overlap would work much better. That is something else that we are going to have to look at very closely when this bill gets to committee.

The state of the CBC is not good and has not been for a number of years. It is in a real financial bind. It has the enormous job of fostering national unity and promoting our identity. Yet, it does not have the resources to do that.

Telling the story of Canada is not easy for anyone. It is not easy for the CBC because in that mandate the CBC has to reflect Canadians to Canadians. The CBC cannot just be satisfied, in my opinion, with doing what it is doing now, it has to do more. It has to present more drama, for example. There are limitations on journalism. I think the CBC does a pretty good job of journalism, but there are limitations to it. I think if you truly want to get the Canadian story across, truly reflect one region to another, you have to spend more money and devote more resources to drama. That is how you get to the guts of Canadians. You get to their insides through drama. Journalism can do only so much.

I know that the CBC is working on a plan to wrestle with some of these problems but there is still concern that when it is all said and done, when the re-organization is completed, the CBC will still face a serious financial shortfall. As I understand it, the CBC is working on a plan to change the face of the CBC in two or three years, particularly for those who are working there. Hopefully there will not be any serious program cuts in the next two or three years.

As I understand it, when all is said and done, even after all the organization is completed, the CBC will still be facing a financial shortfall of perhaps as much as $100 million. Certainly as much as $50 million. That is disturbing. The government is going to have to come to grips with that. There is a point when the government is going to have to say: "Is the CBC worth what it is? Has the CBC done its job in trimming fat and that kind of thing?" And if so it is going to have to come up with the cash. I feel the day is going to come when the government is going to have to support the CBC. If I am right in believing that the corporation is as important as an institution as is this place and as is the Supreme Court, then we have got to fund it and we have got to fund it properly.

There are other parts of this bill which concern me. There is in the bill this proposition for what is called "alternative programming" for the CBC. That has got to be the joke of the year. In my opinion, this so-called "alternative service" for the CBC is a sham. I do not see any evidence that there would be money for it. What is it supposed to do? When I read that section I got the impression that somebody somewhere, some bureaucrat, thought, gee whiz, wouldn't it sound good, throw "alternative service" for the CBC into the bill. That will sound great. That will turn people on. Well, it does not seem to make much sense to me.

I want to say a few words about what is called cabinet power of direction and review. I think the bill will jeopardize the CRTC's ability to carry out its role. The bill will grant both the power to review and to provide policy direction over the CRTC. The bill would give cabinet enough power to override the commission.

In my opinion, the bill would make cabinet both the legislator and the judge. That is pretty serious business. The government does not have to take my word for it. If it wants to consider someone who occupies a very senior position perhaps it should listen to its own appointee, Mr. Keith Spicer, who was appointed chairman of the CRTC not too long ago. I will tell you what he said about combining the power of review with the power of direction. I think it is worthwhile repeating.

Just as an aside, when I was in television I used to have a director who would give me time signals. You do not do that but I wish you would, Mr. Speaker. I have six minutes? All right. I think you would make a great television director. You should consider it as a possible future after you have finished this place. That is not to suggest you are not doing a good job.

Mr. Spicer offered these words at a committee meeting about power of review and power of direction. He said:

> I do not like the tandem of the power of direction in the government's hand and the power of review. I think it is very unhealthy. It is the law, and bad law even administered by good people is still bad law.
>
> I have had no worries about the present people whom I have been dealing with in the government, but this is a law that is going to stick around for a while and I think they ought to take a little look at it again. If I could suggest a compromise, is that in a given case that they have one or the other, but not both; they have the power of general direction policy or review, but not both in the end. Because, otherwise they are going to make the CRTC into a way-station. We are going to be the monkey and they will be the organ grinder and people will say: "Why bother, let us go to the organ grinder."

That is what Mr. Spicer says. Those are pretty powerful words. We are going to have to look at that extremely carefully when we come to committee.

• (1310)

There is the limitation of the role of cable. I think that we must limit the role of cable television systems in providing programming that is complementary to that offered by licensed Canadian stations and networks. Cable should have a special limited role and should contribute to the system. There is a real possibility of unfair competition and conflicts of interest in the present legislation.

There is also the matter of regulation. The new legislation, in my opinion again, must provide some means to regulate cable television. The essential role of cable systems is to distribute Canadian radio and TV signals in both official languages. An important question in cable TV regulation is priority. In many parts of Canada tens of channels are now available. With more and more channels available, only a handful can now be made available on ageing equipment.

By the way, some of that equipment is 20 years old or older. Much of the television equipment presently in use is of that age. The older the equipment gets, the more it falls apart. There are a lot of people in this country who can get only from channel 2 to 13.

There is also the matter of programming in representative native languages. The new bill does not specifically refer to aboriginal languages but only to aboriginal culture. The danger to native languages is very real and it is very apparent, particularly in southern Canada. In my city, the city of Winnipeg, for example, where there is a significant native population, services are not available in native languages.

I think the act should specifically refer to the need to protect representative native languages lest they be lost forever. We must stop the erosion of native culture foremost through the protection of native languages. Language, after all, as we all know, is an important

component of a cultural identity. Its importance must be reflected by specific reference to it in the legislation. The lack of reference to the protection of native languages in this legislation is of grave concern to our native peoples and the Liberal Party as they fight the erosion of their cultural heritage.

On another aspect of the bill, there is no provision to protect exclusive rights which Canadian broadcasters acquire to show programs in Canada. The difficulties arising from non-simultaneous substitution must be redressed otherwise exclusive rights mean absolutely nothing. When you combine increased pressure from U.S. broadcasters for access to Canada and the refusal by the government to limit access through legislation, it is sure to lead to rapid erosion in our home programs.

Let me just finish by talking about the need for licensing foreign networks. There is presently no requirement for foreign networks which do business in our country, and that I think is quite incredible. Foreign networks receive increased revenues and viewing audiences by being carried in Canada and at the same time they are not required to be licensed. On the surface certainly that is unfair. I think it goes beyond the surface though. The same rules which apply to Canadian broadcasters should be applied to foreign broadcasters earning revenue directly in this country.

They also contribute to the country by providing Canadian programming. I am talking about our programs. American networks receive expanded audiences and advertising revenues by being carried in Canada and as a result they should have to contribute through a licensing fee.

In closing, I want to say that the bill is important because of the industry that we are talking about. I was fortunate enough to work in the industry for more than 30 years. You get a sense, when you work inside the industry, of just how important it is to the country. That is not to suggest that people who are outside of it do not appreciate its importance, but it is a paramount industry. We as politicians, as parliamentarians, have to come to grips with this. Whatever we can do to strengthen this bill, which will ultimately lead not only to better programming and a better industry but to foster national unity to promote the Canadian identity, is well and good. In fact, I think that should be our primary motivation. So I look forward to this bill going to committee where perhaps we can do a lot more work to strengthen it.

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, I hope to be able to keep my remarks mercifully brief this afternoon. I will be emphasizing some of the points made by my colleague, the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam and our caucus's communications and culture critic, in his excellent address to second reading of Bill C-40 on November 3. I do not expect to be repeating much.

I would like instead during the course of my remarks today to propose perhaps something of a context in which this bill can be considered by this House. To do that I would like to call reference to what I consider to be one of the most important books published in Canada, certainly since the 1960s, put out a couple of years ago. It is by a west coast author named Brian Fawcett and the book is called *Cambodia: A Book For People Who Find Television Too Slow*. It is a series of loosely-related stories, observations, essays, *pensées*, all of which take as their central consideration how it is that a society, how it is that a culture maintains its history, its collective memory, and how vital that is to the health and survival of that culture and society.

Culture can be defined in many, many ways. It can be defined as narrowly as the fashion in which we choose to sing and dance for our own amusement, to as broadly as including those aspects of education, indeed of our working lives, that allow us to express and rework over time that which we are individually. So coming up with a definition of culture is not an easy thing. But I think we can all agree that one of the crucial aspects of culture in a societal sense is that culture is the vehicle through which a separate and distinct people maintain and distil their history and, hence, maintain their memory of who they are and what they are for. It is how we continually recreate ourselves.

It is in this context, with reference to this definition of culture that I would like, if I may, to consider this bill and some of the other aspects of culture in Canada that help to context, if I may use a noun as a verb, this bill.

I think it is must be agreed that there are two conditions that must be present for culture, as I have defined it, to work for a society. The first is that that society, obviously, must have a history and a memory of that history. It must have a culture. The second is that it

must have a means or several means of distribution, of conveyance, of duplication, of inculcation of that culture.

It is in this regard that we are in grave peril in Canada. We are on the verge of losing, perhaps finally, our history, our cultural memory of who, what, and for what we are. This is because we have failed to retain national control over our principal means of cultural transmission which in our modern age have got to be seen, first, as television but as well must include things like books, films, newspapers and other such means of mass communications, because it is through mass communication that we transmit to ourselves our images, our ideas, our understanding of who and what we are. It is through such mass communication means that we retain our memory.

• (1320)

Examples abound of recent and not so recent alienation of these means of communication in Canada. As we know, prior to the last election under the leadership of Flora MacDonald the department which she headed was preparing to bring forward a bill that would have the effect of loosening the 97 per cent stranglehold the Americans now have on our film distribution industry.

It is pointless to speculate here but, for whatever reason, that legislation was abandoned. It seems none other will be brought forward to take its place and in consequence that American stranglehold of one of those most vital aspects of our culture will remain and perhaps deepen, although I cannot imagine they would be too anxious to scramble up the last 3 per cent when they have the 97 per cent.

This has implications, coupled with the ongoing overwhelming American content of our television broadcast media, for all sorts of Canadian means of cultural communication, even those areas in which there is unquestionably at the moment a vital, alive, thriving Canadian cultural community.

I think especially, for example, of live theatre and, to a lesser degree, Canadian film production—not distribution, but production. In terms of live theatre I think of the incredible array of new plays created and produced in Edmonton, my own town, every year and, indeed, exported across this country. Theatres from St. John's to Victoria are hosting plays written and originally produced in Edmonton.

I think as well of film works such as the works of Ann Wheeler from Alberta, her most recent hit, *Bye Bye Blues*, being a stirring example. There is no question that the cultural product is there. Ken Brown's *Life After Hockey*, from Edmonton, is an example. The attempt to maintain and, indeed, enlarge upon the Canadian memory is there and is thriving.

What is lacking is the means of conveying that memory and the expression of that memory to the broad majority of Canadian people. Those avenues are cut off in film distribution and increasingly those avenues are cut off in television broadcasting. That is where the great problem lies. I do not think anyone will argue this point.

The private sector has failed dismally to advance the cause of the dissemination, the growth, the maintenance of Canadian culture and, again, I do not mean song and dance. I mean Canadian culture in the sense of what we understand it is to be Canadian, how we dream of ourselves when we dream. Because the private sector has failed miserably, we must absolutely maintain a strong, effective, wildly dispersed public sector role in culture conveyance in this country.

The Caplan–Sauvageau committee put it very succinctly and very well in their report when they noted: "The reasons for this problem"—the problem being the lack of access to Canadian cultural markets by Canadian cultural producers—"are clear. The public sector, which must be the chief purveyor of quality Canadian programming, is inadequately scaled and funded. The private sector which should complement the public sector is not doing its job".

That is very clear, very straightforward, very correct. Instead of heeding this fundamental Canadian wisdom the government is in this bill creating a so-called alternative television network, a whole new alternate network without, when the bill was introduced, specifying what that network might be, without assigning any resources to it, without, indeed, describing it in any fashion by which we might come to judge it.

Perhaps this is intimately connected to the events which occurred yesterday. Mr. Izzy Asper finally, after years of struggle with his erstwhile partners, achieved effective control over the Global Television empire in Canada, an empire which has a great deal of growth

potential yet, as I am sure every member of this House will agree, an empire which may come to be understood as the alternate network originally envisaged in this bill.

The point is that we risk the gradual but unending constriction of our societal memory, and in so doing we risk the future of the country itself. It matters not if there remains on the northern half of the North American continent a country called Canada. It matters not that that country maintains a flag with two red bars and a red maple leaf in its centre. It matters not that at the beginning of every hockey, football or other sporting game people who call themselves Canadians get up and sing a national anthem called *O Canada* if those are simply hollow symbols of what once was. If we lose our collective memory as Canadians, which is the price we will pay, if we lose the means of recreating that memory constantly and conveying it among ourselves, then Canada may exist as a name, but it will most definitely not exist as a country.

That is the context in which I want this bill viewed and that is the reason that I think this House, in all fairness, must reject the bill as it is currently constituted. The principle of the bill that we are debating at second reading is a principle for the governance of the growth of private sector, principally American broadcasting in Canada. It is a principle with which I cannot agree.

We should have before us instead a bill, the principle of which should be fostering the rapid growth of broadcasting that will convey Canada to us. That is not the principle of this bill. Neither I nor my caucus can support it.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on behalf of the approximately 3,000 people in my riding who are employed in cultural industries.

I must tell you that the first time I read this bill I did not really notice a big difference from the previous bill. At first blush it seemed to be consistent with the national objectives. Upon review and some support from my colleagues, it was brought to my attention that the government has removed the words, "to contribute to the development of national unity and provide for a continuing expression of Canadian identity". The words that were put in place were, "to contribute to shared national consciousness and identity". I looked at these words and my first reaction was why would the minister want to remove those words at a time when our national will is being assaulted by tendencies in every region of our country to balkanize? We have taken our most powerful instrument of galvanization, our broadcast systems, and we seem to have removed the spirit of what their main purpose is supposed to be.

• (1330)

I tried to think of an example that people on the street might understand when we talk about national unity and the frustrations that people experience in every region of our country. I go back to an experience that I had last January when I was studying French in Quebec City with my colleague from Brampton. One evening we were at a concert and witnessed the Quebec francophone recording artist, Richard Séguin. I left that concert and could not get over how much talent this man had. I returned to Toronto and told my wife about this artist. I went to Yonge Street and went into seven record stores before I finally found a Richard Séguin tape. It was on the third floor, in the back corner, one cassette.

About two weeks later I went to Montreal. I visited with Richard Séguin and I told him this story. He said: "Dennis, this is the frustration, this is the problem we face as francophone recording artists in this country and this is part of the reason why we sometimes say 'what's in Canada for us'?" Richard Séguin can sell 100,000 albums in Quebec but beyond Quebec he is not heard. He is not heard on the CHUMs or the Qs. He is not heard. He is heard on one instrument of communication that is national on a consistent basis, *MuchMusic*.

The frustration that people feel is that their music and artistic endeavours are not given a national presentation. I have tested this over the last few months. If you go into a university or a grade school and say: "How many people have heard of Rita MacNeil or Gordon Lightfoot or Blue Rodeo?" most will put up their hands in recognition. When you mention francophone recording artists, very few do outside Quebec.

I think this bill is here to promote all recording artists, not just in each region but from coast to coast in every region. That is not happening today. I realize that this bill is going to committee. I think there has to be a way that we can be a little bit more progressive and that we

can dare to challenge our broadcasters, even the private broadcasters, with promoting Canadian recording artists on all radio stations in Canada, making sure that our national specials promote Canadian content in not just greater percentage but also of quality which will make all Canadians proud.

We have had several studies on the importance of our broadcast systems. There was the mass media study by Senator Davey and his committee many years ago that talked about the importance of using our broadcast and communications instruments for cultural survival. One of the better Canadian programs today is *The Journal*. The producer of this show is a fellow by the name of Mark Starowitz whom I have never met but who has been quoted repeatedly. He said: "It has become apparent to Canadian legislators that one of the definitions of a sovereign, political entity in the 20th century was the ability to control its national airwaves. Further, it has become equally obvious that a broadcasting system, based entirely on private profit, could not deliver the desired end".

He went on to say: "The reason the issue of television and national identity is felt so viscerally in many countries these days is because television is not simply an entertainment issue, it is a political issue. Television has become essential to the maintenance and functioning of any industrial body politic today".

We have to be sensitive to these men and women who are experts and who are working in the broadcast field.

I consider this bill to be more important than the free trade bill because this is the bill that makes sure that we become and stay galvanized as Canadians. I am concerned that if we do not keep that thrust on promoting the national spirit, then we are going to balkanize and we are going to become regionalized in our communications thrusts.

The other thing that I am concerned about in this bill is the fact that there seems to be some question as to whether or not the CRTC has the ability to regulate all of our broadcast systems. In fact I have had a little bit of legal advice on this. Section (2)(3) states that the act should be applied in a manner that is consistent with journalistic independence enjoyed by broadcasters. This flies in the face of the ability of the CRTC to regulate. I think we are going to have to clarify that when we go to committee.

We have a very special opportunity over the next period to make sure that our broadcast systems are here to promote national unity in every respect. We should make sure that we do not as legislators give any position out there that we want to decentralize it and we want the regions to have sort of a priority position.

Mr. McDermid: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to prolong this debate because I know there has been an agreement reached. It was mentioned in the hon. member's speech and I want to add just a little bit to what he said about Mr. Séguin, the Quebec artist.

He has just finished a cross Canada tour which was very successful. It was sold out. I think Mr. Séguin—I don't know if the hon. member has spoken to him since the tour—made the statement that he was very surprised. This was his first cross Canada tour. He was very surprised that he had sellouts across this country. He could not believe the wonderful reception he received.

Since that tour I am now hearing his music on more and more English stations. He has some very wonderful French-Canadian music that is very catchy and is now being played. I think it is because of the tour.

I would not want the hon. member's comments today to make it sound like artists are being isolated and not being listened to in other parts of the country. Primarily they are not being listened to in other parts of the country because we are not getting them out into those other parts of the country. If we promoted the artists in Quebec and took them into the rest of Canada and displayed that talent across Canada, I think that you would not find one tape in one store in Toronto but you would find a huge number.

• (1340)

Mr. Mills: Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond to that. I would like to inform my hon. friend that we met with Standard Broadcasting three months ago. We told them of the frustrations of the Séguins of the world. It was Standard Broadcasting which took the initiative and organized at the Canadian Association of Broadcasters a joint concert with Sash Jordan and Richard Séguin. That concert was syndicated last Sunday night to over 300

English radio stations. This was a private initiative. I think they are on track. We applaud them.

Richard Séguin has said to me personally that the reason you sell albums, the reason people come to your concerts is because you are heard on the radio first or you are seen on television first.

Mr. McDermid: It is the chicken and the egg.

Mr. Mills: No, it is not the chicken and the egg. This is the artist's view. It is a standard understanding. When you see something on television or hear something on the radio that is what motivates you to go to these concerts and that is what sells albums.

I think I am well aware of the concerts he is selling out. He is a prime example of why we must continue to add support to our artists for them to travel in all parts of the country. I think that feeling of interaction, that feeling of confidence that there is something in every part of the country for all Canadian artists is the thing that is going to galvanize us. It is the thing that is going to sort of contribute to national unity much more than sometimes the legal documents we prepare in this Chamber.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity today to speak to a bill that I consider to be an important piece of legislation. There are three points I would like to make. First, what I like about the bill, second, what I don't really like because it is not up to standard, and third, the fact that perhaps we should look at potential improvements in this area.

As we all know, this bill is much like the previous one. There is not much difference between the two. However, a number of changes would have been desirable to deal with certain fundamental problems.

I must admit, and I am also very pleased, that a number of provisions have been included that are very positive with respect to women, children, cultural minorities, aboriginal peoples and disabled persons. I am glad to see this.

I also admit that the bill recognizes the French language environment. To me, this is a step forward, not just for Quebec but also for the areas outside Quebec.

[*English*]

I am pleased as well that the orginators of program signals will be protected and that educational broadcasting becomes an integral part of the law. I shall have more to say about that shortly.

I am pleased that local stations have priority when carried by cable and that broadcasting is defined to give CRTC more flexibility in dealing with new types of programming services.

Some of the concerns that I have are as follows. The fact that national unity, *l'unité nationale*, has been left out causes me some concern because I, like a number of my colleagues from all sides of the House, believe that the country has never been in greater need of some unifying force or forces. It appears to me and to many other Canadians as well that this is indeed a vehicle that could reach that particular objective. I shall want to expand on that briefly.

I am concerned as well about the part-time position for the CBC chairman. The questions of course that are being asked are why, because of the prominence of the individual, was it primarily motivated as a PR gesture? Was the half-time position to limit the person's influence and role?

You will note as well, Mr. Speaker, that the CBC president is to be appointed by cabinet. Some people have suggested, and I certainly appreciate what they are saying and can see the possibility, that it could involve more political control.

We have talked about a new alternative programming service, and my colleagues have referred to this point. It seems to me when one looks at the way the CBC has been severed in a number of ways, reduced by cut-backs and what have you, that this will be a challenge indeed, and one which we will follow with a great deal of interest.

I am concerned as well because I believe that the Canadian Broadcasting System should be owned and controlled by Canadians. I would have liked the bill to require that at least 80 per cent be Canadian owned and that no single foreign shareholder own more than 10 per cent.

I note that while there is some acknowledgement of *les peuples aborigènes*, or aboriginal people, there is no

guarantee for aboriginal people to receive service in representative native languages. I would have liked that to have occurred.

Foreign networks, I believe, should be licensed. There is no provision, to my knowledge, for this to happen, for them to have to obtain a licence.

I want to ensure that people understand the following point. While I am wholly supportive of cable operators I think that they should be encouraged, and I say this in a very positive way, to offer programming that is different and complementary to that which exists.

The cabinet power with respect to direction and review is one that I think we need to be sensitive to. It will be recalled that cabinet can review CRTC decisions and provide policy direction to the CRTC. Of course the question that comes to mind is: "Is there some potential for abuse? Is there some potential for political interference?" I believe that it might be possible—in fact desirable—for cabinet to review CRTC decisions when they go contrary to cabinet directions, or when that decision has national policy implications.

There is no provision for non-simultaneous substitution. When Canadians buy a foreign service it seems to me that that service should not be shown to Canadians at a different time by that foreign power, if you wish, that is the one that sold us the service. There again there is potential for abuse.

The status is unclear for MATV systems. Condominium and apartment dwellers need to know where they stand with respect to this issue.

The final point that I want to raise before I talk about the educational role is the seven-year versus a five-year term of office for the chairman of the CBC. It may reduce the ability to operate at arm's length from government. I have reviewed some of the positives, and perhaps some of the negatives, and some of the issues that I think we need to be sensitive to.

[*Translation*]

At this point, I would like to discuss one role I believe is very important, and I am referring to the educational role, in the broadest sense of the word. Earlier, it was said, and I have noticed this many times, that our young people spend more time watching television than they do in the classroom. I do not recall exactly how many hours adults spend watching television, but I know it is quite a lot. We tend to point to young people and children as the culprits, not adults. Not so. The vast majority of Canadian men and women spend a lot of time watching television.

It was also said that the majority of our programs come from other countries. Now this raises two very important questions. If we spend as much time watching television as people say, and I think we do, this is a golden opportunity to learn more about what is going on in our society, to be informed, to be aware and to increase our knowledge.

• (1350)

Furthermore, if most of our programs come from outside Canada, the question arises: What are we learning? Is it really what we need to develop our abilities and gain a better understanding of what we are, what our country is all about and its place in the world?

Personally, and a number of colleagues have said this as well, I think one of the most important roles of television, radio and the media generally is to educate, to share information honestly and accurately. I think this educational role could build Canadian unity, something we already have but which, we must admit, is gradually deteriorating.

I wish we would consider the possibility of increasing the role and impact of radio, television and other media with respect to our primary objective in this House which, I think all members will agree, is to present national unity.

[*English*]

Quite apart from making a major contribution to national unity broadcasting can foster racial, religious and linguistic tolerance. To me that is part of the package of national unity. What better medium is there to sensitize us to those differences, to bring out the similarities and yet at the same time permit us to grow in tolerance, understanding and sensitivity?

I think as well that there might be a prime role for language education for our official languages of course, but also for the languages of our own aboriginal peoples, languages which are disappearing. And of course a number of languages spoken by new Canadians.

[*English*]

This medium, that is television, radio and others, can in fact contribute to not only the appreciation of the different languages used in this country, but as well to the learning of those particular languages.

[*Translation*]

Cultural education is another role. We do not always have a very clear understanding of the meaning of the word "culture". To many people, it means the clothes people wear and the holidays they celebrate throughout the year. It goes deeper than that, and there is a real dilemma because we have not tried to go further and understand more about this. To me, culture is not just what I wear, what I eat or the holidays I celebrate. It is the way I look at the world, receive and interpret information, and try to solve problems.

Providing cultural education is so important because it means explaining to people what culture is and what impact it has, and how one culture's perception of a given problem differs from that of another culture.

[*English*]

Regional concerns are another wonderful opportunity for broadcasting. We know that we have a wonderful country. It is not one of the most wonderful—it is the most wonderful. We need only consider the small province of Prince Edward Island with roughly 120,000 people; the giant province of Ontario with over 9.5 million people; and the Northwest Territories with one-third of Canada's land mass and a little over 50,000 inhabitants.

We have in the western Arctic roughly seven native languages that are being used on a daily basis without a whole lot of friction. We have special problems in each of those regions. The smallness of P.E.I. makes it unique and wonderful in a number of ways, but it creates certain unique problems as well. With the largeness of Ontario and its uniqueness, the distinctiveness, if I may say, of Quebec and the Yukon, there are special and unique concerns.

It seems to me that broadcasting could play a greater role than it now plays in helping us understand those regions, in helping us to understand the problems that exist in our cities with our rates of crime, alcoholism and abuses of different kinds. Surely these are regional concerns, but they are real. They include the problems of our rural population, the depopulation of the rural areas, the farming problem, those tremendous difficulties that have to be surmounted on a regular basis.

Distance education for remote areas is another golden opportunity. What about providing learning opportunities for men and women who do not have flexible schedules for a number of reasons, be it because of work, family responsibilities or what have you?

As well, I would like to see the consideration of continuing education, including literacy. All of us know that we must keep learning continually on a regular basis in order to be able to contribute to society as we would want to. Many of us know that there are roughly 5 million Canadians in Canada today who are considered functionally illiterate. It is not a disease. It simply suggests that they do not have the literacy and the numeracy skills that will permit them to develop their full potential. This costs Canada roughly $10 billion a year. What better opportunity is there to try to reach those particular individuals to give them the kind of confidence they need and want in order to participate fully in Canadian life?

[*Translation*]

It seems to me there is another objective that is very useful and extremely important, and that is to explain government to Canadians, and I am talking about federal, provincial and municipal governments.

It is often said that today's young people do not understand politics and are not terribly interested in the subject. This is only partly true. We must also recognize the fact that among young people today, and I believe this very strongly, there is as much, if not more, knowledge about the political process at various levels of government as there is among adults. I believe that we have a democracy which has certain great strengths and certain weaknesses but is not as well known as it should be to each and every citizen across Canada.

We could consider another extremely important objective: the impact of our domestic economy on social programs. Let me give a few examples.

[*English*]

Let us talk about the economy to Canadians via our media. Let us make sure that they understand what it is that we are trying to do. It is necessary in a democracy to have different values, a different vision and different priorities. Let us explain that to Canadians so that they can participate more fully, more meaningfully in understanding economic development, in understanding what it means to have a deficit and in understanding the different kinds of approaches that various parties or governments would take in order to reduce that debt and deficit.

[*Translation*]

Let's talk about the constitutional crisis. Let's do it. It is quite obvious that at this very moment, there is a constitutional crisis in this country. Let's talk about it. There are people who have various points of view, and I think it is very important for us to be aware of these differences so that even if we do not agree, we can appreciate the fact that there is a problem. But there are ways of getting at the problem and untying all these knots.

[*English*]

Cultural misunderstanding is another objective. I mentioned it briefly, but I need to mention it again. I am alarmed and I am hurt in fact when I see people defining culture as dress, food and dance. I simplify perhaps a bit too much. I do not do it to denigrate. I would welcome to be challenged in an open debate on this question if anyone should like to do so.

Culture is more than dress, food and dance, music and feasting. It is how I see the world, you see the world, how I receive information, decode information and approach the solution of problems. One of the problems we have in this country is we have oversimplified what the cultural differences are without identifying the similarities.

Let us talk as well about racism and bigotry because it exists. I am not proud of it. I am not happy. But let us talk about this. Let us make sure that our media makes its contribution.

At the same time we could talk about major health issues, the question of ageing. What are the implications on Canadians, on Canada, on the economy, on social affairs? What about major health problems such as AIDS? This is a wonderful mechanism in order to explain the difficulties and in order to teach people more about this difficult situation.

What about international affairs? If one looks recently at countries such as Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, one notices massive changes. I was delighted to see last night a major program trying to explain what the economic, social and cultural implications will be of those political changes. What better medium than our media to do that. Let us talk about global pollution, let us talk about famine and world hunger. Perhaps the most significant point that I want to make with respect to broadcasting and all that surrounds it, is a marvellous opportunity to learn about Canada and its place in this world. It is a wonderful mechanism for helping parents, schools, colleges and universities to educate the Canadian people. If we want to be leaders and not followers, especially when comparing and talking about the importance of education, training and retraining, the teaching of science and technology, research and development, we have to consider that broadcasting has the same kind of potential.

• (1400)

[*Translation*]

I feel that we need a very close link between our educational institutions and the media. Together, they provide information to Canadians. Together, they can make me more aware of things and provide information on subjects I feel are very important, so that I can make my full contribution to Canada's development.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: On division.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Gerry Weiner (for the President of the Privy Council) moved that Bill C–47, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find there is consent that this particular bill be referred to committee of the whole rather than the legislative committee.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, there was not only consent to that but we have already agreed with the government that we would go through all three stages today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion.

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and the House went into committee thereon, Mr. Paproski in the Chair.

The Deputy Chairman: House in committee of the whole on Bill C–47, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act.

On Clause 1—*Qualifications of candidates*

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Speaker, if I could be permitted to make a few very short comments about this legislation with respect to Bill C–47, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act.

The bill corrects an omission in the Canada Elections Act of the Revised Statutes of Canada, 1985. By inadvertence, former Section 20 of the act in the first supplement to the Revised Statutes of Canada, 1970 which required that candidates at an election qualifies electors was omitted from the Revised Statutes of Canada, 1985.

The bill is very short and technical in nature. Clause 1(1) adds former Section 20, now proposed Section 76.1 to the Canada Elections Act. This section specifies that a person who qualifies as an elector may be a candidate.

Clause 1(2) establishes as the date for the coming into force of the amendment as December 12, 1985, the day on which the Revised Statutes of Canada, 1985 came into force. It is unfortunate that former Section 20 was omitted in the Revised Statutes of Canada, 1985. It is crucial that the bill be enacted as soon as possible as it affects the qualifications of candidates in elections.

Without this amendment, persons who do not qualify as electors, that is, minors and non–Canadian citizens could be candidates in future elections. Given the technical and non–controversial nature of the bill I am very pleased that we have had agreement with the other parties of the House to rapidly deal with this situation.

I believe it would be in order to present the amendments at this time. Would I read them or would I dispense with reading them? I believe the other members have copies of the amendments. They are in both official languages.

The Deputy Chairman: I believe all members have seen the amendment. I do not think it is necessary for him to read it.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported.

Mr. Weiner (for the President of the Privy Council) moved that the bill be concurred in.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Weiner (for the President of the Privy Council) moved that the bill be read the third time and do pass.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to participate in the debate on this important bill this afternoon. My friend the parliamentary secretary, will appreciate the co–operation that has been shown by all parties in agreeing to pass this bill through all stages today.

We recognize the importance of correcting this portion of the law. Having shown such co–operation, I would like to draw to his attention the lack of co–operation shown

by the government in respect of the appointment of the commission to look into the matters affecting the electoral law of Canada.

During our break in November, we came back to find that the Prime Minister had named a commission without any consultation, either as to the members of the commission or as to its terms of reference. We had had in an undertaking by the Deputy Prime Minister by way of a statement in answer to a question in this House that he would, in fact, consult with the members on this side of the House.

I regret very much that that consultation did not take place and I am sure that my friends in the New Democratic Party share my concern. Here we are co-operating with the government in expediting passage of a bill today and I wish we had had the same co-operation with respect to the appointment of that commission. I just wanted to make that point. Otherwise, we support this bill fully.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I just wish to re-emphasize the point made by my Liberal colleague. We are also concerned, certainly not with the calibre of the person representing the New Democratic Party, but the process that was followed was inadequate. It shows a lack of real commitment to the parliamentary dialogue and consultations by this government.

With regard to the bill in front of us, we have agreed to the quick passage of this legislation after we were reassured by officials of Elections Canada and the department that this, in no way, would prevent people who did not live in an area where there was the by-election from seeking election. There was some concern over the actual wording and the meaning, but I believe all those concerns have been dealt with and that people who wish to run in the Chambly by-election or other by-elections that will be called in the next six months, once the Prime Minister calls it, that those people, all Canadian citizens who are electors will be able to seek election.

• (1410)

Motion agreed to, Bill read the third time and passed.

CANADIAN SPACE AGENCY

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Gerry Weiner (for Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology) moved that Bill C-16, an act to establish the Canadian Space Agency and to provide for other matters in relation to space, be read the third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: On division.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Agreed to on division.

Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The Parliamentary Secretary to the House Leader.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, that completes the legislation which the government had on the Order Paper for today. I would ask at this time that we suspend the House to the call of the Chair so that we may later in the afternoon receive Royal Assent.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the government on its co-operation today and, as usual, the opposition is always available to co-operate with this government when it wants to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is there agreement to suspend? The hon. member for Churchill.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, we are agreeable to this with the understanding that the motion standing in the name of the hon. member for Essex—Windsor would be just dropped to the bottom of the Order Paper to be dealt with at a future time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I have received written notice from the hon. member for Prince Albert—Churchill River that he is unable to move his motion during the hour for Private Members' Business on Monday, December 18, 1989.

It has not been possible to arrange an exchange of positions in order of precedence pursuant to Standing Order 94. Accordingly, I am directing the table officers to drop the item of business to the bottom of the order of precedence. The hour for Private Members' Business will thus be cancelled and pursuant to Standing Order 94, the House will continue with the business before it prior to that hour.

In accordance with Standing Order 94, notice was published for consideration today of a motion standing in the name of the hon. member for Essex—Windsor. Since the member is not present to move his motion at this time, the motion will, in accordance with Standing Order 42, be dropped to the bottom of the Order Paper.

SITTING SUSPENDED

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There being no business before the House at this time, is it the wish of the House to suspend the sitting to the call of the Chair?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

The sitting of the House was suspended at 2.14 p.m.

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 4 p.m.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed Bill C-49, an act to provide for the resumption of certain government services, without amendment.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE ROYAL ASSENT

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received as follows:

Royal Assent

Rideau hall
Ottawa,

December 15, 1989

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that the Hon. John Sopinka, Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court of Canada, in his capacity as Deputy Governor General, will proceed to the Senate Chamber today, the 15th day of December, 1989, at 3:45 p.m., for the purpose of giving Royal Assent to certain Bills

Yours sincerely,

Léopold H. Amyot
Secretary to the Governor General

THE ROYAL ASSENT

[*English*]

A message was delivered by the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod as follows:

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Deputy to the Governor General desires the immediate attendance of this honourable House in the chamber of the honourable the Senate.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker with the House went up to the Senate chamber.

And being returned:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I have the honour to inform the House that when the House went up to the Senate chamber, the Deputy Governor General was pleased to give, in Her Majesty's name, the Royal Assent to the following bills:

Bill C-49, an act to provide for the resumption of certain government services—Chapter No. 24.

Bill C-10, an act relating to the forgiveness of debts incurred or assumed in respect of certain official development assistance loans made by the Government of Canada to the governments of certain countries in sub-Saharan Africa—Chapter No. 25.

Bill C-36, an act to amend the Advance Payments for Crops Act and the Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act—Chapter No. 26.

It being 4.16 p.m., this House stands adjourned until Monday next at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 4.16 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, December 18, 1989

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

ORDER IN COUNCIL

TABLING OF APPOINTMENTS AND REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEES

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada) Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, a number of Order in Council appointments which were made by the government.

Pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 110(1), these are deemed referred to the appropriate standing committees, a list of which is attached.

* * *

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government responses to 16 petitions.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

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COMMITTEES

BILL C-18—REPORT OF LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy—Royal): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the report of the legislative committee on Bill C-18, an act to establish the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship and to amend certain acts in relation thereto, with amendments.

I wish to express my appreciation for the co-operation of the members of the committee, and as well to the staff of the committee who performed a great service.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

* * *

INTEGRATED CIRCUIT TOPOGRAPHY ACT

MEASURE TO ESTABLISH

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): moved for leave to introduce Bill C-57, an act to provide for the protection of integrated circuit topographies and to amend certain acts in consequence thereof.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. minister should have leave to introduce the bill?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

* * *

[*Translation*]

WOMEN

TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ADOPTION BY THE UNITED NATIONS OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, today is an important day for women in Canada and around the world. On the one hand, it allows us to reflect on the progress we have made towards equality, as we celebrate the tenth anniverary of the adoption by the United Nations of The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

[*English*]

At the same time, we are reminded that we have barely scratched the surface of our understanding of the

root causes of discrimination against women, and we are profoundly disturbed at the depth of that discrimination and frequently at the horror of its manifestation.

In this battle to eliminate discrimination, the convention is the legal instrument setting out the basic standards necessary to achieve women's equality. It covers areas as wide-ranging as employment equity, equal access to education and health care, participation in public life and equal treatment before the law. Its adoption in 1979 represented the culmination of decades of work by women's organizations and by the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

Canada was proud to ratify this convention in 1981, recommitting itself nationally and internationally to the goal of eradicating discrimination against women in all its forms. As of today, 98 other nations have also pledged to embody and enforce its principles.

• (1110)

In Canada as a society we see the necessity for economic self-sufficiency for women as fundamental to the elimination of discrimination. The ability to economically sustain oneself and one's family is as important to women as it is to men, not simply for survival but for pride, dignity, self-confidence and optimism for the future of one's children.

We also know that violence toward women and sexual harassment are linked at least in part to women's lack of economic self-sufficiency. Unhappily, our struggles to achieve equality and self-sufficiency have failed to eliminate the humiliating and tragic consequences of these most ancient and obscene forms of discrimination.

There is no clearly marked map which delineates the boundary where natural and healthy sexual tension between men and women begins to break down into offensive and demeaning behaviour. Men, as well as women, are struggling to redefine their relationships with each other so that the end result is sexual expression with dignity and mutual respect.

However, for too many still in our society as in other societies there is no boundary. There are still some men who view harassment and violence as their right and as their legitimate means of expressing superiority. It is, in other words, their right to discriminate against women. In recent days, we have been made more acutely aware than ever of where the aberrant form of that manifestation of this so-called right may lead.

The stark tragedy which we have been faced with in Canada can lead us to oversimplify the causes of the barriers we, as women, have still to overcome. It can reinforce our view of ourselves as constantly vulnerable, as perpetual victims.

Let us remember today, as we celebrate this tenth anniversary, that much has been done, that in every avenue of Canadian life, there is activity that is building a better life for all of us. Let us take pride in the fact that women have been the leaders in defining the means to eliminate discrimination and in promoting a broad social agenda that has been embraced by political parties of all stripes and that is changing the way we deal with each other. Let us remember as well that men as well as women must consciously, in their every day behaviour, seek to end the discrimination that diminishes all of us.

In February 1990, Canada will present its second progress report to the United Nations on the measures we have taken to implement the convention. Although much is still to be done, Canada can be proud of its record on women's rights. On the legislative front, the principles of the UN Convention have been embodied in Section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Our employment equity legislation reflects the fundamental principle that business and employers, as well as governments, must become responsible for solutions to discrimination in the workplace. Proposed amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act will enhance maternity and parental benefits. We have put in place measures to enforce court-ordered support and maintenance payments and programs to encourage women entrepreneurs, to name a few, among a broad range of initiatives.

In addition, we are urging the provinces to examine women's training needs and health concerns with us and together we are working on the availability and affordability of child care.

There are urgent objectives still to be met. For example, obstacles remain much more acute among certain groups such as aboriginal women, immigrant women, visible minority women, disabled women, elderly women, and, as a government, we are paying particular attention to their needs and concerns.

As a signatory to the convention, Canada has also made a commitment to implement measures that enable parents to combine work and family obligations in new ways that deal with our new social forms, and here governments at all levels are developing strategies to prompt changes in attitudes, programs, services and

legislation. But let us not forget that while governments can lead, there must be leadership through a broad range of activities in our community.

Discrimination against women violates the basic principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity that are the due of all citizens of our planet.

[*Translation*]

I am confident that, despite difficulties and setbacks, Canada will continue to set an example towards the elimination of obstacles that inhibit the ability of women to achieve their full potential as participants in, and contributors to, society.

[*English*]

Women have much to take pride in, and those of us here today honour them in their ability to contribute and participate as we have in the past. We must all of us remember together that women who perform so much in our society out of their talents and their natural ability to contribute to our well being will continue to do so in the future and will continue to take pride in their ability to do so.

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. The day is important because it marks the acceptance, at least on paper, of a new global direction, a direction that will eventually tear down the walls of inequality and allow each one of us to live and work without the unfair burden of gender discrimination.

But let us make no mistake. The minister's statement has highlighted an important point, namely, that we still have a long way, a very long way to go in addressing major issues in our society here in Canada which affect women.

The force of the United Nations Convention is only as strong as each independent signatory wishes it to be. As in the case of the United Nations Charter of Rights and Freedoms, some signatories continue to be the greatest violators of human rights.

Can we stand and proclaim that we here in Canada are seriously addressing the problem of inequality and that we can be proud of our record on women's rights? I do not think so. The minister cited the work of this government listing the first embodiment of the principles of the UN Convention in Section 15 of our own Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

But while the *non obstante* clause exists and Section 15 is in jeopardy, I do not think that we can congratulate ourselves. What message is this government sending to the women of Canada when we have professed to entrench equality in a document where equality is essentially not entrenched?

The minister further pointed to the employment equity legislation that exists. This is remarkable considering that the government is still embroiled in a dispute with hospital service workers, predominantly women, who are being paid substantially less than their male colleagues. Even with a ruling against the government from the Human Rights Commission, this government has refused to move toward pay equity.

A recently released study has shown that women employed in Canadian banks make only 56 cents for every dollar paid to male employees and, further, although women outnumber male bank workers 70 to one, there are virtually no women in banks' upper management in Canada.

This government recently introduced legislation on abortion which criminalizes women for exercising control over their own reproduction. This government professes to be committed to the cause of women but with a sweep of its mighty arm, it slashed funding by 15 per cent from vital national women's programs. It is one thing to say that we are leaders in the realm of equality and it is another thing altogether to actually lead.

• (1120)

Where is real pay equity and where, oh where, is a national child care program that is acknowledged by all to be the only true bridge to true employment equity?

The road to eliminating discrimination is a long one. I applaud the intentions of the United Nations and of Canadian governments past and present, but indeed let us not forget that there is much work still be done.

The examples that I have listed illustrate that we are a long way from achieving a truly equal society. More distressing, the events two weeks ago at the University of Montreal reinforce the notion that women are still

perceived by far too many to be a group infringing on the natural domain of men.

Is there hope? Of course there is. But the hope lies in progress, courage and government action. The hope lies in such government action that is honest, consistent and progressive. The hope lies in government that shows its true commitment to gender equality and acts rather than congratulates itself for work which is still unfinished. The hope lies in the recognition, some day in the future, by this government and by all governments that women truly do hold up half the sky.

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women has requested that this day be a day of national mourning for the 14 young engineering students who were massacred in Montreal. I would like to support the call for that day of mourning and also the request that Canadians make donations to their local rape relief centres, to organizations that are working toward ending violence against women, and I would urge members of Parliament and all Canadians to take that day of mourning seriously and to perhaps make donations if they are able.

The minister focused her remarks on the progress that women have made toward equality, and I congratulate the women of Canada for that progress. But on this tenth anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, I would like to look closely at the Convention and point out here what still needs to be done in our country.

The minister has said that Canada can be proud of its record on women's rights. I wonder if the government is proud of spending $17 million on 38 strip clubs in Canada while still withholding the bulk of $22 million that is earmarked for Project Haven, a capital grants program for shelters for battered women, because of regulatory red tape.

It is ironic that Article 13(b) of the convention asks signatories to observe equality in credit lending. Women are still discriminated against in terms of bank loans and credit, while this government invests in strip clubs.

Also ironic is this government's recent and rather flagrant violation of Articles 2(c) and (d) and Article 11(d) which deal with equal pay for work of equal value. Pay equity is what the federal hospital workers, mainly women, have been demanding since the early 1980s. They had to take this government to court and they won. The government still refuses to entrench fair wages in the collective agreement. Instead, within the past couple of weeks, we have witnessed the sorry sight of these unfairly treated workers being legislated back to work.

The government's abortion law, introduced this year, contradicts Articles 2 and 16(1)(e) of the convention. This proposed abortion law will discriminate against women because it controls women's reproduction and not men's. It limits women's choices. It targets women's fertility by imposing arbitrary regulations on women's decisions whether or not to bear children.

In Canada it is illegal to discriminate against women because they are women. Yet Employment and Immigration's language training programs for immigrants contain an inherent bias against women that has not yet been addressed by this government. In fact, the government is being taken to court again over its human rights violations.

One in 10 Canadian women is not covered by the Canadian Human Rights Act. In Canada's second report to the convention, on its progress toward equality it mentioned the 1985 *Equality for All* report. The recommendation to include sexual orientation as a prohibited ground for discrimination is still being ignored by this government some five years later.

Article 7 of the convention guarantees women's rights to participate in the formulation of government policy and to participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country. The Conservative government responded to this by slashing the Secretary of State's program for women by 15 per cent and funding to the National Action Committee on the Status of Women by 50 per cent.

I am glad that our party, the New Democratic Party, has contributed to the government's next report on the participation of women by being the first national political party in North America to elect a woman as its leader.

Article 11(e) establishes a right to social security, contrary to the government's clawback policy on pensions and on family allowances. Article 11(2)(c) speaks of a development of a network of child care facilities. Where is Canada's much needed child care program? Will this government once again introduce a program two months before an election, only to have it die once again on the Order Paper?

Articles 3 and 5 can be applied to bring in pornography legislation, legislation that attacks violence and pornography and not sexuality.

There are three other points made in Canada's second report on its implementation of the Convention that need examining. One is its glorification of the Court Challenges Program. I hope that this means that the program will be extended. The second is the repeal of discrimination in the Indian Act. However, there still does remain discrimination in the Act since reinstated women can only pass status down to the first generation while men can pass status down to subsequent generations.

The report also discusses the prison for women. I visited the Kingston prison for women and I found the conditions there just absolutely shocking. I would hope that in Canada's next report, there will be real, rather than imagined, progress to comment on as far as the prison for women in Kingston goes.

The preamble of the convention says that signatories are "concerned that in situations of poverty, women have the least access to food, health care, education, training and opportunities for employment and other needs, convinced that the establishment of the new international economic order, based on equity and justice, will contribute significantly towards the promotion of equality between men and women—".

In Canada, the devastating reality is that one in three female single parents in the paid workforce cannot keep her family out of poverty and 53.4 per cent of female-headed, single parent families are poor. Three-quarters of all poor seniors are women.

What we need to fulfil our convention obligations is really a new economic order, one that puts people first, one for which full employment is a priority, one that redistributes wealth, an economic order that is based on equality and justice for all.

[*Translation*]

PETITIONS

OPPOSITION TO TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS ON TAX BENEFITS FOR NORTHERN AND ISOLATED AREAS

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I wish to present two petitions which reject the recommendations of the Task Force on Tax Benefits for Northern and Isolated Areas. Your petitioners, who are residents of the isolated community of Lebel-sur-Quévillon in Abitibi, are concerned about the recommendations in this as yet unfinished report.

Mr. Speaker, the task force's final report does not contain single reference to the James Bay and Northern Quebec Cree-Naskapi Agreement or to the final report published in October 1989 on regional disparities among isolated communities, carried out by the Government of Quebec.

• (1130)

[*English*]

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour and privilege to present a petition pursuant to Standing Order 36, certified correct by the clerk of petitions from a number of people from Kamloops, British Columbia. The petitioners are distraught at the news that the government is going to proceed with the goods and services tax and make the announcement tomorrow that it will be reduced to 7 per cent. I personally feel depressed to read all of the things they have drawn to our attention which cause them to be so discouraged and disillusioned with the government.

In summary, they are asking the government to please have some sensitivity as to what is going on in the country and back off from this cruel, brutal tax.

Mr. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by hundreds of Canadians from Montreal, living in the constituency of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, who strongly oppose the new goods and service tax. They state it is an unprecedented tax grab from the pockets of Canadians. It will hit them not only with higher taxes, but with higher inflation, higher interest rates and higher unemployment. They humbly

pray and call upon Parliament to reject the proposed goods and services tax.

Mr. Jack Whittaker (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege today to present a petition to the House of Commons pursuant to Standing Order 36. There are actually eight petitions signed by 417 people in the riding of Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, from the communities of Carmi, Salal, Princeton, Hedly, Merritt and the Lower Nicola.

These people are concerned, as are so many others across this country, with the imposition of a goods and services tax of any nature whatsoever. They have asked the government to ensure, if and when there is a broad public consensus on a sales tax measure to replace the manufacturers' sales tax, that it not be an opportunity for the government to impose a massive tax grab.

They are asking this government to ensure that the tax burden is not shifted to ordinary Canadians but is fairly shifted throughout the whole of Canada.

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I also have a petition signed by quite a number of British Columbia residents opposing the goods and services tax. The petitioners state that this is an unfair form of taxation which permits wealthy individuals and corporations to pay little or no tax while forcing lower and middle-income taxpayers to bear the burden of national taxes. The petition also states that the government is now trying to tax reading, haircuts, diapers, coffins and home heating fuels.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to reject the current proposal, to reform the tax system and to cease with a proposal which will shift the tax burden on to ordinary Canadians through a regressive consumption tax instead of through real tax reform.

VIA RAIL

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I also have a second petition which opposes cuts to VIA Rail. The petitioners ask Parliament to guarantee VIA sufficient support to carry out its mandate to provide passenger services in Canada.

SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to present two petitions. The first petition, certified correct under Standing Order 36 by the clerk of petitions, comes from a number of people in the Big River community of Saskatchewan in the Battlefords—Meadow Lake constituency. It is a petition circulated by One Voice, the senior's network, that calls upon Parliament to abandon the proposed measures that will clawback the old age security and family allowance benefits undermining the principle of universality in social programs. They state that it is a tax that would discriminate against recipients of old age security and family allowance benefits. They call upon Parliament to abandon this and maintain an old age security and family allowance benefit program that is tied to the level of income.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, I also want to present petition today signed by residents of the Battlefords—Meadow Lake constituency, primarily from Battleford and Wilkie in the North Battleford area.

The petitioners are indicating that the goods and services tax is a regressive tax. They call upon Parliament to reject the proposal for the goods and services tax, to reform the taxation system so there is an effective minimum tax tax on wealthy individuals and corporations, to ensure that if and when there is a broad public consensus on sales tax measures to replace the manufacturers' sales tax that this reform not be an opportunity for the federal government impose a massive tax grab and, finally, for the government to cease with the proposal which will shift the tax burden on to ordinary Canadians through a regressive consumption tax instead of a thorough real tax reform.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour and duty, pursuant to Standing Order 36, to present to this house four petitions certified correct by the clerk of petitions. They contain the signatures of Canadians who reside in the communities of Hamilton, Burlington, Stoney Creek, Ancaster, Dundas and Caledonia.

The petitioners state that the Conservative federal government wants to impose on Canadians a new general tax of 9 per cent on all goods and services which will be hidden from Canadians and applied to virtually everything they buy. They say that the imposition of this new general goods and services tax will cause serious and unfair hardship to low and middle income Canadians and that the imposition of this tax will create an onerous burden on small business. They call on Parliament to

reject the proposed goods and services tax, be it at 9 per cent today or 7 per cent tomorrow.

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, I rise under Standing Order 36 to present a petition from my constituents on the Bonavista Peninsula; Newman's Cove, Amherst Cove, Birchy Cove, Bonavista, Elliston. These communities are looking at the crisis in the fisheries that we will be talking about later on today. They are looking at Bill C-21 under which 26,000 people will have reduced UI benefits and under which 9,000 in Newfoundland will probably lose all their UI. They are looking at the goods and services tax on top of this and on top of the provincial sales tax of 12 per cent, which itself may even rise.

If there is any such thing as a humble prayer and resolution, my constituents are asking for this to get rid of this goods and services tax. As was said by one of my colleagues, the member for Kamloops, let us reduce it from 7 per cent to 0 per cent. Let us get rid of the whole thing.

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, I also rise under Standing Order 36 to present petitions from a number of small businesses in my riding.

This is a petition about the goods and services tax and these small business people, 441 of them, say that the goods and services tax is an unfair form of taxation because it forces small businesses to carry a disproportionate share of the tax burden. They state that it will be an implementation nightmare for small businesses in Canada and that the $600 motion offered to small business to offset the cost of administering this tax is completely inadequate.

The petitioners call upon this government to reject the goods and services tax at any percentage rate and to consult with business, labour and consumer groups to reach a broad consensus on reform of our tax system and to ensure that there is a real reform of the tax system to provide a healthy climate for small business in Canada.

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning, pursuant to Standing Order 36, to present 11 petitions from people in many communities of Canada; from Waterloo, Toronto, Saskatoon, Kamloops, Nanaimo and Vancouver who are opposed to the implementation of the goods and services tax.

These petitioners point out that the government has not adequately addressed the unfairness in the present tax system and that the goods and services tax is particularly unfair because it does not tax people on their ability to pay. Having to pay a tax on reading material, educational material, haircuts, and heating oil is certainly not a fair way to collect taxes. They say that there ought to be an effective minimum tax on wealthy corporations and wealthy individuals who can pay, and that whatever tax reform the government brings in must be based on ability to pay and not be a massive tax grab.

• (1140)

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition to this House under Standing Order 36 regarding the grief and suffering tax. It is signed by residents of the central interior of British Columbia who express their concern that this new tax will be a regressive tax. They request that the tax system be reformed so that there is an effective minimum tax on wealthy individuals and corporations and to ensure that, when there is broad public consensus on a sales tax measure to replace the manufacturers' sales tax, this reform not be an opportunity for the government to impose a massive tax grab.

Indeed, Tory times are tax times.

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Mr. Speaker, the petition that I have comes from the community of Gananoque. The petitioners object to the effects that the proposed goods and services tax is going to have on the pastime of skating, a pastime for children. The tax applies not only to skates but also to the instructors' fees and everything associated with that pastime for children in that particular community.

In addition to that, I have another petition which meets all requirements. In the community of Kemptville, not too far from here, a great activity in which seniors can participate is bowling. The seniors are objecting strenuously to the 9 per cent additional cost of bowling. That is one of the few activities in which seniors can

participate at most any age so residents of the community of Kemptville are really objecting to that.

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, I have about two dozen petitions to present today on behalf of constituents throughout the Algoma-Manitoulin area in which they oppose the implementation of a goods and services tax. My constituents point out that some 31 new taxes have been imposed since 1984, that the manufacturers' sales tax has been increased from 9 per cent to 13.5 per cent, that the new goods and services tax at 9 per cent or even at 7 per cent will still be a hidden tax that will cause unfair hardship for low and middle income Canadians and that it will be a special burden to small businessmen because of the cost of administration and the time involved in administration.

I present these on behalf of these constituents who are opposed to the goods and services tax.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 146, 161 and 163.

[*Text*]

THE JAMES BAY AND NORTHERN QUÉBEC AGREEMENT—OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGETS FOR CREE SCHOOL BOARD

Question No. 146—**Mr. Skelly (Comox—Alberni):**

Under the provisions of Section 16.0.28 of the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement* for approved operating and capital budgets for Cree School Boards (a) what was the budget for capital and operating costs approved under the agreement in each school year from 1978-79 to date (b) of the approved budget in each school year how much was contributed by Canada in (i) dollars (ii) percentage terms (c) has Canada's initial responsibility to provide 75 percent of these budgets been changed and, if so (i) in what years (ii) in each case, by what percentage of the approved budget?

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): (a) Québec and Canada have not, to date, agreed on a common budget approval process for the Cree school board. In the past the Québec government has determined the annual budgets and billed Canada for its 75 percent contribution. Negotiations are continuing to correct this situation.

(b) (i) The table attached indicates Canada's contributions to the Cree school board budget from 1978/79 to 1988/89. The 1989/90 budget is still under discussion.

(ii) These contributions represent 75 percent of the expenses Canada has accepted to fund annually. Canada is also discussing with the Québec government the approval of additional Cree school board expenses incurred during past years.

(c) This percentage has not changed since 1978/79.

CONTRIBUTIONS BY THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

FISCAL YEARS	OPERATING	CAPITAL	TOTAL
1978/79	$ 7,626,800	$ 1,373,077	$ 8,999,877
1979/80	10,125,700	1,452,748	11,578,448
1980/81	11,698,500	2,235,263	13,933,763
1981/82	13,453,300	1,319,000	14,772,300
1982/83	15,471,300	941,900	16,413,200
1983/84	14,731,000	3,561,500	18,292,500
1984/85	16,238,200	1,700,900	17,939,100
1985/86	17,403,300	2,721,800	20,125,100
1986/87	19,437,000	4,172,200	23,609,200
1987/88	18,460,460	4,624,500	23,084,960
1988/89	20,517,427	6,048,200	26,565,627
Totals	165,162,987	30,151,088	195,314,075

APPLICATION OF FEDERAL TAXES

Question No. 161—**Mr. Saint-Julien:**

As of October 25, 1989, are any Canadian products subject to a federal tax and, if so (a) which ones (b) what is the tax rate applied to each of these products?

Hon. Otto John Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue): A general rate of federal sales tax at 13.5 per cent is imposed by the Excise Tax Act on all goods manufactured or produced in Canada, or imported into the country. A reduced sales tax rate of 8 per cent applies to various construction materials. The Act also provides for a number of exemptions from the tax. For example, most

food for human consumption, most clothing and footwear, and certain drugs and devices for the handicapped are exempt.

Excise taxes of various rates are also imposed under the Excise Tax Act on selected commodities such as jewellery, playing cards, wine, tobacco products, lighters, heavy vans and automobiles, and gasoline.

Excise duties are imposed at various rates by the Excise Act on domestically produced beer, alcoholic spirits and tobacco products.

In addition to the above taxes on commodities, the Excise Tax Act imposes a tax on certain insurance contracts effected outside Canada and a tax on air travel.

The Excise Tax Act also imposes an 11-per-cent telecommunication programming services tax and an 11-per-cent telecommunication services tax.

APPLICATION OF FEDERAL TAXES

Question No. 163—**Mr. Saint-Julien:**

As of October 30, 1989, are any Canadian products exempt from federal tax and, if so, which ones?

Hon. Otto John Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue): The Excise Tax Act imposes federal sales tax on all goods produced or manufactured in Canada. Subsection 51(1) of the statute exempts from this tax the goods which are enumerated in Schedule III to the Act under the following headings: Coverings or containers diplomatic; educational, technical, cultural, religious and literary; farm and forest; foodstuffs; fuels and electricity; goods enumerated in Customs tariff items; health, marine and fisheries; mine and quarries; miscellaneous (including such disparate items as baler twine, British and Canadian coins, and ice); municipalities; production equipment, processing materials and plans; goods manufactured in institutions; clothing and footwear; construction equipment; transportation equipment.

In addition, provision is contained in sections 68 and 69 of the Excise Tax Act for refunds of federal sales tax for the following purposes: exports; ships' stores; use by province; certain systems (primarily municipal drainage or sewerage systems); certified institutions; hospital cleaning establishments; educational institutions; incinerators; small manufacturers; tourist literature; motor fuel used by diplomats; fuel tax rebates to farmers, fishermen, loggers, miners, hunters and trappers who buy gasoline or diesel fuel for commercial, off-highway use solely in qualifying operations and not for resale.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: The questions as enumerated by the Parliamentary Secretary have been answered. Shall the remaining questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

* * *

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, if Questions Nos. 147 and 153 could be made Orders for Returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that Questions Nos. 147 and 153 be deemed to have been made Orders for Returns?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

[*Text*]

PENSION BENEFITS STANDARDS ACT

Question No. 147—**Mr. Whittaker:**

For companies regulated by the *Pension Benefits Standards Act* (a) what is the breakdown of required contribution rates for employees and employers (b) of companies that have established a pension committee with pensioner representation (i) what number provide funding to assist this representation (ii) what are their names (c) for each company that has provided "ad hoc" voluntary inflation adjustments to pension plans (i) what is its name (ii) what is the nature of the adjustments (iii) over what period of time have the adjustments been provided (iv) what is the cost to employees of these adjustments (d) what companies have claimed excess pension fund earnings (e) of the companies that have printed a revenue and disbursement summary, which companies have made the summaries available to pensioners and employees?

Return tabled.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Question No. 153—**Mr. Caccia:**

In (a) 1987 (b) 1988, were any charges laid as a result of the violation of federal pollution legislation and, if so (i) what number (ii) under which statutory authorities, with what number of separate charges laid under each (iii) what number led to successful prosecutions, with, in each case, what penalty?

Return tabled.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the ministerial statement, Government Orders will be extended by 21 minutes, beginning at 1 p.m. today.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

INCOME TAX ACT

ALLOCATION OF TIME TO CONSIDER REPORT AND THIRD READING STAGES OF BILL C-28

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada) moved:

That, in relation to Bill C-28, not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration of the report stage and, one sitting day to the consideration of the third reading stage of the bill; and

That, fifteen minutes before the expiry of the time provided for government business on the day allotted to the report stage consideration and on the day allotted to the third reading stage consideration of the said bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required, for the purpose of this order and, in turn, every question necessary in order to dispose of the stage of the bill then under consideration shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise with a great deal of sorrow to speak to this particular motion because I know that my hon. colleagues opposite had wanted to prolong the debate on this motion *ad nauseam*. Actually, this is a government measure to save them from themselves because we were getting calls from there was this great uprising in the Liberal and NDP parties in an effort to come to the rescue of people with incomes of over $50,000 who were having their old age security taxed back.

We in this party believe in distributing income to those people who need it.

Mr. Riis: Charity in other words.

Mr. Lewis: I didn't say "charity", I said "income distribution". We are doing that through the modernization of a tax system which was left to us in decrepit shape by a decrepit Liberal party. We are making great strides toward doing that. I know I speak for people on all sides of the House when I say that my hon. friends are waiting in anticipation of the declaration by the Minister of Finance on the new great services tax which we are going to be bringing in shortly. I am sure that by the time the Minister of Finance is finished there will be a great deal of support for this tax.

While I am on my feet I want to mention that I understand the hon. member from Ottawa Centre is organizing a demonstration against the budget cuts that the President of the Treasury Board announced on Friday. I want him to know, although I know it is rather public to do it here, that if he should in any way contemplate a cross-country tour to speak to this, I want him to come to Orillia, Midland, and Penetanguishene to speak to this important issue. We want him in Kamloops and probably in Peace River. We want this noble quest carried across the country. And if he needs money we will be glad to raise the funds to get him there.

Having said that, we are making good progress on the legislative agenda. Upon passage of this motion we intend to call report stage on Tuesday next, tomorrow, and third reading on Wednesday and complete the debate on this very important tax measure and send it off to the other place for final review and, I am sure, speedy passage.

I do not think I need to speak any further. I am sure my hon. friends opposite will probably see the wisdom of this and, thanks to my words, we will probably be able to vote immediately.

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Madam Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to have the opportunity to reply so immediately to some of those comments.

On the matter of the cutbacks I feel that I have some obligation to respond to the minister's remarks. I think that the people of the national capital region are indeed aware of the fiscal mess into which the government has got the country. I think they are willing to do their part to try to alleviate the incredible burden that has been thrust upon the nation by five years of fiscal incompetence which has more than doubled the national debt in that time.

I think the government needs to be aware at this time of the importance of national symbols, the importance of realizing, on the part of all Canadians, the fact that we have institutions as well as programs in this country that tie us together.

• (1150)

The national capital plays a major part in the development of a system of national values and an awareness of the fact that being Canadian has a symbolic importance beyond where we were born or where we happen to live. I think we should all be concerned, whatever side we are on, when the government and its ministers try to excuse the inability of the government to manage its finances by somehow criticizing or dumping on one region of the country, especially when that region, more than others, in a way embodies the identity of the nation. I think it is very important that those institutions that are centred on the national capital continue to play that role.

Even as the President of the Treasury Board was standing in the House of Commons on Friday talking about what he was going to cut, the Prime Minister of Canada was in Chambly, Quebec, where there is a by-election by some coincidence going on, talking about how he was spending, about what he was doing to buy votes in that area. I suggest that the government start to look at its own iniquitous practice of trying to buy votes before it starts to talk about the national capital region being some kind of privileged area.

On the matter of time allocation on this bill, I think the minister has also said some things that bear examination. He has talked about the effort on this side of the House to protect the wealthy. I hardly think that asking the House of Commons to take the time to consider the most important social policy change in a generation in this country should be interpreted merely as trying to protect the wealthy.

We have built, for better or for worse, a series of programs in this country based on the assumption that universality should be the guiding principle. We have done that not just with respect to our family allowances and old age pensions, although those are important. We have also done it with our educational system. We have done it as well with our medical aid system. We have accepted the idea that Canadians, whatever their economic situation, should share a common basis of well-being based on being Canadian, whether they are rich or poor, whether they live in Ottawa, Orillia, Peace River or Halifax. Wherever they live, whatever their income, Canadians are entitled to a common basis of social programs in this country.

The government is tearing down national institutions. It is going across the country encouraging criticism of the national capital. It is underfunding the National Arts Centre and its ministers say we should not even call these institutions national because it offends some separatists in Quebec, that we should call them Canadian rather then national. While the government is tearing these things down it is tearing down the basic social concept, the contract whereby we live together in this country, and it is saying, "You can only have a few hours to debate it".

The clawback should not even be in an income tax amendment bill. If the clawback is going to be introduced it should be done as part of social policy change. There should have been a discussion paper following up the one that was issued by the minister of health in 1985 in which the minister of Health at the time, now the minister of energy, said that to tax back old age pensions would be unfair and unacceptable. He said at the same time that it might not be unfair with family allowances. We could argue about that, but he specifically mentioned that the old age pension should be protected.

What happened to the discussion paper? It went to a parliamentary committee, it was studied, it died. There was no further discussion, no more policy papers, no more indication that the government was considering introducing the most significant social policy change in a generation. None of that was done.

Instead the government, and the Prime Minister in particular, went around during the election campaign and said, "Social programs, especially for the elderly, will not be diminished. They will be improved". And with the very first budget after the election we had the clawback introduced. Did he tell his mother, I wonder.

I am sure all Canadians are disgusted at the memory of the Prime Minister of Canada parading his own mother on to an election platform as an example of his good faith to the seniors of Canada. Four months later the Minister of Finance gets up and says he is going to tax back Mrs. Mulroney's old age pension. Why was that not put before the people during the election campaign? Why is it that now, four days before we are to adjourn for Christmas, in an Income Tax Act amendment bill, which has all kinds of things in it from the budget, which the Department of Finance itself tried to amend in committee and all of its amendments were out of order, we have

to be constrained in the time we have to debate such an essential issue?

Instead of having time to study it, instead of having time to hear the groups of Canadians across the country who are concerned about whether the erosion of universality is going to lead to the erosion of universality in so many other areas, we have to abandon that debate, we have to turn it over to the editorial writers and hope that they will take time to raise with Canadians this essential issue of public policy.

This is scandalous, Madam Speaker. It is scandalous not just because it is closure but because it is closure on such an important measure. It should not be done. I suggest to the government, in view of the failure of the Department of Finance to get its amendments introduced at committee stage, in view of the implicit recognition that comes with that failure that the bill itself is fundamentally flawed, that it needs to be amended, that the government should withdraw the bill, forget about trying to push it through this week, introduce a proper income tax amendment bill in the new year and put the clawback aside until it has been considered and debated by Canadians across Canada.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Madam Speaker, when the young people of Canada are studying the history of Canada years from now they will look back on 1989 as the year that the Government of Canada decided to abandon one of the crucial principles of what being a Canadian is all about. Being a Canadian means that if you get sick, it does not matter who you are, rich or poor, whether you live in Newfoundland or Saskatchewan, you will have adequate medical attention. It means that your children will go to school. You do not have to pay extra. You do not have to send them to private schools or special schools which are going to cost you money. Your contribution through the general tax system will take care of that education. It means that if you are raising children you get a family allowance cheque every month until the children are age 18. And it means that if you are an elderly person, no matter who you are, rich or poor, no matter what your ethnic origins, your religion, or where you live, you get a pension. That is what it means to be a Canadian.

This year the government decided it was going to change all of that, that it was going to tear universality up and throw it out of the window. The government says that it has had enough. It does not want a fair system for everybody in this country, it wants charity. If you can prove to the government that you are poor enough to receive a pension, then you will get a pension. If you are poor enough to prove to the government you require family allowance, then you will get family allowance cheques.

This means that we are going back to the old days of the means test, a degrading experience. That is Tory times. This is what being a Conservative in this country is all about. I suspect that those people who are watching the House of Commons on their television sets today, trying to understand what is going on, Canadian is all about. If they look through all the veils and so on of what the various ministers have said, lo and behold, way out there is the free trade deal staring them in the face. Because the free trade deal says that we have agreed, as a country, to harmonize our social programs with those in the United States of America.

• (1200)

We know how abysmal the health care system is in the United States. We know how families are the last sort of caring aspect of the American administration, the American way of life, in terms of support and care,. That is what is happening here today. To make it worse, not only is this government dismantling something that is fundamental to being a Canadian, it is now saying: "We don't want the opposition members of the House of Commons to speak about this because if they speak about it the people who are watching their television sets at home today will be aware of what is going on". It decided: "We are going to muzzle the debate. We are going to curtail the debate. We are going to shut down the debate. We are going to introduce dictatorial, totalitarian methods that say we no longer want the Parliament of Canada to explain to the people of Canada what this government is doing".

That has to be a very dark day for freedom of speech. It is a dark day for those who believe in the fundamentals of a parliamentary democracy. It is a dark day for those Canadians who actually believe that democracy is something we are struggling to keep. As we see other countries, particularly in the east bloc, begin to slowly introduce the principles that we have held high for generations, this Conservative government has decided to dismantle this and make this House of Commons and Parliament of Canada into an ineffectual place. As soon as it hears criticisms coming from members of the

opposition parties it says: "We don't want to hear this any more. We are going to curtail debate".

That is what the government has done this morning. I do not know if members on the government side realize what is going on today. The Minister of Justice—of justice of all people—stood up and said: "Listen, I know that we introduced this legislation, that it is dastardly legislation, mean-spirited and cruel." What it means to be a Conservative government is to introduce that kind of legislation. He went on to say: "We are going to drive this through". The government closed off debate at second reading and sent it to committee.

Committee is where experts are asked to come from across Canada and examine legislation. We know what happened. It went to committee and members of the New Democratic Party stood up and said: "Listen, if we are going to change the social policy of this country so drastically as a result of this Conservative government and this legislation, let us bring in experts, let us bring in those who understand the implications to explain to the members of the government what this is actually going to do to people and how mean and cruel this whole legislation is".

Did the government do that? Absolutely not. Once again it did not want to hear what people had to say. It did not want to hear the experts. It did not want to hear what it was actually going to do to families living in Atlantic Canada, western Canada and northern Ontario and Quebec. It did not want to hear what this actually means to those people who struggled and built this country. Now the government says: "Well, we changed our mind. You no longer will get an old age pension cheque. Because you have saved and worked hard to provide for yourself we feel you do not need a cheque any more and so we are going to take away this critical right of what being a Canadian is all about". That is the essence of this legislation.

What did the government members do in committee? They said: "We do not want to hear all of this information because if people understand what we are doing they are going to get very, very concerned." They cut off the witnesses.

We thought that here we are back in the of the House of Commons, we will have a chance now to explain to the people of Canada what this all means. Then the government introduced today time allocation, the muzzling of Parliament, closure of Parliament. "Do not let them talk on the terms of the legislation". That is what has happened. Two days from now we will not be able to speak on this legislation. This legislation will be passed, all gone, done. This government will have changed the direction of the country forever and ever until the new government, the New Democratic government decides to put it right back where it should be and introduce the principle of universality once again.

Not only is it bad that the Conservatives want to take away people's pensions—which is what they are going to do essentially—not only is it bad that they are going to muzzle Parliament, curtail debate and use their jack-booted tactics to close this debate down, which is bad enough in itself, but the bill itself is a disaster. The government came into committee—something which has never happened in the history of Canada before—and said: "Listen, we have made such a disastrous mistake in drafting this legislation, we are going to require 125 amendments just to make it workable". It is incredible that the government is so sloppy, so loose in its thinking, so uncaring, so callous, so stupid when it comes to drafting legislation that it has to have 125 amendments to it just to make it tolerable to its own members.

As you know, the Speaker said: "This is all nonsense" and threw them all out. He said: "These are not even procedurally acceptable". If the government was just to do the honourable parliamentary thing it would say: "Let's go back and at least draft a bill that you can pass through the House of Commons and do what we want even though it is mean and cruel and against senior citizens and families. If that is what we want to do, then at least let us make it properly acceptable in the House of Commons".

Members of the government did not even do that. The government has shown nothing less than utter contempt for this place. It just said: "Well, if we just draft up anything that is sloppy, you know, we will get it through the House of Commons, the Speaker will let it through". Thank goodness, Madam Speaker, you did not let it through. You said: "Listen, there are some standards in

here. They can use closure and muzzling of debate and all sorts of procedural tricks to jam inappropriate legislation through". But at least the Chair said: "That is far enough and we are not going to tolerate this nonsense".

If this were the only time the government decided to bring in its heavy hand of the majority and just ignore the minority—if you like the tyranny of the majority—then I suppose we could say: "Well, they did not know any better. They do not understand parliamentary democracy. They do not understand what it means to govern within a democratic framework". This is now a trend. This happens time and time again. It is the only way of course that it can get bad legislation through. From time to time the Official Opposition and the New Democratic Party try to improve legislation and make it the best we can. We are not always happy with it but we try to do our best.

The government has brought in legislation that essentially, as I said, takes universality and eliminates it, something that as Canadians we have struggled to achieve, something which we hold up high on the world stage and say: "This is what it means to be a Canadian. It does not matter who you are and what you are, you will be able to get the old age security cheque when you are aged 65". Yet this government says: "Well we have changed our mind. We are going to change all that now". This is not the Canada we want to see.

This has happened time and time again. There has been closure, muzzling of Parliament, shutting Parliament down, making it impossible for members to speak. That is not what a parliamentary democracy is all about. That is why we say this government shows contempt for Parliament, the principles of Parliament, the traditions of Parliament and the practices of Parliament day after day.

I want to send to the Prime Minister a very clear message this morning. It is that as far as the New Democratic Party is concerned we are not going to take this any more. To make this place work properly you need to have the support of all of the parties and you need to have the will to make this place work.

In closing, I am simply putting the government on notice this morning that in the future if it plans to use the heavy hand of closure, the jack-booted approach to the parliamentary system, we in this party will not stand for that. We will pull out all the countless ways and means that we use to make this place effective and efficient. If the government is not going to recognize the practices and traditions of the parliamentary democracy in this country, then I am putting it on notice that we will not co-operate any further in the future and it will not be able to pass, without an incredible struggle, this kind of mean, cruel-spirited legislation that we are seeing here before us today.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Douglas Young (Gloucester): Madam Speaker, I cannot say that I welcome the opportunity to take part in this debate. As you know, there are Canadians who would like to hear Members of the House of Commons discuss this bill. They realize it has some extremely negative implications. However, instead of discussing those implications today, we ought to consider the fact that the government will not let us have the kind of open and full debate that we should have here in the House.

[*English*]

One of the problems facing Canadians is to try to figure out why the government is so stubborn about dealing with this particular proposal. It has tried to suggest that people who are suggesting the clawback is not an acceptable proposal are defending the indefensible, defending people with high incomes. Canadians understand the need for a debate on this matter, particularly senior citizens. They understood from the very outset that this was an attack on what was called a sacred trust. They understood from the very beginning that clawing back any amount, no matter what the threshold, was the beginning of the end.

• (1210)

What I find very unsettling is the fact that we have seniors across this country who are among the best organized groups of citizens in Canada telling the government, telling MPs who are not members of the government that we have to debate this issue, that we have to clarify all of the implications that will arise now that the crack is in the facade of universality. We have to go back and tell them that the government has decided unilaterally, because it has more members sitting to your right, Madam Speaker, than to your left, that it is going to impose closure.

The government has told us that some seniors support the proposition. I want to quote from *Hansard* of November 20 when I was involved in a debate on this very issue. I want senior citizens in Canada to understand exactly why closure is being imposed, why time allocation is being imposed. That debate was fairly lengthy and rather heated. I have had people come up to me to suggest that during that debate I should have repeated what hecklers to your right, Madam Speaker, were saying. Out of courtesy I was allowing them to make their interventions, realizing that they were not being picked up and that people who watch these proceedings were not able to understand what was being said. It was suggested to me that that was not a very effective means of proceeding because the fact that I might respond could not always be understood because the intervention had not been heard. What I want to do is simply refer to the debate that took place on the clawback proposal on November 20, 1989.

In that debate I was asking members to indicate whether or not when they went back to their constituencies and talked with senior citizens they were being told that this was the kind of legislation that should be introduced, whether it was appropriate, whether it was acceptable, whether it was fair. I was listening to people saying things like: "What about the deficit? What about the debt? Everybody has to pay their share".

It was my argument at that time that many senior citizens in this country have paid enormously to benefit from our system. They have paid in times of war. They have paid in times of depression. They have paid taxes. Most significantly they have paid into retirement plans, the Canada Pension Plan and old age pensions with the thought that the Parliament of Canada would respect what they had done and that the rules of the game would not be changed at a time when they were less able to defend themselves against legislation such as this.

The reason I bring this up is that I want to remind people that the reason the government wants to impose time allocation is that it does not want any more statements like the one I am going to quote. In that debate I was asking the questions: "Do you want senior citizens to pay down the debt? Do you want senior citizens to reduce the debt? Ask them, tell them. Do not say it is because you have too much and we want to take some away from you."

In response to my comments the hon. member for Winnipeg South said: "No, that is not what we are saying". Out of courtesy and recognizing what she said I indicated: "What are you saying then?" I asked that in order to provide the hon. member with an opportunity to explain her concern. I want to quote from the debate on November 20, 1989. The hon. member for Winnipeg South said this about the clawback:

> What is being said is that what has been given to you is only deserved if you have an income that is less than what it takes to live on.

Imagine that, Madam Speaker. That is why we are faced with time allocation today. Imagine a Conservative member of this House saying, and I am quoting from *Hansard*:

> What is being said is that what has been given to you—

The senior citizens of Canada:

> —is only deserved if you have an income that is less than what it takes to live on.

That is why we are getting time allocation. When you ask members of the government party to speak out and to explain what is the philosophy behind this, what is the purpose of going after senior citizens in this country, what is the purpose of trying to embarrass them they say: "If you are getting over $50,000 a year there should be a clawback. Never mind whether it is indexed or not. Never mind whether the threshold can be lowered or not". That is why the government cannot afford to have us talk about this too long. People will say, as the member from Winnipeg South said: "What has been given to you is only deserved if you have an income that is less than what it takes to live on".

I cannot believe that all members to your right, Madam Speaker, share that kind of an attitude. Certainly it is shared to some extent. Again in that debate not that long ago—on November 20—the following was said in this House on this very same matter. I was saying that I had been to Alberta and Manitoba and that my experience had not been to have senior citizens say: "My goodness, I am glad that you have begun the process of eroding our security". I have not even heard people 50 and 55 years of age saying that.

I was explaining that what we are hearing from senior citizens around the country is that they are very, very concerned. They are anxious. They see the beginning of the end for any kind of long-term security. Day after day we read reports indicating that people in Canada are living longer and longer. Life expectancy even in the last 10 years has increased dramatically. I am sure that as life expectancy has increased and people are aware that they are going to be around longer the level of anxiety has increased. We have a government that does not seem to understand the need to maintain security in the minds and in the hearts of Canadians—not only senior citizens but, as I indicated in that quote from *Hansard*, people who are not receiving pensions now but who are very much aware that those days are rapidly coming. They are not very secure.

The point I am making is as to why the government feels the need to clamp down on Parliament, to shut off debate, and we can quote again from that debate in response to the comments I made. I said that I had not heard senior citizens, not even people 50 and 55 years of age, say that they wanted this process of eroding security to begin. The hon. Minister of State for Privatization in response said: "They have said: 'We do not need it, so tax it back.'"

I do not think the government can take much more of that. I believe that it would need to recognize that its members are having a hard time articulating the problem that it is addressing with the clawback. You have one person on the government side saying: "What is given to you is only deserved if you have an income that is less than what it takes to live on". Another member, a member of the Cabinet, is saying that senior citizens are telling him: "We do not need it, so tax it back".

I think Canadians are extremely concerned. As my friend the House Leader for the New Democratic Party said, every time a sensitive issue comes up we are being told: "You cannot discuss it any more. We are going to put it through". I hope that Canadians understand that we are going to continue to fight for the rights, not only of senior citizens in this country, but for everyone who believes that Canada has developed a system second to none in this world. We are going to fight to protect it.

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my great displeasure at this government's attempt once again to gag Parliament. I can certainly understand why the government would introduce such a closure motion today. It is because hon. members opposite have been checking with their constituents. They have been finding out that the longer this debates continues on this and other regressive measures that this government has introduced in this place the lower and lower the popularity of the Conservative Party falls.

• (1220)

This is an abuse of the rights of parliamentarians to a full debate on social policy changes that are taking place around us. This government is intent and hell-bent on making sure that that type of debate does not see the light of day.

I listened earlier when the Minister of Justice spoke. It is no wonder he had such a hard time keeping a straight face. He said that he was getting calls from our constituents. I do not think that he has received calls from any of my constituents telling him that they want this bill passed as quickly as possible. He says that the opposition parties have spent too much time, way too much time, holding it up at report stage. Either he has gone into a deep sleep or he has lost all sense of timing.

This particular measure, Bill C-28, has been debated at report stage for only one hour. It is one of the most major changes that we have seen in any bill before this place. Perhaps the only more significant change was with the free trade debate, and the government did the same as it has done today. When it has a piece of legislation that it does not want Canadians to listen to debate on, it invokes closure or time allocation. It did it then and it is trying to do it now.

On this particular piece of legislation it is important for Canadians to know that what members of this government are doing is ending universality of social programs through the back door. It is doing it in a bill called C-28. It is doing it with the clawback, the scratch back, the gouge and screw back. That is exactly what it is doing.

The Minister of Justice said earlier that the Liberals do not want the rich to be taxed. I hate to tell him this but since 1984 with the inflation rate the purchasing power of $50,000 is equal to about $33,000 in 1984. Not even that member opposite would have had the gall to get up in this House in 1984 and say that somebody who makes $33,000 a year is rich. I do not think he even has the gall to get up today to say that someone who makes $50,000 a year is rich. Let us look at how regressive this

particular bill is. Then we will understand why they wanted to invoke time allocation again to kill the debate.

Let us take an example of two individuals who worked the same number of years in the workforce. Those two individuals made about the same amount of money. Both are heading for retirement. One of them made sure that they lived on as little as they possibly could. They did not take their trips to Florida. They did not move into a five--bedroom house when a three bedroom house would do. They did not spend money on Bingo or go to the horse races to bet at the track. They had a pretty tough life. What they did was put their money into investments so that when they retired they would reap the benefits of good fiscal planning.

Buddy next door said: "This is crazy. I could be dead tomorrow. So what I am going to do is have a heck of a time. I am going to Florida. I am going to spend every penny that I can possibly spend. I am going to go out boozing every night. I am going to go to the racetrack. I am going to drive the biggest car on the block. I am going to have one hell of a time". That is what he says.

He spends his disposable income. He does not invest. Then he turns 65. Under this legislation because he did not plan and because he had such a great life he is going to be allowed to keep his old age pension. The poor bugger next door who planned all his life and had a pretty meagre life will now find himself because of good planning getting his old age pension taxed back.

Surely to goodness there are no members opposite who are going to look at that particular scenario—and it is not a far-fetched scenario—and say that this is fairness, that this government policy wreaks of fairness. It wreaks of something, and it is not fairness.

The other thing that most Canadians and I have a lot of problem with in this legislation is the fact that this government has misled the Canadian public on its intentions on universality and its intentions to tax back old age security. Let us not forget—and I know members opposite would love to have this forgotten, which is why they are trying to put closure on this debate—that in 1984 the Prime Minister told everybody that the Conservative Party would never touch social programs, that they were a sacred trust. Then they came in and tried to deindex the old age security pensions. That is what they did. If it was not for a lady from Ottawa—Vanier who pointed her finger at him and said: "Good-bye Charlie Brown", we would have had the deindexing of the old age pension. You know: "Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me".

In 1988 during the election campaign we had the Prime Minister—and this shows you, in my opinion anyway, the complete lack of faith in the Canadian electorate, and I guess perhaps the single-mindedness and the almost arrogance of this government—knowing full well that he had misled the seniors of Canada in 1984 during the election campaign using his mother as a prop. He took his mother out during the campaign and said:, "My mother is on old age security. Would I ever do anything that would harm my mother? I certainly would not do anything to harm her." He used his own mother as a prop. How low can you get? That is pretty low, Madam Speaker. I cannot think of anything lower, except the use of closure on the debate of this bill.

Mr. Gardiner: They are digging a well, that is how low they will go.

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): My hon. friend over here says: "They are digging a well—" If the Canadian public had their way they would dump them in the well and they would fill the well in.

This particular debate that is not going to take place is a debate on our social programs. It is a debate on fairness. Let us not forget that up until 1971 the people of Canada who were working and paying income tax paid in to the old age security system. I think 1971 was the last year that it was still on the income tax forms. It was a special surtax of about 4 per cent. This was not a bit of welfare. It was the Canadian people saying through their government that they believed that those individuals who built this country and made it strong had the right, when they were looking at retirement planning, to expect something back from the government. They paid taxes all their lives. They built this country and made it strong. They paid into the fund and the least that they

should expect is a few dollars a month coming back from the federal government when they go into retirement.

What this government has done with this bill is to ensure that those seniors who are making over $50,000 start to get their old age pensions taxed back. If that were not bad enough, what it has also done is to ensure, because there is not full indexing on that particular provision, that the older Canadians get the poorer they get. That is absolutely despicable.

I think the Leader of the Opposition back on May 9 in a question in the House put it very well. He talked about what effect the Consumer Price Index minus 3 per cent would have when the threshold would be reached in the future. What it means is that somebody who is going on retirement right now and perhaps making $35,000—and that is not a lot of money—as a result of good planning, by the time they are 75, just 10 years down the road, they are going to have some of their Old Age Security taxed back. It is not just that this bill is so unpalatable right today, it is the effect in the long term of making older Canadians poorer that this government will have to pay for.

I see that my time is nearly up. I wish to join with other members from my side at least who find this motion on time allocation to be absolutely inappropriate. It is nothing short of an attempt by members opposite to hide their latest dirty deed.

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Madam Speaker, this is not a timed speech so you may invoke closure at any time. We are all very used to that on this side of the House.

As to the definition of universality, we have had a difficult time in getting the government to define it for us. I have taken the opportunity to check in the dictionary. It means "of or belonging to or done by all persons or things in the world or in the class concerned applicable to all cases". The thesaurus goes on to say that universality means cosmic. It means global. It means infinite. It means pervasive. It means total. It means usual.

• (1230)

However, this government has rewritten not only the rules in the House of Commons—closure is a rule rather than an exception— it has begun to rewrite the dictionary and thesaurus.

It does not say that they will give it to you only to take it back. It does not say that if we take back 4 per cent it is still universality, or we recognize that in 10 years it will be 25 per cent. I am sure eventually it will be 100 per cent. That is universality in reverse.

I think that is what the government has planned for us. It is rewriting not only the rules of the House, not only the dictionary and the thesaurus, but it is rewriting social policy for the whole country.

Every once in a while we forget—and we get tired of mentioning it—the free trade agreement, but I think this is what it is all about. Universality is a watershed of social policy that this government is eroding, in fact decimating.

May I talk about the sad chronology of events of Bill C-28. I was to be the lead speaker for our party on Bill C-28. When I heard the speech of the Minister of State for Finance I was sitting here in great trepidation because I thought I was going to speak to the wrong bill. Not once did he mention the words "universality" or "clawback" in any of his very abbreviated speech. That gave me some trepidation that I was going to speak to the wrong bill. Lo and behold, that was a plan. No one in the government speaks about universality or clawback, and now we know why.

This bill has received very little fanfare. It is suggested that it is not a significant bill; let's push it through very quickly and keep its contents quiet. Member opposite are saying that the New Democrats are speaking for the rich. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The people for whom we are speaking are the entire population of the country. That is what they want to keep quiet. They just want to talk about the $50,000 for the seniors. Those are the only people. No one out there wants to suggest that we should not take it back. That is what they are saying but that is a lie. The whole thing has been a fallacy. The whole thing has been a scam.

We have spoken to universality. At least we have tried to, but this bill touches on many other things. It is an omnibus tax bill. It talks about transfers to provinces, regional development, and post-secondary education. However, because of the way the government has handled it, ramming it down everyone's throats, we have not been able to address most of the issues. We have zeroed in on universality. At least we have tried. The

government's suggestion is: "Let's keep them in the dark. What they don't know won't upset them."

We presented to the committee a list of 20 possible witnesses. The government members said: "Let's take five or six. We will pick them. You don't. They will all come and say the same thing over and over again." I suggested at that time that government members did not want to hear what they have to say. They were mute and did not ask any questions of any of the witnesses who did appear. It is a story they did not want to hear. That is a sad evaluation of some of those people. The five or six who did come suggested 35 minutes for presentation and questions.

For the committee members on the government side it was a revolving door of individuals. Once in a while I do not mind being laughed at, but throughout the hearings there was a great deal of laughing: "Why are you concerned? Let's wrap this up for Christmas. Let's give the seniors and families of this country a Christmas present."

Some 120 government amendments were thrown out. They were heavier than the bill itself. It was suggested that they would come back with another bill in the new year and clean it all up. I suggest that that is not acceptable. Why this week? Why are we hurrying this up? Tomorrow is GST day, another bit of sad news from members of the government. They know that this claw-back will get lost in the GST, another cover-up of the whole thing. They have worked out a very sad stratagem. It is indeed a sad evaluation of the government.

The opposition is growing, but we know it is growing too late. Everybody is tied up with the Christmas shopping rush and they are preoccupied with Christmas spirit, but it is not in the spirit of Christmas that this government operates.

Bill C-28 is personified by Scrooge. They say: "Seniors, humbug. Families, humbug". We are not surprised by the government action. It is expected. We do not accept it, but we are powerless to do anything. Powerless now, but time is on our side. The seniors' time will come; the families' time will come; the Canadian people's time will come. The Canadian people will turf this government.

We shall not forget their callous attitudes and actions. They are changing the direction of this country. We are headed southward. History will recognize this bill for what it is. Unfortunately history will not unfold for quite a long period of time, but this government and its members will be judged very harshly.

Fie on this government for this bill, fie. If one does not understand what fie is, it is a euphemism for a curse or a plague upon this government for introducing this legislation. The Canadian people shall not forget.

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River): Madam Speaker, I must say that I rise today with great difficulty to discuss Bill C-28 or, more important, the closure that comes with it. As a new member of Parliament I have a lot of difficulty, as do a lot of members, trying to figure out the procedures of the House. When we first came to the House we were told that this was one of the procedures that would not be used very often. I recall the discussion we had with the Whip who told us not to be too worried about closure, that it only happened once in a while.

All of a sudden I notice that closure takes place almost every day in the House. I am getting to know the rules quite well and understand the procedures, but I want to talk a bit about closure and about what this House is supposed to be for. I think it would be important in this debate for members opposite to pay a little attention so they could understand my reasons for thinking why they are here and why they were elected by their constituents.

I was elected to voice my opinion on behalf of the people of Kenora—Rainy River. When I return to the riding on weekends and when the House is not sitting, on a regular basis the people of Kenora—Rainy River give me their input on what is important to the country and what direction they want us to go.

One thing that really bothers me is the fact that on all bills that we have debated closure, in particular, nobody on the other side gets up to represent their constituents. I find that deplorable. It is one thing to vote with the government side because you are a member of the government; "Hold your nose", as they say, and "go ahead and do it".

It is difficult in our party system to vote against your own party. That is understandable. I think people can understand that, but they do not understand when people come to the House, sit here all day long—or in this case for an hour—and not rise once to defend the reason closure is in place, to defend the reason this particular amendment of Bill C-28 is taking place. If

they agree with closure, then let us change the procedures of the House so that we only debate for an hour and, if that is acceptable to Canadians, then so be it. However if it is not, then we should stop using this particular procedure which was put on the books for purposes of emergencies.

This is not a great emergency. I do not see any seniors outside saying: "Hurry up and put this in place. I can hardly wait to have my hard earned funds taxed back and clawed back as quickly as I can, so get on with it!" I think that is something that the members opposite should pay close attention to.

• (1240)

The people back home are starting to pay closer attention to what the Conservative members are doing. One thing they must be asking themselves over and over again is: "Who is speaking for me? Who is speaking out? Why are they not saying what they think?" If they really believe that this is the way to go for the future, then by all means they should be standing up in their place and doing that.

Another thing that we should touch on is: What does closure really mean? You close the door, the window, or perhaps the lid on something that is open. Whether it be in the fridge or in the cupboard closure means basically that. You put a stop to something. The environmental aspects of closing a door is that you do not want the cold air to come in or, for that matter, they might not want the fresh air to come in.

What we are seeing here with members opposite is that they are putting closure in place because they do not want us as opposition members to use our abilities to speak in the House and to tell the people of Canada what is taking place. That is a very dangerous precedent. To continue doing that on a regular basis really undermines democracy and the ability to speak our minds whether or not they agree with it. Really, it does not make any difference whether they completely agree with my point of view. In this country I have the ability to speak for the people I represent.

Another thing I have noticed is that the government opposite does not like the members of the opposition, members of the Liberal Party in particular, to speak about the clawback. In essence, they believe that we do not know what we are talking about.

Today I have prepared some quotes we have heard over and over again to make members opposite more aware that aside from the seniors we are not the only ones who are saying it is not good. There are other people who have a common voice, a lot of exposure, and are well respected members of Canadian society speaking on this issue. I think the government should pay closer attention to that.

One Voice, the Canadian seniors network states: "History will remember the clawback as the end of universality, not for its drop in the deficit bucket".

Then there is Don McGillivray, our good friend from *The Ottawa Citizen* who states: "The policy pretends to continue universality, but in fact cancels it".

Then there is Hugh Winsor of *The Globe and Mail* of all places who states: "If, as Mr. Mulroney subsequently admitted, tampering in the indexation was wrong in 1985, attempting the same thing with the threshold levels is wrong in 1989".

Leonard Shifrin, in an article published in *The Ottawa Citizen* states that the finance minister "proceeded to undermine the universality of family allowances and old age pensions".

A report from the National Council of Welfare states: "A social program that delivers benefits to everyone and then collects them all back from some recipients is not universal".

We are not the only ones in Canada who are disappointed that what this government is doing through the back door in a sneaky way is moving away from universality. What it is doing is changing the way we look at ourselves. That is something that should be heavily debated, not something that should be just fed in there very quickly.

A perfect example is the discussion we have had in the House for the last months about VIA. There was no heavy debate on VIA. Therefore we still do not know what we are going to do with VIA Rail.

Do not make the same mistake as other governments have made by not discussing that particular issue. If they want to change the way that Canadians look at themselves, then change the way we as governments are either to give benefits to Canadians or take back benefits

through the tax system. Let us stand up in our place and debate it. If Canadians accept that, then so be it.

One thing of utmost importance is how we as Canadians look after other Canadians. Is this to become a dog eat dog or an "I'm okay, Jack" type of country where if you are lucky enough, you get a good education, good employment and are able to save the amount of dollars required in this day and age to have a long retirement.

Senior citizens are having longer and longer retirements because there are early retirements and people are living longer now than they used to. We are really talking about our future seniors, not necessarily the seniors of today, because the level and the threshold will reduce themselves over time. It will not happen over night. People 20 years from now will be more adversely affected than those of today.

Members opposite keep using the argument: "Why are you protecting the rich, those who make $50,000 a year and over?" I say to them that we are not. We are talking about a fundamental change in direction in how we are looking after the people of Canada. If we are going to do that, we should do it a constructive way.

We should not have closure and one measly hour to debate something so fundamentally unacceptable to Canadians and something that we as opposition members will have to explain in our ridings time and time again in the future. That is very difficult when nobody on the government side wants to stand up and argue the point.

How do I go back and tell the people in my riding why the government is clawing back old age pensions if government members have not stood up and told me why. Therefore, I have to go back and say: "The Conservatives do not know anything. They have not got a clue where they are going, no agenda whatsoever". I suggest that there is no agenda because if they had an agenda they would not be afraid to stand up in their place and tell us why they are doing what they are doing.

Mr. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt): Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to stand up in the House to participate in different debates. However, the one we are participating in today is one where this particular government has gone back on its promise. Let us look at the record.

In 1984 the Prime Minister was running to become the Prime Minister of this country. I guess this was probably the biggest mistake the country ever made. At that time he stated: "We will not deindex seniors' pensions. We will not even touch them, the sacred trust". What did his buddy sitting next to him, the Minister of Finance do? In 1985 he turned right around and said: "Seniors, we are going to stick it to you". They attempted deindexing, and the Prime Minister had to face some seniors in front of this House and say: "I would not do it to my mother". Then they tried to deindex seniors' pensions.

What they were not able to accomplish then, they seem to want to accomplish now. The government is preaching one thing and on the other hand tries to do another. It speaks of universality. However I do not think it knows what the word "universality" means. The government continuously preaches one thing and does another: "We are all going to be equal, yet if you make over a certain amount and you happen to be a friend, as we have seen, you will end up being better for it".

There are many examples where the government of the day has let its rich friends eat from the public trough. We could go through them, but the one I really want to touch on is the deal whereby CN Express was sold to Route Canada. It is a great example of how the friends of this government ate from the public trough. They sold CN Express for $29 million and then Route Canada turned around and went to the bank and borrowed $50 million. They walked away with $21 million clear. They will not open the papers yet so many jobs were lost at CN Express. Where does one go?

In 1988 the Prime Minister gave to this country what we should be calling a "Scrooge proposal". After the election, he again put forth closure. We were limited on the amount of time that we were able to debate the free trade legislation.

After one year, at Christmas 1989, what do we see? In Toronto only, 7,000 jobs were lost and the Prime Minister stands up and says: "We have created 1.4 million jobs." I wonder what kind of jobs, hamburger helpers at McDonald's?

• (1250)

In my riding alone, just south of my riding, the van plant of General Motors closed costing many of my constituents their jobs when 1,700 jobs were lost.

Now the government is proposing a goods and services tax. Small business is going to get hit over the head. The average Canadian is going to get hit over the head. Seniors will have to pay an extra 9 per cent for everything they buy. We are going to have the clawback taking it away from them because all their lives they were frugal. They spent all their lives earning and because they have something extra now we are going to take it away from them. That is not enough. We are going to turn around and we are going to hit them over the head with a 9 per cent sales tax.

The Prime Minister is practising one thing and saying another. I think that the meaning of Ebenezer Scrooge is going to have a new sense in the 1990s. Ebenezer Scrooge at least saw the light. I wonder how many ghosts our Prime Minister would need in order to see the light.

This government I believe is discriminating. Yes, it is discriminating against the seniors who worked so hard all of their lives. I was visited just last weekend in my constituency office by a delegation of seniors. They said to me: "We voted Conservative last time around. However, this time we are not going to vote Conservative. We do not even want to think Conservative; we do not even want to say the name of the Prime Minister". They strongly voiced their opinions to me.

I wonder what the Prime Minister's mother would be thinking today. Would she be proud or would she be sad? I think she should be sad.

We are going to give our seniors a Christmas present they will remember the rest of their lives. We are not only going to say to them: "I as your member of Parliament cannot voice your opinion. The democracy that we fought so hard for over the years is going down the tubes. If you make more than $50,000 we are going to claw back your pension". The government of the day states that it is going to stay at that level, but I reassure you, Madam Speaker, that in two years time it will go down to $45,000. A couple of years down the line it will go down to $40,000, and then to $30,000 and $25,000. Where is it going to stop? I wonder.

We have fundamental changes to what we call universality. We have taken the word "universality" and said: "If you make *x* amount of dollars we are not going to touch you, but if you make more than that we are going to hit you over the head". It is going to go lower and lower and lower. What we are doing is discriminating against the seniors of this country who worked so hard over their lifetime building what we have today, and as we and our children continue to get older that discrimination is going to continue.

I feel very saddened that this House is not let to debate this particular bill. This government time and time again does not do what it preaches. It brings closure on bills in order to steam roll them along. It seems that every Christmas history repeats itself: 1988 and 1989. I wonder what will happen in 1990. To whom are we going to stick it?

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate on this particular motion today regarding Bill C-28, which is referred to as the clawback bill. A number of members in the House have raised their concerns about this very regressive legislation that is being introduced by this most incompetent government.

First I would like to mention a few points about what we are dealing with right now, this motion on time allocation and closure. What has the House dealt with when it comes to time allocation and closure? First, it is not the Conservative party any more; it is the closure party. That is what it is going to be known as from now on, because of the number of times the closure party has brought in time allocation and closure in the House.

Let us take a look at a bit of history. In 1969-1974, time allocation—not closure but time allocation, basically a form of closure—was used three times. The Liberals were in office then. As usual the Liberals say one thing on this side of the House and another thing on the other side.

In 1974-1979 there were 15 Liberal time allocation motions. In 1979 there was one time allocation motion. That was the only chance the Conservatives had during that time in office, I suppose, to move it.

In 1980-1984 the Liberals were running the country, and it was probably the worst time that the Liberals had to offer this country. They are still paying the price for that. During this time they brought in time allocation 20 times. To try to outdo the Liberal Party of Canada in its destruction of this country, we have the Conservative

party making its best effort. What is its best effort? In 1984 to 1988, the Conservatives first term in government, time allocation was brought in 20 times.

The record is being broken in this House by the antics of the government opposite in the way it is ramming legislation through this House. We all remember the debate last year at this time around free trade. I did not even count how many times time allocation and closure was used then. I wonder if the members opposite can remember that or kept track.

An hon. Member: They are trying to forget.

Mr. Gardiner: They are trying to forget it, as my hon. friend says. You are darn right; that is what they are trying to do.

We know that in 1992, when they have the gumption or the courage to go to the polls again, it is not the Conservatives who will remember time allocation, closure or the clawback. It will be the Canadian people who will remember that.

This House came back in April 1989. Let us take a look at closure motions and time allocation motions since April alone. Closure has been used six times and time allocation has been used four times. The government has already reached 50 per cent of the goal it had in the four years of its first term of government and the last four years of the Liberal administration, and we are only through one year of Parliament.

Members opposite in the Conservative government should look closely at their record of ramming legislation through this House. The committee which deals with rules and procedures in the House of Commons should examine the use of time allocation and closure by the government. We should adopt some measures that ensure a return to this Parliament and this House of those rules of Parliament that we have stood by for so long and which are being trashed by the Conservative party. It is called democracy, and we ask government members to support our call for the return of democracy to the House of Commons.

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiaq):

[*Editor's Note: Member spoke in Inuktitut.*]

[*English*]

Mr. Anawak: I rise on this occasion to state a few of my concerns with regard to this bill. One must realize that in terms of the clawback provisions certain areas of the country—and I would like to give special attention to the north—are not quite as well off as the rest of the country, particularly the Northwest Territories.

As far as old age pensioners are concerned, I would think that the government would want to reward old age pensioners who are enterprising enough to make in excess of $50,000 net.

• (1300)

However, the government now wants to tax anybody who makes in excess of that after that senior has accumulated that pension over the years. I cannot understand why anybody would want to tax the hard-earned savings by that person which have already been taxed.

It is difficult enough for anybody to make $50,000 in the north because the cost of living is about twice the average of the cost of living in the south. Why would the federal government want to tax a senior who makes over $50,000 in the north when that person's earnings are about half compared to what it costs to be able to live down here? For anybody making $50,000 up north, it would probably amount to $30,000. I remember my colleague said earlier that in 1984 $50,000 was equivalent to about $33,000. That figure would have been approximately $22,000 to $27,000 in the north.

If the Conservatives think that somebody who was making $25,000 is rich and are willing to tax somebody at $27,000, I would hate to see what they would do to tax somebody who is making $15,000 to $20,000 which is what most people are making in the north. They ought to do away with this bill because it is going to create hardships for those people who have, over the years, earned the right to their pension.

I would just like to add my voice to those who have already spoken ahead of me that this is not a fair treatment of our seniors who built this country over the last number of years. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to say a few words.

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Madam Speaker, I feel compelled to take this opportunity to speak to the time allocation motion on Bill C–28, an Act to amend the Income Tax Act.

I feel compelled to speak because I feel that Bill C–28 to amend the Income Tax Act belies the real intent of the bill which has been spoken to by several of my colleagues, the intent to put an end to the theme of universality in social programs in this country.

Through the amendment to this act the government proposes to put an end to the universality of the Old Age Security program through the clawback of that program whereby, when instituted, seniors in higher income tax brackets will be repaying back to the government the total of the benefit that they receive.

The problem with this is that at this point in time it affects seniors at one income level, but because the clawback is not totally indexed in a very few years every senior will be paying back the totality of the Old Age Security income and, in fact, there will be no benefit to anybody in this country through this program.

The government proposes to do this in view of the serious national debt and the increasingly high deficits that we have on an annual basis in this country. The government uses a totally unacceptable moral ethic in the way it brings about changes to programs which are supposedly going to address our mounting and ever increasing deficits. It uses the lifeboat ethic, where it is seen that the most important problem is our debt and if we cannot afford to keep everybody on the Canadian life raft, we dump those at the bottom level.

In this instance, it disguises that fact by clawing back the Old Age Security from those seniors in the highest income bracket. It is a principle, and the clawback not only applies to Old Age Security but to family allowances as well, and will have in the future, and even today, a very sad impact on those in need in our country.

This government not only has an economic financial problem in terms of the national debt, but in my opinion, it has a more serious bankruptcy problem. It is bankrupt in terms of ideas and leadership in this country.

I do not think there is one member in this House who is not concerned about our national debt and would not be willing to sit and discuss ways and means of addressing it. I am very concerned. I have the sense that I am an elected member of Parliament here to warm a seat in this House and in various committees. We in this House and in committees have the opportunity and the privilege to listen to people who have very broad experiences and expertise. But this government proceeds with very drastic and dramatic changes, in this case to social policy, without any consultation with any of the elected members of this House.

For example, we have a tremendous change in passenger rail services in this country through Order in Council. Again, it is the lifeboat ethic. The government says it cannot afford to maintain the service so it will just throw off certain people. There is total neglect to the strategic need and the ultimate importance to certain people in this country of having services such as rail service. For some people in my riding it is a matter of life and death. They depend on that service for their health needs.

We are seeing here the erosion of the notion of universality. It is an erosion which will lead to its total elimination and yet there is a total bankruptcy in terms of this government's ideas for addressing the needs of those people who are dependent upon our social programs. Instead of providing for those most in need, as is the proposition from this government through effective programs, it simply eliminates all programs in the name of trying to address a national debt problem.

This government, I believe, has only two masters. One is the United States and the other is big business, overlooking totally the most important contribution of the middle and low–income people in this country, who, because of the national debt and through paying taxes, are paying interest to the high–income people in this country who can afford to invest in bonds. The masses of people in this country at the lower spectrum of income are those who are most hard–hit by this government, a government that does not have a conscience or a modicum of concern for them seen through consulting with the members of Parliament in this House who have been elected by the Canadian people.

• (1310)

I object totally to the time allocation motion made concerning this bill. I think that when you are bringing in a bill that has such a serious impact, which totally changes the nature of our social policy in this country, we must have a full debate and consultation among all members of this House. If it is this government's opinion that it is necessary to erode or do away with the idea of universality, we must replace it simultaneously with

something that is going to address the needs of those most in need in this country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Madam Speaker, this debate will not last more than two hours because of the government's motion for time allocation, which will limit debate to one day per stage, the debate on this very important bill, Bill C-28, which contains measures whose purpose is to claw back sums of money from Canadians Old Age Security Pensions, from people who were often counting on those amounts and who depended on the money to be able to plan for a well deserved retirement.

Madam Speaker, the government is once again using a measure to limit debate because it wants to tell Canadians as little as possible. The government wants to keep bills that are difficult to explain to itself. It wants to keep them from away as the public opinion as possible, and to do so, it uses measures like closure, which limits debate to one or two days on a very important subject, or time allocation, which is also in our Standing Orders, a measure that the government has used as well.

I asked the clerks in the House for some statistics. During the 33rd Parliament which ended with the 1988 election, the government used time allocation 20 times. Madam Speaker, this government decided to limit debate 20 times, and one wonders why Canadians have trouble understanding what this government wants to do! Because it doesn't want to explain. It doesn't want to. It limits the time for debate. It hides important details from Canadians, and Madam Speaker, if today Canadians are confused and cynical about this government's policies and objectives, it is the government's own fault.

As far as this session is concerned, since November 1988, the government has used closure ten times on ten different bills. Don't get me wrong. These are not your run of the mill bills. These are very important pieces of legislation. In this case, we have Bill C-28, a bill that, as you know, is a concerted attack on the elderly, aimed at recovering certain sums of money paid to Canadians for their old age security pensions. This bill proposes to attack these pensions, one more instance that belies the fact that the Prime Minister said that Old Age Security Pensions were a sacred trust.

[*English*]

I want to remind members of a statement made by the Prime Minister in Sydney, Nova Scotia during the last election campaign. He said:

> As long as I am Prime Minister, social programs, especially those for the elderly, will be improved not diminished.

This is the same Prime Minister whose government today is proposing a bill that attacks senior citizens, that attacks old age pensions and that attacks the rights of children because it will clawback some family allowances.

It, therefore, is an attack directly on Canadian families. It is an attack, no doubt, on the universality principle which has been with us for some years. As the members have been told before in this debate, the Prime Minister and his government said these were "sacred trusts". Well, they sure as heck did away with that commitment. There is nothing sacred any more as far as this government is concerned, social contract or no social contract.

I view this as a betrayal of the Prime Minister's promises. It is a betrayal of the Prime Minister's so-called "sacred trust". We take exception that these important pieces of legislation are being bullied through the House through time allocation or closure. The government will say to Canadians: "In the interest of balancing our books, in the interest of dealing with the deficit, we are indeed in a hurry to get the legislation dealing with old age pensions through, so we are going to use time allocation or closure".

This bill got first reading on June 20, 1989. It was called by the government, which brings forward whatever bills it pleases, on October 11, 17, 18 and November 20, 1989. Closure was put on second reading and the bill was sent to a committee. As of November 20, the House had spent 15 hours and 37 minutes in debate, discussing a bill which contains 48 amendments to social programs and which ends universality and penalizes Canadians.

I do not know how the Prime Minister and his Cabinet can continue to say they know what is right for Canadians, when Canadians across this country have been

telling them: "We don't want you to meddle with pensions especially with the universality principle which to us is a very important principle".

I want to read something that was said by an important group of Canadians concerning the proposed measure to claw back some of the pension benefits. I quote an editorial from the *Vancouver Sun*: "As a political issue, the clawback is a sleeper because initially it will not affect many Canadians, and even those will not be seriously inconvenienced at first because the plan is to phase it in over a three-year period".

It goes on to explain that the government has sold the plan as a "high income taxpayers measure". I will not read the whole article, but it goes on to say that the real problem is the inflation which becomes, in the editorial's own words, "a two-edged sword against Old Age Security Pensions, cutting their value through the clawback as well as through increased consumer prices".

We would have loved on this side of the House to debate the importance of preserving the value of our senior Canadians' pensions that inflation reduces every year. This measurement will claw at their pensions. Today, $50,000 may sound like a big number but eventually with inflation this figure will soon affect a million Canadians whose entitlement to pensions will be reduced.

We would also love to discuss the impact on married seniors. There is a good article written by Leonard Shifrin in the *Ottawa Citizen* of December 14.

Mr. Shifrin makes the point that indeed women, particularly senior women, are getting a raw deal from this legislation.

When I was on the government side, I remember the Trudeau government facing the problem of seniors, especially female seniors who were found to be in need. They were not entitled to the CPP because the way in which the CPP was structured did not allow those people to receive a justifiable amount of money since they were not contributing to the plan. Therefore they depended upon Old Age Security. What did we do? We increased the Guaranteed Income Supplement to allow these people to at least get a reasonable income so that they could cope with day-to-day requirements.

I find it totally abhorrent that this government has more or less abandoned women, especially seniors. I happen to have many seniors in my riding, who deplore the fact that this government in the last five years has not increased the GIS. We would like to have a debate on that. Why is the government clawing back the old age pension upon which these people depend for their livelihood in the years to come?

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Order. It being 1.21 p.m., I do now leave the Chair till two o'clock this afternoon.

At 1.21 p.m. the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

TRADE

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, to show Canadians that support for Canadian culture would be business as usual under free trade, this government promised prior to the last election that postal subsidies for Canadian magazines, newspapers and books would remain close to current levels for five years.

How times have changed. With the election over and free trade a *fait accompli*, the government has now caved in to American pressure and broken its promise not once, but twice. First, the Conservative budget slashed $45 million from postal subsidies and last week they cut another $64.5 million.

Do the Ministers of Finance and Communications not realize that publishers earn pre-tax profits of only 2 per cent and that is why for more than 100 years all governments, regardless of political stripe, have supported this subsidy? It gives all Canadians equal access to magazines, books and newspapers with a Canadian perspective, no matter where they live.

This Conservative government's slashing of a vital link between publishers and readers will affect 95 per cent of Canadians who read our magazines. Does this govern-

ment not realize that Canadians like to read *Maclean's*, *Equinox* and *Chatelaine*? Where is the government's sense of Canadian cultural priorities? Is it in *Newsweek*?

* * *

[*Translation*]

MINES

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, in Grevet, in my riding, a new mining camp is about to open. According to Mr. Christian Derosier of Exploration VSM, the one deposit is worth $700 million and exploration was financed by means of flow-through shares. A pre-feasibility study is now under way to assess various options for opening the mine between Miquelon and Chapais.

However, one of the concerns of people at VSM and SEREM is railway transportation. Representatives of both companies have attended public hearings and also emphasized the need for maintaining the Franquet-Chapais subdivision of Abitibi, which CN closed down without prior authorization or consultation.

Mr. Speaker, this is another underhanded manoeuvre by CN management. The people of Senneterre and Chapais and the people of Quebec are waiting for the National Transportation Agency's decision on CN's unwarranted application.

* * *

[*English*]

HOUSING

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, this government's goods and services tax will impact very heavily on the Canadian housing industry. The Canadian Home Builders Association estimates that the goods and services tax will increase the price of an average home, average being around $150,000 now, by at least $3,000. Most Canadians realize when we mortgage our homes, by the time we pay off that mortgage, the $3,000, that goods and services tax will be well above the $6,000 or $7,000 level.

The implications for the home building industry are evident. Not only will this tax put the Canadian dream of owning a home well beyond the reach of many Canadians, it will affect the very heart of the lumber industry in our country.

The lumber industry in British Columbia, Alberta, northern Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic Canada will be hard hit. Not only are we an export-based industry, but we rely very heavily on domestic consumption and the domestic market. In light of the 15 per cent export tax on the softwood lumber industry and the continuing appreciation of the Canadian dollar, the lumber industry in Canada cannot afford another set-back.

This government must realize that our single largest industry is in some difficulty. This industry should be helped and not hindered.

* * *

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, today is a national day of mourning instituted by the National Action Committee on the Status of Women to commemorate the death of the 14 young women in Montreal. All Canadians are encouraged to reflect on violence against women and, if possible, to make donations to rape crisis centres and to shelters for battered women.

On Saturday, a vigil was held in Vancouver for a foreign domestic worker who was continually raped by her employer. Foreign domestics are often the victims of violence and economic exploitation.

The National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women has recommended that the federal government work with its provincial counterparts to establish employment standards and to ensure that these standards are being implemented and enforced with sufficient resources.

It is imperative that domestic workers be given more protection. I hope the Minister of Employment and Immigration will attend to this serious issue, and not make it more difficult for domestic workers to receive landed status in Canada.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Ken James (Sarnia—Lambton): Mr. Speaker, 1990 will be a very busy year for Dow Chemical, located in my riding of Sarnia—Lambton, in the environmental area.

Last Friday Dow announced its Sarnia division vision. This policy statement affirms the company's commitment to work in a safe, healthy and environmentally

responsive manner. Indeed, it complements a 10-year, $55 million spending history on ecology related projects at Dow's Sarnia division.

Financially, Dow announced a commitment of an additional $10 million toward some further 25 separate ecology projects in Sarnia. The key goal is to separate Dow's plants from direct contact with the St. Clair River, virtually eliminating the potential for spills and harmful discharges into the river.

I applaud those on-going efforts by Dow Chemical to achieve environmental excellence and fulfil a commitment to not adversely impact the environment. I strongly encourage other private sector interests as well as public sector organizations to demonstrate a similar commitment to our most valuable infinite resource, our environment.

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INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. Felix Holtmann (Portage—Interlake): Mr. Speaker, there is a crisis on Indian reserves in Manitoba. In the past year, four young children have perished in house fires, two on reserves located in my constituency. These tragedies are further compounded by the fact that in every one of these cases, a fire truck was available at the reserve but was not functioning due to one cause or another.

Steps must be taken to make sure that no more lives are lost. Bands should be encouraging their residents to inspect their homes at least once a year. It seems the Department of Indian Affairs cannot handle the problem. I call upon the Minister of Indian Affairs to enlist the help of outside independent professionals to do the job that it seems this department is unable to do.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, the federal Minister of Fisheries was quoted as saying on the weekend with regard to the east coast fishing industry: "Some of these guys are making over $100,000 a year. You sure wouldn't know it the way they sing the blues."

Did the minister really say this? Does the minister believe that? Is he not concerned with the 1,500 people who lost their jobs at National Sea last week? Is he not concerned about the potential lay-offs at Fishery Products International? Is he not concerned about the severe cuts in the total allowable catch in Atlantic Canada? Is he not concerned about the American lobster restrictions? Is he not concerned about the European quotas in our waters which are three times what Canada requested?

If the minister is not concerned about all of this, he is in the wrong job.

* * *

CANADA POST

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago I informed this House about a Canada Post decision to close the McKernan postal outlet located in my riding before Christmas.

The corporation insisted that the outlet, located in Maurice Pharmacy, would be closed unless the pharmacy's new owner, Eugene Barabash, purchased a franchise at a cost of roughly $40,000, an impossible amount considering Mr. Barabash had just bought his new business.

Since then, Canada Post has proven that, like the Grinch, it too has a heart. After meeting extensively with Mr. Barabash, officials from the corporation have determined that the outlet which has served the community for 20 years will not close after all.

I would like to commend Canada Post for its response to the concern of area residents and for demonstrating sensitivity to the needs of its customers. I would also like to commend the residents of McKernan for uniting together to save the Maurice Pharmacy outlet. Their determination should be admired by us all. Merry Christmas, McKernan!

* * *

STUDENT LOANS

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Mr. Speaker, last Friday there was an announcement by the President of the Treasury Board to introduce an administrative fee of 3 per cent on any student loan application that will be processed next year.

• (1410)

Students in the 20th century continue to suffer with the additional costs this government so frequently finds necessary to pile on to the minimal budget with which students have to work. The combination of Treasury Board's student loan administration fees, the Finance Department's proposed GST and Consumer and Corporate Affairs copyright fees will leave some students in

the position of not being privileged enough to attend post-secondary education institutions.

I believe our youth need to foster growth and maturation through higher education. If this government's extra fees preclude individuals from becoming involved in higher education, then yes, all these fees that are being tacked on by this government do hit the lower income groups, contrary to what the people of our country have been told.

This is going against the Canadian tradition if it affects Canadians in this way. I continue to question how it can be interpreted otherwise if only the rich can still afford a higher education.

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[*Translation*]

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

Mr. Jean-Marc Robitaille (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, Richard Bilodeau, a Canadian resident of Coaticook, was released by the American authorities last Saturday on $100,000 bail.

Mr. Bilodeau has come home to his family and will be able to spend Christmas with his wife and children. This was made possible thanks to a tremendous movement of solidarity on the part of all Quebecers, the involvement of all levels of government—federal, provincial and municipal—and especially, thanks to the much appreciated help of the media which made their contribution towards dealing with this terrible injustice.

Mr. Speaker, this spirit of solidarity went beyond the province of Quebec and was felt across Canada and even in New Hampshire and other states in New England.

This proves that when we stand together, there are no obstacles we cannot overcome, and what was accomplished by this general support for Richard Bilodeau, Mr. Speaker, is reassuring when we think of our future safety on trips in the United States.

[*English*]

THE CENSUS

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North): Mr. Speaker, I am quite concerned about the content of the 1991 census. Officials representing the Canadian disabled community fear that the people they represent will be excluded from this census.

It is of paramount importance to the livelihood of the disabled community that they be included in this census. For the first time in 1986, four questions on the disabled were included. The information obtained by Statistics Canada from this census allowed for more complete and accurate data regarding employment equity. If questions about the disabled are excluded from the 1991 census, Statistics Canada will be unable to gather current information regarding the disabled community in Canada.

I want to inform the Minister of Employment and Immigration that we are indeed aware that the questions regarding the disabled may be left off the 1991 census. Inclusion, not exclusion, is what Canada's disabled community would like.

* * *

TRADE

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to pay tribute to a very successful project in my riding of Delta. Taking advantage of the balmiest climate in Canada and using waste wood as an energy source, Houwelling Nurseries are a true success story.

Starting in 1985 with six acres under glass, they now cover 15 acres and are currently shipping the last of their poinsettias, 62 per cent of which are shipped to the United States. They are currently planting English cucumbers, tomatoes and peppers which they will start harvesting at the end of January to be shipped as far east as Montreal and Pittsburgh and as far south as Los Angeles.

There is a vast market in Japan for their produce but the Japanese have not allowed the regular import of these choice Canadian products. I call on the Canadian government to assist this excellent company to open the doors to the Japanese market to bring greater prosperity to Canadians.

S. O. 31

SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa. He is sitting right over there in the Minister of Finance's seat but he is known as Santa Clawsback.

This Santa claws back your old age pension. This Santa claws back family allowances for young families. This Santa claws back door-to-door postal delivery in rural post offices. This Santa claws back the national dream of Canadians of passenger rail service from coast to coast.

This Santa claws back decent, affordable child care. The Santa claws back programs to promote women's equality. This Santa claws back support for our regions, for those of us who live a distance from the money barons of Toronto and Montreal.

This Santa claws back support for students at universities. This Santa claws back support for health care in hospitals and medical research. This Santa claws back our social safety net. This Santa claws back protection from unemployment. Finally, this Santa claws back 9 per cent or 7 per cent or whatever he feels like from virtually every dollar spent by every Canadian.

* * *

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, a columnist in *The Globe and Mail* has recently pointedly summed up five years of Conservative government. "The Conservative government," says Michael Valpy, "is a statement such as we have not heard in this century. It is a statement of evaporating social compassion, of a government who favours the bottom line over people".

The Minister of Finance says that if he lowers the proposed GST rate, he will have to tighten the government's belt. What he really means is that while he and his colleagues continue to travel in luxury, more and more Canadians will be forced to brown-bag it. He says that there has to be a little give and take. Yes, taxpayers give, give and give and he takes.

The Prime Minister says that he needs the GST to reduce the debt. What he really means is that he needs a convenient excuse to severely reduce social programs like the clawback of the OAS, and in the process, closure, closure and more closure, because this government is not interested in hearing from Canadians.

The reality of five years of Conservative government is that today in metro Toronto, there are more food bank programs than there are the combined total of outlets of the three major burger chains. The reality is that the Prime Minister is demanding even more cuts in spending at the expense of his government's social programs.

* * *

"CHARTING CANADA'S FUTURE"

Mr. Bob Porter (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, in April of 1986, the federal government initiated the review of demography and its implications for economic and social policy. The study was mandated to report on the changes in size, structure and distribution of the population of Canada between now and the year 2025.

On Thursday, December 14, the Minister of National Health and Welfare released the results of the study and presented the report to the standing committee. A total of 167 studies, prepared by over 200 Canadian scholars from across the country, culminated in this report. The projections for the future show what will happen if fertility, mortality and immigration levels remain at the current level. The Canadian population will peak at 31 million in the year 2026.

Contrary to popular belief, the baby boom did not cause the aging population. In fact, it delayed it. By the year 2026, between 20 per cent and 25 per cent of the population will be over 65 and approximately 10 per cent of the population will be over 75. Women in this latter age group will outnumber men two to one.

The research indicates that Canada is not facing an imminent population crisis, but that current demographic trends will produce such fundamental changes that the Canada of the 21st century will be significantly different from the Canada that shaped today's attitudes and policies. The implications for Canada in areas such as immigration, social policy, tax structure, health care and housing will all be impacted by these changes. I would urge all members of Parliament and Canadians to avail themselves of the information contained in *Charting Canada's Future*.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

THE ECONOMY

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, during the last election, I said that the Conservatives would try to attack senior citizens' pensions and the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance called me a liar. I said that the east coast fishery would suffer as a result of the trade deal and again I was called a liar.

I said the dollar would go up and hurt our exports, and they called me a liar. I said interest rates would rise, and they called me a liar. I said the GST would cost billions of dollars more, and the Minister of Finance called me a liar and said it would not cost one single penny more to the taxpayers of Canada.

A year ago, the Minister of Finance said to us in this chamber: "Conservatives have spending commitments and we have sufficient money to handle those announcements". The Prime Minister said: "Every nickel has been accounted for".

Will the Prime Minister explain to the students of this country, the senior citizens, the public servants, and to Canadians generally, what he was talking about last year when he said he had enough money to handle our spending commitments? I ask the Prime Minister exactly who was lying during the last election?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member knows explicitly what I said in the speech when I was referring to the veracity of the things that he was saying, and they were not what he referred to in his remarks. So again, he is misleading people by what he is saying.

• (1420)

Clearly the fiscal position of the Government of Canada has been greatly affected by the change in interest rates. what was anticipated at the time of the election and also at the time of the last budget. To be precise, we were looking at interest costs of, I think, $33 billion. Instead, they have gone up to $39.5 billion. That has meant a significant change in the fiscal position of the government and it did require a number of the actions that we have taken.

The point that must be made here is that if you apply the increase in the debt of the country from 1984 to the present time and relate that to the interest costs on the debt that was in place at the time that we took over, you will find that it is almost exactly the same.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): The fact is that this Minister of Finance, advising his Prime Minister, told the people of Canada during the last election that all the spending commitments were commitments for which there was money and that the sales tax that he contemplated would not cost one single cent more to Canadian taxpayers. That is what he said.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's statements are very revealing. Last week, when he was campaigning for the Tory candidate in the Chambly by-election, the Prime Minister of Canada repeatedly told voters how much money the government had spent in their riding. He was practicallly saying: Vote for the Conservatives and money will come pouring into the riding. However, as soon as he left, he started talking about the need to cut spending. Why is the Prime Minister prepared to spend taxpayers' money on winning a by-election, when he reduces appropriations for students, the elderly, food assistance organizations and regional development?

Does he think he can buy a by-election in Chambly like he bought the Environment Minister's seat in Lac-Saint-Jean?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition will leave this House with very little ceremony if he maintains the tenor of his questions. He ought to know that, contrary to what he said, in Chambly I never made single reference of the kind the Leader of the Opposition is putting into my mouth. I did refer to economic expansion in the Montreal area, which is occurring thanks to this government's intervention in industries such as the automobile industry, petrochemicals, aerospace and pharmaceuticals, while the Liberals in the Senate and here in the House were effectively smothering Bill C-22. I mentioned, quite appropriately, what the federal government, together with the Quebec government, has done to stimulate the economy in the greater Montreal area including, of course, the town of Beloeil.

Now if the Leader of the Opposition is against economic recovery in Montreal, if he is against intervention by the federal government in high-tech industries in the Montreal area, including the riding of Chambly, let him come out and say so, instead of applauding this in Beloeil and speaking out against it in the House.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): I dare him to say anywhere else what he says in Chambly, Mr. Speaker!

[*English*]

Interest rates in Canada are too high. The spread between Canadian and American interest rates is at an almost historic high. The government's tax policy is in a mess. Instead of scrapping the GST, it is now trying to perpetrate some phoney changes on us.

The fiscal policy is a mess. They make all kinds of special promises during the election and then they break every one of those promises. The trade deal is a mess and we are now moving into a trade deficit.

What is the Prime Minister going to do to avoid a recession in this country? Does he think that the deceitful promises he used during the last election are going to work this time to salvage the Canadian economy?

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, I will tell you what we will not do. We will not follow policies like those followed by the Liberals when the Leader of the Opposition was the Minister of Finance and gave rise to the deficit and the recession that this country began to go through. He is responsible for it.

Program spending in Ottawa increased by 20 per cent a year when the right hon. gentleman was the Minister of Finance. Program spending has been held to 3.5 per cent by this government as opposed to the 20 per cent under the Leader of the Opposition.

Last week, a leading columnist in *The Globe and Mail* said that the period from 1975 to 1984, led by the former Prime Minister and his ministers was the period that devastated the economy of Canada. He was right. The policies of this government are making the economy stronger and more competitive and we will pursue them because they do not involve printing money and bringing on inflation and dragging up unemployment. They involve getting Canada ready for the next century in a very confident and modern economy.

[*Translation*]

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Douglas Young (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. Everybody agrees that the goods and services tax is more bad news for the Canadian economy. Small businesses are already struggling under the burden of interest rates that are too high, while at the present time, consumer spending is going down.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister of Finance whether he agrees that his proposed goods and services tax will bring Canada into a recession. Will he now listen to people across this country who are asking, who are begging him to withdraw his proposal for a goods and services tax?

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, we have listened very carefully to the consultations that we have had as a government and that the finance committee has had in the course of its hearings across the country. We have listened carefully to what Canadians have had to say. I will be reporting to the House on that tomorrow, as I indicated last week.

I say again to the hon. member that he would have more credibility as a spokesman for his party if he would come up with some alternatives rather than saying scrap this, scrap that. That is no way to deal with the problems that we are facing today.

The members of the Liberal Party are walking away from the problems of taxation, the problems of high inflation and saying you can't do this, you can't do that, but they have not got a brain in their heads to propose another alternative policy.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, two quick proposals would be to reduce the interest rates and try to reduce the value of the Canadian dollar. That would do more than anything else to help exports and business in this country.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Young (Gloucester): That would be a nice start, Mr. Prime Minister, to reduce interest rates.

The Minister of Finance has said consistently that he would not change his position on the goods and services tax. The Prime Minister defended the Minister of

Finance saying that the proposal would stand as it was presented.

Since it was to be revenue neutral, visible, and have provincial co-operation, the proposal that the Minister of Finance has presented to this point and undoubtedly will continue to put forward tomorrow has none of those components in it, will he not understand that the only appropriate thing to do at this time is to withdraw his proposal, reduce interest rates in this country, make sure that exports are protected and try to get it right?

• (1430)

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member. He says: "Get interest rates down". This is not Santa Claus. This is not Christmas Eve and this is not just a question of saying: "Let's have lower interest rates".

I ask the hon. member to consider how he is going to get lower interest rates. We have seen bank loans growing at 11.5 per cent. To get interest rates down the hon. member would start printing money, which means that bank credit would be increasing at 12, 13, 14, or 15 per cent with an economy that is growing at around 7 per cent.

How is that going to address the problem of inflation? It is going to feed inflation, it is going to feed higher interest rates, it is going to feed the very problems that he is concerned about today. All he is saying is deal with the symptoms of the problem and ignore the cause.

We on this side of the House understand the causes and we are dealing with the causes of that problem, not just fluttering about saying: "Do this, do that" about the symptoms, which he knows will do absolutely nothing to solve the problems we are facing today.

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance as well. The minister said in this House on Friday that he fully supports the high interest rate policy of the Governor of the Bank of Canada. Also on Friday the chief economist from the Bank of Montreal said that Governor Crow wants to deliberately weaken the economy to prepare for the introduction of the GST.

Some hon. Members: Oh come on.

Mr. Nystrom: Those are the words of the chief economist of the Bank of Montreal.

Is it government policy to deliberately create slack in the economy in order to create unemployment so that workers will be scared to push for wages to compensate for the rise in the cost of living when the GST comes in? Is that the policy of the government? Was the chief economist of the Bank of Montreal right when he said this is happening?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, let me say right off the top that I completely reject that machiavellian interpretation of the policy of the government.

The hon. member knows exactly why we are following the policies that we are, and that is because we have some very real concerns about the level of inflation. I ask the hon. member to reflect on the impact of inflation on senior citizens, on people who are on fixed incomes, on people who are in low income brackets. These are the people whom we are concerned about when we follow the policies that we are following today.

If the hon. member wants to ignore those policies, again I ask him to think back to 1981–82 when there was that sense of despair in the country, when people were saying: "We are going to have a 12 or 13 per cent inflation rate for a long time to come". With that came the high interest rates. Think back to that time and reflect on whether or not the policies that we are following are the right ones because we are doing everything we can through the policies that we are following to avoid that happening again.

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, thinking back to 1982, the Prime Minister at the time, Mr. Trudeau, said: "It is still possible to scare the hell out of people by creating more unemployment". What I really want to know from this Minister of Finance is whether or not he is following a similar policy.

We now have about the highest interest rate in the industrialized world, a rate that is about 400 basis points higher than in the United States. We have rising unemployment and we have the first monthly merchandise trade deficit in some thirteen and a half years.

How much more of a decline in the economy is the Minister of Finance going to accept before he has a

heart-to-heart talk with John Crow and demands he bring down the interest rates? Has he, for example, ever thought of firing John Crow, giving him a pink slip?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, I am certainly never going to defend the policies of Pierre Elliott Trudeau, so don't ask me to do that.

Here we have a question comparable to the last one asked by the Liberals, possibly with a little more attention to what might come up on the evening clip on television tonight. The answer is the same. The NDP are saying: "Please Santa, give me some lower interest rates". You cannot just wish these. You cannot just wish lower interest rates, you have to follow some policy direction to get them.

The policy direction that I have heard from the NDP and from the Liberals is print money and that will raise interest rates a few months down the road, although there may be a short-term drop. That is not the right way to cure inflation.

That is exactly what happened in the 1970s under the policies initiated by my friend across the way. The hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce was there at the time as well. They started printing money. They took the inflation rate from 5.5 per cent up to 13 per cent. They took the unemployment rate from about 7 per cent up to 13 per cent and they took interest rates from about 10 per cent up to 24 per cent.

Some hon. Members: Shame, shame.

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Finance wants to know how to bring down the bank rate, all he has to do is ask the chairman of the finance committee. He will tell him how to do it, and so did the finance committee last June.

I want to ask the Minister of Finance about the unemployment rate. We now have an unemployment rate of some 7 per cent in this country. About 1 million people are unemployed. What unemployment rate is the Minister of Finance going to tolerate before he changes monetary policy in this country? Is it 8 per cent or is it 9 per cent, because at 9 per cent another 250,000 people will be unemployed.

What is the bottom line? What unemployment rate will he tolerate before he instructs the Governor to roll back that bank rate? People in this country really want to know.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member is very well aware of the performance in this country on employment. We have seen 1.5 million jobs created. We have seen unemployment come down in every province, except for one, Prince Edward Island.

Mr. Gauthier: Oh, come on.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): The hon. member across the way says: "Oh, come on". Those are the facts. I know the hon. member does not like to face the facts. He does not want to listen to what has happened over the course of the last five years, partly as a result of the policies this government has followed.

Mr. Gauthier: Go ahead, I'm listening. Just don't mislead.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Again, we go right back to the source of the problem, and that is inflation. If the hon. member would stand up and tell me how he feels we should get inflation down, I would be quite happy to listen to that. For the last year and a half members from the New Democratic Party have been saying: "Forget about inflation. You can't have interest rates go up. Forget about inflation". When we see that those pressures are still there today we know that if we had forgotten about inflation we would have a rip-roaring inflation problem now, and that is what we are trying to avoid.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. When the minister took office in 1984 he inherited a $20 billion trade surplus. In the last eight years he has managed to produce the first month-over-month trade deficit. There are some economists who are suggesting that over the next year our trade deficit could go as high as $20 billion.

What plan of action does the minister have to avert this economic disaster?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I understand that there are some pressures in the economy. That is clear. The hon. member is falling into the same trap as his colleague who sits behind him. He is dealing with the symptoms of the problem and not dealing with the cause of the problem. I would appreciate if the hon. member would stand up and tell me what he thinks we should be doing about inflation, how we should be getting the inflation problem under greater

control, because it is the inflation problem that is causing the things to which he has referred.

At the heart of this is the difficult fiscal problem that we inherited in 1984, which he very conveniently avoided mentioning, and that is a deficit that was close to $38.3 billion which we have brought down year by year with a very great deal of difficulty, and we are committed to getting it down further. That is one of the difficult causes of the inflation problem that we have today.

Mr. Mills: My supplementary question is for the same minister, Mr. Speaker. It really frustrates me that he cannot take responsibility for his own actions. The fact of the matter is that in the last four months our inflation rate was around 2.7 per cent on average. I would just like to know at what point in time he would react to inflation.

• (1440)

The Governor of the Bank of Canada is not responsible for managing the economy of this country; the Minister of Finance is responsible. At what time will the Minister of Finance assume his responsibilities? At what point in time will he ask the Governor of the Bank of Canada to act? Will it be when there is 100,000 jobs lost, 200,000? At what level of human misery will the minister act?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has said that I am not prepared to accept my responsibilities. I am quite prepared to accept, and I accept those responsibilities day by day, every day that I am in this job.

The hon. member again is playing kind of loose with those numbers. If he takes notice he will see that the inflation rate increased last month, not decreased. These are the pressures that are still there in the economy. I say to him again if he is going to have credibility as a spokesman for his party stand up and talk about the cause of the problem, and that is inflation.

Some hon. Members: It's you.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): How is the government going to deal with the problem of inflation today? If he has any ideas on that I will be happy to listen to them, but don't just talk about the symptoms because, as he knows, dealing with the symptoms of the problem is exactly what got us into the mess we inherited in 1984. That government, for years and years, dealt with just the symptoms of the problem and did not get down to dealing with the causes.

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[*Translation*]

ATLANTIC FISHERIES INDUSTRY

Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Beauséjour): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. The entire fisheries industry in the Atlantic Region is in a slump, and this applies to Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Eastern Quebec and New Brunswick. Our economic base is crumbling.

Last week the Prime Minister told us here in the House that generous, comprehensive programs similar to those created to help Western farmers would be put into place for the Atlantic fisheries. We have now heard about these programs several times but we have yet to see the colour of them. Could the Prime Minister explain to Canadians this afternoon what he means by comprehensive and generous programs?

[*English*]

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman may not be paying all that much attention, but a week ago today, I believe it was, the government announced the measures it was taking with reference to the immediate consequences of certain plant closures that have occurred in Atlantic Canada, or that may occur in the next several months.

Included among the measures to be taken was the formation of a community diversification fund to help the people in the communities affected, to try to diversify their economy to assist those communities. Improved programs were announced in order to help the individuals who might be affected, including the application in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia of the program for older worker adjustment which applies to those who are over the age of 54. If they cannot be retrained or find other work they will be assisted until they are 65. It was announced that there would be a supplement to that program for workers in this industry who are over 50 and find themselves in that position, because the workers in this industry are not entitled to pensions and because in some cases they are not even receiving a separation allowance.

Steps have already been announced and taken and, as the Prime Minister has indicated, longer term plans are being developed with the province of Newfoundland in particular to deal with the long-term consequences of the fact that the fishery is now trying to sustain many more people than can be sustained at an economic or living wage from the fishery, and that problem has to be tackled as well. It was not tackled in the past. It is going to be tackled now under the leadership of the Prime Minister.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robichaud: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Prime Minister whether it is true what he meant by comprehensive and generous programs.

[*English*]

Is the Prime Minister ready to commit his government before Christmas, right here, today, to a $1 billion program like the programs that are used to aid the western farmers? Is he ready to do that today? Is the Prime Minister ready to put his money where his mouth is?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have already indicated on behalf of the government and on behalf of the people of Canada that we would be assisting the Atlantic fishery and the communities affected by problems in the Atlantic fishery as vigorously as we intervened on behalf of the prairie farmers. I have already indicated that very publicly. I do not know why the hon. member is quarrelsome in regard to his question.

I know of the hon. member's sincere interest in this. As a result of this I would ask him, on behalf of those in the Atlantic fishery who are badly affected, to speak to his Liberal colleagues in the Senate to make sure that they pass the unemployment insurance bill because that will give fisheries workers benefits at 10 weeks rather than 14 weeks.

Mr. Robichaud: Let's hear a number then.

Mr. Mulroney: Atlantic families are today being penalized by Liberal senators, and I ask for your help to get this thing back on the rails so that Atlantic Canadians can benefit from UIC.

EDUCATION

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State. Recently the Prime Minister pledged to make education the highest priority of his government. He promised all young Canadians a world-class education.

Now the government is imposing user fees on student loans and adding hundreds of dollars to debts of already overburdened students. The government keeps telling us it does not like debt. Why is the government forcing students into more debt?

Hon. Gerry Weiner (Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Citizenship)): Mr. Speaker, the Canada Student Loan Program is a very important program that will help some 220,000 students in need this particular year.

The government will be guaranteeing student loans worth some $600 million this year and will be spending $431 million on student assistance. That is double the amount that was spent five years ago. We are very cognizant of what has to be done. We certainly want to do all we can to be helpful. The small administration fee that is being asked is intended to help offset some of the cost of the defaults which are now running very high.

Mr. Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, students all over the country are finding it difficult to get to university because they do not have enough money and have difficulty paying back the loans when they do get there.

My supplementary question is also to the Secretary of State. The government is also privatizing the student loan program. It is doing what its business friends have told it to do, privatize education. Canadians want to know whether, under this government, the qualification for university admission is to be high marks or high income.

Mr. Weiner: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of benefits that students receive, including the loan guarantee. There is an interest subsidy. There are favourable interest rates and an easy repayment schedule. We are trying to increase the efficiency of the program. We would like to encourage responsible borrowing and we want to deter the default payments.

There is every reason to target some funding, for example, to the disabled, to the really disadvantaged, and to women. We are going to be examining the program, as we have very recently. We are going to be doing a very full review to see how the program can better respond to the changing needs of the community.

[*Translation*]

INCOME TAX ACT

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance.

In Quebec, all corporations have to pay tax annually on their capital. However, Quebec's income tax legislation provides an exemption for mining companies that have not yet reached the production stage.

Bill C-28 does not contain the same exemption. It taxes all companies with capital in excess of 10 million, like Ressources Yorbeau in Rouyn-Noranda.

Mr. Speaker, my question is this: Will Bill C-28 provide the same treatment, and if not, will he consider a change in the legislation for mining companies that are not in production?

[*English*]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the concern that the hon. member has indicated on this particular tax, the large corporations tax. It was a tax which was brought in to ensure that all corporations with capital over $10 million, which amounts to 3,500 or 3,600 corporations in Canada, would pay at least a nominal amount of tax and that amount varies with the size of the corporation.

The hon. member has expressed interest in a variation on this. I would be happy to look at the proposal and get back to him.

* * *

• (1450)

AGRICULTURE

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture recently released farm income figures showing that as a result of government policy farm income will drop by 39 per cent in 1990. This includes an incredible 101 per cent drop in Saskatchewan and 87 per cent in Manitoba. Now the minister's office has told the *Globe and Mail* that program expenditures will drop 64 per cent in 1990. The farmers of Canada cannot accept these massive cuts.

What plans does the government have to ensure a fair return for the producer rather than encouraging the vicious winner-take-all battle that this government has forced upon the agricultural industry and the food processors of Canada?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's question would have certainly expressed the urgency of the matter if he had not tried to preface it on the basis that the decline in farm income projected is as a result of government policy. He knows that and he should not mislead the House in that regard because the Government of Canada has been very generous in supporting farmers all across Canada, whether it is western Canada, eastern Canada or central Canada. The hon. member knows that very well.

As a matter of fact, that resulted in large part in the average income of the farming community in Canada being raised from an average of $3.1 billion during the time when his party was in office to over $4 billion during the period of time that we were in office. That is a 30 per cent increase. That hardly demonstrates that this government has not been there in support of the agricultural community. Some $21.7 billion, to be exact, has been spent since this government took office.

What is the government going to do about it? We have put in place a process for the examination of new policy alternatives which is clearly needed to overhaul the crop insurance program, the safety net program and stabilization programs which have been put to the supreme test. I ask the hon. member, rather than carping from the sidelines, to get involved in this process. Bring forth your ideas and I am sure that they will be taken into consideration.

Mr. Ferguson: The fact remains, Mr. Speaker, that the price for grains has dropped dramatically since the government took office.

If this minister is unable to recognize the impact of his own figures, a look at what is happening in the food processing industry will allow him to see the writing on the wall. Three more food processing plants announced

closings this month: Cobi Foods, St. Lawrence Starch and Gerber Baby Foods. Five hundred more jobs are lost. Twenty-two processing plants have closed across the country this last year with 3,071 jobs lost, and that in addition to what is being lost in the fish processing industry.

Given the disastrous effects of the free trade agreement on agriculture in Canada and on the food processing industry, will the minister call upon his government to invoke the six month cancellation clause of the free trade agreement, or will he just continue to bluster and evade the issue that Canada's food production and processing industry is in serious trouble?

Mr. Mazankowski: Well, Mr. Speaker, every sparrow that falls will be blamed upon the free trade agreement.

An hon. Member: What a turkey.

Mr. Mazankowski: When it comes to turkeys, the hon. member knows who they are because they are all surrounding him, and as Christmas grows near they get fatter.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the minister could conclude his answer.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, I find it rather ironic that the questioner who preceded the member for Lambton—Middlesex sort of suggested that we were too generous to the agricultural community and this gentleman now is indicating that we are not generous enough.

He knows as well as anyone else in this House should know that the price of grain is established in the international market-place and Canadian grain is largely exported and it must be competitive to meet competition. The Hon. Member should know that.

He talks about the processing industry. As I have said in the House before, the processing industry has had a very good year. Investments are up by some 15 per cent. Investment is up by 40 per cent in the bakery industry, 21 per cent in biscuit manufacturing and 73 per cent in meat processing.

He wants to talk about what is happening because of free trade. Pilsbury, Canada Packers, General Foods, J.M. Schneider, M.L.M. Flour Products and C.S.T. are all expanding because of free trade.

* * *

CLOSURE OF CFB SUMMERSIDE

Mr. Joe McGuire (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, it has been eight long months since this government asked for the closure of CFB Summerside. Since that time the economy of Prince County and indeed the economy of Prince Edward Island has suffered severely, as the Minister of Finance has already indicated.

My question is directed to the Prime Minister. Now that the Prime Minister and his cabinet have had eight months to respond to their commitment of a significant federal presence to replace CFB Summerside, is he prepared to make that announcement today following his meeting with Premier Joe Ghiz?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. Members: Just say yes.

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, the Liberals ask a question and yet they refuse to let anybody answer. That is the problem with the Liberals.

I will be meeting with Premier Ghiz this afternoon and any matters that have to be announced will be announced then or at an appropriate time in the future.

Mr. McGuire: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Associate Minister of National Defence. In view of the fact that the Atlantic fisheries is in a state of crisis and the fact that the elimination of the 880 Squadron will only make that crisis worse as 50 per cent of our air surveillance will be eliminated with the elimination of the tracker squadron, will the minister offer some support to her beleaguered colleague, the Minister of Fisheries, and order a full reinstatement of the 880 Tracker Squadron or at least a partial reprieve because service to the Atlantic fishery is needed now more than ever? Will the minister do her part toward solving this crisis?

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the hon. member

is aware that the Department of National Defence will, of course, continue to provide services through Aurora aircraft and the newly purchased Arcturus aircraft when they come on board.

I am sure he is also aware that in October of this year the cabinet approved additional funding for the Department of Fisheries of some $28 million to provide for fisheries patrol surveillance and that should more than meet their needs. In fact it is substantially more than what had been provided by our department previously.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. To date approximately 2,000 Canadians have died of AIDS and another 3,300 have contracted this deadly disease. In spite of all the efforts of our best doctors and scientists we have not found a cure. The best thing we can do is help prevent it. In this regard the government on December 1 presented an excellent video on AIDS.

Does the Department intend to issue any more of these informational videos?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, in addition to the video *Live* which we released on World AIDS Day, December 1, we have a further video about AIDS which we are currently negotiating with the CBC for airing on the national network.

We have already shown the video to a number of community health people and educators have been very supportive of it. We are currently preparing materials for use in classrooms to go along with the release of the video.

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THE ECONOMY

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board. He will be aware that during the Canada-U.S. negotiations on the free trade deal there was great pressure by the Americans on our cultural industries, including postal subsidies to keep Canadian magazines afloat. The previous minister, Flora MacDonald, proudly told this House that she had won the battle and she was going to keep the subsidies on for at least five years.

Last week the minister cut those subsidies. On what basis was Canadian culture chosen as a cutback and was this, in fact, just a guise? In fact, it was a concession as a result of the free trade deal under the guise of a budgetary cutback.

• (1500)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member that the government's decision in this area has nothing to do with the free trade agreement.

We are trying to develop a program that meets Canadian cultural objectives in the book and magazine publishing industries, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

Mr. Waddell: I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, for the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister has spoken eloquently in the House about the five million people who are illiterate in the country. He has turned around and put a tax on books and has now removed the subsidies to Canadian magazines.

What are the priorities of the government, given in the last week that the principal victims—not the cafeterias or the dining rooms—or the real victims of the cut-backs were students and the Canadian cultural industry? Where are the priorities of the government?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Masse: Mr. Speaker, the government's priority in this respect is to ensure that our cultural industries are viable and that communication between the Canadian creative artist and the Canadian consumer is effective, and that is what is foremost in our minds.

[*English*]

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board.

The National Capital Commission's budget has been chopped by $24 million over the next three years. This comes after a $5 million cut in last April's budget.

By reducing the NCC's budget by 25 per cent, by forcing the NCC to sell off federal properties, by leaving the NCC competing for money in the private sector, and

with the potential for staff lay-offs in the future, is the government really committed to the concept of the NCC playing a pro-active role on behalf of the entire nation? If not, why not? If it is, when is it going to prove it?

Hon. Paul Dick (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, the National Capital Commission plays a very important role in the life of the community of Ottawa, being the nation's capital. With a budget of in excess of $96 million a year, I think any other city in the country would also be pleased to have such a forthright and progressive institution.

The fact that the cut-backs happen to be with regard to the residences of the Prime Minister and Rideau Hall do not affect the ongoing programming the NCC is carrying out.

Mrs. Gaffney: Mr. Speaker, obviously the Minister for Supply and Services does not support the National Capital Commission.

In 1986 cabinet approved an expanded mandate for the National Capital Commission with the key objective of, and I quote, "making the capital more representative of Canada and ensuring that it is perceived as such by all Canadians".

If this government is really committed to the National Capital Commission, why is the minister making it impossible for it to carry out its mandate? How can the minister seriously expect the NCC to maintain a nation's capital of which all Canadians can be proud?

Mr. Dick: Mr. Speaker, I do not understand. We are very much in support of the NCC and think that the chairman has been doing an excellent job.

However, it is obvious that the Liberals would sooner have a new roof on the Prime Minister's residence than get on with the new programming and the work carried out by the NCC.

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PRIVILEGE

CONTENT OF BROCHURES—PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX—SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: I should advise the House that I have two questions of privilege to deal with.

On November 20, 1989 the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands raised a question of privilege related to certain pamphlets on the goods and services tax which a constituent of his had informed him were being distributed in a local grocery chain outlet.

In view of the Chair's ruling on October 10, 1989, the hon. member questioned the propriety of the distribution of the pamphlets. He suggested that this constituted a contempt of the House, pointing out that in the text of the pamphlets the presumption that the GST will be law by January 1991 is everywhere asserted with none of the appropriate references to the legislative process through which the GST must pass.

[*Translation*]

Later that day, the Minister of Finance rose on a point of order to explain that the pamphlete in question were part of the initial information package prepared by the Department last summer and distributed last August. The Minister assured the House that the distribution contracts for the dissemination of that material had been completed by October and that, subsequent to the Chair's ruling on the advertisements for the GST, steps had been taken to have all offending materials returned to the department.

[*English*]

The hon. member for Windsor West intervened to question whether the disputed material was still being distributed.

[*Translation*]

The Chair undertook to look further into the matter. I have now carefully considered the issue raised by the Honourable Member for Kingston and the Islands and the remarks made by the Honourable Minister of Finance. It appears that the point at issue is the timing of the removal of the pamphlets from public distribution.

[*English*]

The Chair is satisfied that the material in question was part of the summer advertising campaign and that given the intricacies of the nation-wide distribution of such material some time delays may have occurred in recovering material from that campaign. The minister has assured the House that the department had taken appropriate steps to have the material returned to it and has asked, in light of the complaint raised by the hon.

member for Kingston and the Islands, if members would bring such aberrant cases to his attention so that corrective action may be taken where required.

In light of this information the Chair is satisfied that the hon. member's complaint has been fairly and expeditiously dealt with and considers the matter settled. If hon. members have further information to bring to the Chair, the Chair of course will hear further applications.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS—SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: I am now ready to rule on the question of privilege raised on Friday, October 20 by the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell regarding proceedings in the Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations the previous day. The hon. member had made the case that he had been convened to a meeting of the committee to discuss the specific subject matter, that during the course of the meeting a motion was moved relating to an entirely different subject, and that this constituted a breach of his privileges as a member.

He further argued that the committee notice of meeting is equivalent to the Order Paper of the House and that if a single item of business appears on the committee notice of meeting then only that item can be dealt with by the committee.

[*Translation*]

I have carefully considered the argument of the hon. member and the excellent points made by hon. members on both sides of the question. The Chair finds itself in some difficulty in addressing the specifics of the case made by the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell. According to our traditions and practices, the Chair ought not to intervene with the proceedings of a committee unless a problem has been reported by the committee to the House or in extremely unusual circumstances. It is also clear that disputes arising from committee meetings ought to be dealt with in that committee and not raised on the floor of the House.I will therefore not comment on the specific incident in the Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs. The Chair is pleased, however, to comment on the larger questions which arose during the discussion of the hon. member's grievance, which relates to committees dealing with business other than that listed on the green sheet announcing the date, time and place of the meeting.

[*English*]

Although Standing Order 116 states in part that "in a standing, special or legislative committee, the Standing Orders shall apply so far as may be applicable," it is nonetheless a long-standing convention that notice is not required for any motion in committee.

Beauchesne's Fifth Edition in Citation 571 reminds us that flexibility is the watchword in committee deliberations when it states:

> Proceedings in the committees are more relaxed in nature than those in the House as the requirements which must be observed in the chamber are not so strictly enforced when members sit in committee.

This difference in practices between the House and its committees is nowhere more evident than when dealing with motions in amendment to the clauses of a bill. Motions to amend a bill in committee require no notice whatsoever. In the House, on the other hand, the Standing Orders specifically require that 24-hour written notice be given for motions in amendment at report stage of a bill.

[*Translation*]

This being the case, and while some members may feel that it causes inconvenience and creates difficulties for the orderly pursuit of a committee's agenda, the Chair must rule that there is no procedural impediment to a committee's dealing with any matter within its mandate at any meeting of that committee regardless of the stated purpose or purposes of a particular meeting.

• (1510)

[*English*]

The Chair must also inform hon. members that it has been unable to find any procedural authority to support the position of the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell and other hon. members that the committee notice of meeting constitutes an Order Paper for the committee.

Should the House in its wisdom wish to alter this long-standing practice it can certainly do so, and there are several avenues open to achieve this end.

[*Translation*]

I thank the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell for raising this most interesting issue.

[*English*]

I hope that this judgment has helped to clarify the matter for all hon. members.

* * *

POINT OF ORDER

COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, during Question Period and in response to a question the Minister of Agriculture stated that I had misled the House.

This is very serious. I would like to point out that some of the figures I used came from the minister's own department. I would suspect that likely he was referring to the fact that I said as result of his government's policy farm income would drop by $2.6 billion in the coming year. The minister's own figures show that there will be a drop of $1.7 billion in expenditures of the Department of Agriculture for the coming year.

Therefore I would suggest to you, Sir, that the drop in his own expenditures is in effect as a result of government policy.

I would ask to have that remark withdrawn.

Mr. Speaker: I am prepared to hear further argument.

Mr. Murray Cardiff (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture who has another engagement at the present time. He is unable to be here to make any comment. We would ask him to respond at the earliest opportunity when he returns to the House.

Mr. Speaker: We certainly will accommodate the minister and hear his response.

I want to point out to the hon. member for Lambton—Middlesex that the word "mislead" is sometimes used on both sides of the House. It always gives me a certain concern because the question has to be whether the word is used in the sense that the minister or the member is intentionally misleading the House. That is what I would have to determine.

The hon. member for Lambton—Middlesex would know that that would be the question I would have to decide. I have some difficulty in sorting out the merits of an argument over various allegations of numbers and figures on both sides of the House. However I will hear the minister at an appropriate time.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

INCOME TAX ACT

ALLOCATION OF TIME TO CONSIDER REPORT AND THIRD READING STAGES OF BILL C-28

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Lewis:

> That, in relation to Bill C-28, not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration of the report stage and, one sitting day to the consideration of the third reading stage of the bill; and
>
> That, fifteen minutes before the expiry of the time provided for government business on the day allotted to the report stage consideration and on the day allotted to the third reading stage consideration of the said bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required, for the purpose of this order and, in turn, every question necessary in order to dispose of the stage of the bill then under consideration shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment.

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Madam Speaker, I am not very happy to be speaking this afternoon on a motion to impose closure on a bill that deserves to be heard.

I sat in the House throughout this morning's debate just as you did, Madam Speaker, and I listened to argument after argument by opposition members. These opposition members were stating the obvious, that is this government has imposed closure and time allocation more times than any other government in the history of this country.

It is a sad state of affairs when the government has to impose its will on the people of Canada, rather than do the will of the people of Canada and carry out their wishes and needs. I sat here and listened to the various arguments that were being made. I was quite surprised that I did not hear a single word in response from members on the opposite side of the House.

All morning we debated this bill and the only words we heard from across the way were a very few short statements from the Minister of Justice who said they had to impose closure on the clawback legislation, Bill C-28.

We have no evidence whatsoever that members opposite have listened to a single thing that Canadians have said about this Bill—not in committee, not in debate here in the House of Commons, and certainly not from the people of Canada.

Just prior to that debate this morning I presented a petition from people in Big River, Saskatchewan. It is a smallish community in the northern part of my riding, The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, in north west Saskatchewan. Big River is on the eastern side of my constituency.

The seniors of that community sent me a petition that had been provided to them by One Voice, the seniors network. These people from this small community in the northern part of Saskatchewan were adding their names to those of other Canadians and seniors from right across this country who are telling this government that it cannot claw back the old age security pension, the family allowance program, or take money our of the pockets of seniors and do away with universality.

Did the government listen to those petitions? Did the government listen to the petitions that have been presented by the other members of this House who we have heard day after day after day in here? No, not at all.

I have been listening to the debate in this House. I have not heard much debate from the other side of the house. Obviously they must be listening if they are not speaking. However, if they are listening, why are they not doing what the people of Canada are suggesting to them?

It is like the other things that we have heard about in the last little while on the subject of interest rates. It was demonstrated quite clearly in the House today during Question Period. Is this government listening to the people of Canada, to the small business people of western Canada, to the farmers of Canada on the subject of interest rates? No, it is not listening to the people of Canada.

Has it listened to people on the subject of VIA Rail? Has it listened to the seniors from coast to coast who are using VIA Rail? Has it listened to the students who are using VIA Rail? Has it listened to the tourists who have travelled this country all summer long on VIA Rail proclaiming it to be not the best service but a good service for them as tourists coming to this country? Has it listened? No, it is not listening on Bill C-28. It is not listening on clawback or on universality. I think it is a shame and a sham that it is trying to impose this on us. I say that, the people of my constituency say that and certainly, as I indicated this morning with my petition, the people of Big River are saying that to this government.

There is total chaos in this bill. Certainly the process by which we have seen the matter handled through committee, the introduction of amendments, the whole mismanagement of this matter, tells me that rather than imposing closure on this bill and rushing it through the government should be doing everything in its power to withdraw the bill and start over again so that we can have good, unflawed legislation and a government that demonstrates that it can manage not only this piece of legislation but the economy.

An hon. Member: And that it cares for Canadians.

Mr. Taylor: That is right. My colleague is absolutely right. It has mismanaged the economy and this piece of legislation, and we should have none of it.

I know that I do not have much time, but I just want to indicate something here about the bill. Bill C-28 is essentially a clawback on the old age security pension. This is being done by not fully indexing the program—an attack on universality.

I just want to put a couple of thoughts on record. Talking about universality, obviously the government has accomplished the withdrawal of universality by not fully indexing what it calls a trigger figure of $50,000. If inflation rises by 4.5 per cent next year, the trigger figure will rise by only 1.5 per cent. That means that over time through inflation more and more of us will be caught in this whole process.

Here are some examples concerning the old age security pension. Right now a 25-year old who makes $25,000 a year for the rest of his life will have part of his old age pension clawed back at retirement. Where is the $50,000 there?

• (1520)

Here is another example. A 30-year old making $30,000 will have part of her OAS pension clawed back when she retires at the age of 65.

The same is true for 35-year olds making $35,000 a year, for 40-year olds making $40,000 a year, and for 45-year olds making $45,000 a year.

This is where the end of the universality program attacks a growing number of seniors in our society as time goes on. All told—and the government knows this, which is why it is not saying a darn word today—the clawback will catch about 128,000 Canadian pensioners in 1990. In 20 years from now that figure will rise to over one million Canadians. Where is this process of universality? Where are the government members standing up and saying: "Universality is a sacred right in this country"? We have on the old age security program more and more seniors coming under attack.

Is it any wonder that at national conferences across this country when seniors get together they talk about how this government is hitting them harder and harder with every single move that it makes? It is happening on this old age security program, on VIA Rail that transports them from one place to another, and on the GST which attacks almost everything that they buy and reduces their buying power.

I am appalled that this government wants to oppose closure and does not want to talk about the legislation here in order to give Canadians the opportunity to hear what we have to say. I am appalled that I have to stand here today and talk to them about this, but I know it is the only way that Canadians across the country will know exactly what those people across the way are thinking and doing, because obviously they are not interested in communicating that message themselves.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, once again I rise in this House to address the issue of closure. It seems that it is becoming such a habit with the government opposite that it appears to have embarked on a one-party quest to change the rules of the House of Commons.

I would say that this party, the Conservative party, was a party of parliamentary reform. When it came into office in 1984 the Conservatives said how much Parliament needed to be reformed. They had been in opposition for decades and had all kinds of ideas on how Parliament would be improved. They instituted a series of reforms that Your Honour knows about. We are now faced with a situation where instead of living up to the spirit of those reforms and following through with them they are going back to the old closure rules that they condemned so vigorously when they were in opposition and which they now use willy-nilly on almost every bill that comes along.

I see the hon. member for Macleod is grinning. He should be red-faced with shame at the constant use of closure that this government has embarked on in this House. I want to make some reference to this.

I think the record is a broken record, a dreadful record. This government has used closure in this Parliament already, and we have not yet been sitting for a full year from when we started last December. The government has used closure more than any other government in any other Parliament in Canadian history. Not by one or two times more; it is almost double the number of times. I think it is at 11 on closure, and that this is the second or third time we have had time allocation. That is not counting the fancy suspension of the standing orders we have had: one on the bill last week and one on the free trade bill a year ago in December.

That is the kind of record that most governments would be terribly embarrassed about. Instead, this government goes on with its dictatorial ways trampling on the rights of Parliament right, left and centre.

I want to go through the history of its dealings on this particular bill. The bill was introduced following the budget and was given first reading on June 20 this year. It was called for second reading on October 11. I would like to remind you, Madam Speaker, that the House adjourned on June 27 last summer and, at the request of the government, we did not meet again until September 25, a full two weeks later than the rules would normally have provided.

If the government were that concerned about getting this bill passed, surely it would not have allowed an extra two weeks of holidays, as they are called, for members of Parliament to be away from this place. Surely it would have called Parliament back promptly.

Mr. McDermid: Holidays?

Mr. Milliken: I said so-called holidays. I know the Minister of State for Privatization works like a Trojan when he is not here, but the fact is that Parliament could have been recalled. We could have been here to deal with that issue. Instead government members chose to ignore the facts. They said: "We will wait. We will get Parliament back together and then after two or three days of debate we will close her down. We will stop members from debating this bill any more", because they are so embarrassed by its contents.

It was debated on October 11, October 17, October 18, and finally on November 20. Let us look at the days just to see. That sounds like a lot, four days on second reading of a bill. Let us look at the days. October 11 was a Wednesday. October 18 was a Wednesday. Those are the shortest possible days that you can discuss government business in Parliament. Yet those are two of days on the list of four which the government says that this bill has been debated.

On October 17 it was debated for a full normal Tuesday and then on November 20 they applied closure. We had a late night sitting to deal with the bill because of the application of the closure rule. We went on until 11.30 at night. We could have gone to 1; if the minister had been here to speak perhaps we would have.

The fact is that the debate ended and the minister did not participate, as I recall, on that particular evening. I regret that. I would have enjoyed a speech from him. Perhaps he will speak tomorrow. The fact is that the debate was closed off on November 20 and the matter went to a committee. It has come back to the House by report.

When was it debated at report stage? There were about, as I recall, seven amendments moved at report stage. It was debated for one hour on Friday morning from 11 until 12 and then the heavy-handed Minister of Justice walked into the House and slammed down a little time allocation motion on us.

The Minister of Justice was here this morning introducing his motion. It was one of those flippant happy speeches that the minister so likes to make, designed to charm the people in his riding but not designed to charm the opposition or anybody who has a responsible view of the duties of a government in Parliament.

The duty of the government is to account in this House. I see the minister running from the door. The obligation of this particular bunch is to come in here and tell the House what is going on, to account and be responsible. Instead they say: "No, we do not want to discuss this bill. We will simply close off debate as soon as we can get an opportunity".

One hour at report stage and the government is in here moving a time allocation order. It is a disgrace. It is an absolute disgrace. It says that we will have one more day.

Guess what is going to happen, Madam Speaker: One day on report stage. That will be on Tuesday. It will be a full day and then one day on third reading. It will be Wednesday, another short day; probably two and a half hours of debate maximum at third reading on this bill. That is what the government calls a full day of debate. That is what the government calls a responsible attitude to Parliament. That is what the government calls the spirit of parliamentary reform.

I see the Minister of Justice has appeared from behind the curtains. He should come and sit in this House and tell the House his views on this motion, instead of the flippant speech he gave this morning when he smirked and snickered his way through what could only be regarded as a travesty for the rights of parliamentarians to discuss an issue of great importance. This bill is one of the major bills coming out of the budget that was introduced, that leaked budget that the Minister of Finance had all across the television screens before he could introduce it in this House last spring.

This bill, as everyone knows, claws back pensions. It is a totally unfair package of tax increases for senior citizens. No other group in Canada is being discriminated against the way senior citizens are being discriminated against. The Minister of Justice, of all people, the representative of the sovereign as the fountain head of all justice in Canada, is in here applying closure and this kind of tactic to a bill that is designed to be unfair, to discriminate, to do everything that a bill should not do. The Minister of Justice is the one who is seen to countenance this kind of injustice toward the seniors in this country. No other group is being subjected to 100 per cent tax on their income or any portion of it and yet that is what this bill does for the seniors of Canada.

Mr. McDermid: A "portion" of their income.

Mr. Milliken: The hon. minister of state for privatization is getting excited again. Certainly it is a portion of their income, but it is their old age security pension that is being attacked in this way.

• (1530)

Mr. McDermid: Got to keep you honest. The people from Kingston and the Islands are honest.

Mr. Milliken: I agree with the hon. minister that people from Kingston and the Islands are honest. I do not disagree with him one bit on that statement. But the fact is that part of people's income is being taxed at 100 per cent. No other kind of income is treated in this way under the tax laws of Canada.

Mr. McDermid: Part of my income is taxed 100 per cent, too.

Mr. Milliken: Hon. members opposite are getting overwrought. The minister of state says part of his income is being taxed at over 100 per cent. I say to him, he does not have an Old Age Security pension and he is not getting taxed on that particular portion of his income.

Mr. Andre: Family allowance is taxed to death.

Mr. Milliken: Family allowances, also. I am sorry, I forgot about his family allowance. Not being a family man, I am not concerned about the family allowance in the sense that I am unaware of my family allowance being taxed back. But I agree with the minister, he should be ashamed that that kind of income is being taxed in this way too. It is highly discriminatory. It is highly unfair and the minister knows that. He should oppose this bill.

Here we have the largest cabinet in history, 38 members of the cabinet sitting in this House. If there were any sense of democracy in that group, surely they would get together in the cabinet room and vote down this kind of bill. Surely they would say to the Minister of Finance that this breaches all sense of decency, of fairness, of equity, of propriety, and of justice, I say to the minister. Yet 38 of them did not manage to vote this down. Where is the sense of democracy in the treasury benches opposite? I ask the Minister of Justice, why did he not put to his colleagues the question of whether there would be time allocation on this bill this afternoon? Surely, if he had put that question to his colleagues they would have said: "No, Mr. Minister, we cannot have time allocation on such an important and unfair measure", and surely the minister would then have agreed.

I ask the minister to stand up in the House in the minute remaining in this debate and withdraw his motion so we can proceed with detailed consideration of this bill as it requires.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Call in the members.

The House divided on the motion which was agreed to on the following division:

(*Division No. 158*)

YEAS

Members

Anderson	Andre
Atkinson	Attewell
Beatty	Bernier
Bertrand	Blais
Blenkarn	Bosley
Bouchard (Roberval)	Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Bourgault	Boyer
Brightwell	Browes
Cadieux	Cardiff
Casey	Chadwick
Champagne (Champlain)	Charest
Clark (Brandon—Souris)	Cole
Collins	Cook
Cooper	Corbeil
Corbett	Côté
Couture	Crosby (Halifax West)
Darling	DeBlois
de Cotret	Desjardins
Domm	Dorin
Duplessis	Edwards
Epp	Fee
Feltham	Ferland
Fontaine	Friesen
Gérin	Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)

Greene	Guilbault
Gustafson	Halliday
Hawkes	Hicks
Hockin	Hogue
Holtmann	Horning
Hudon	Hughes
James	Jelinek
Kempling	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Koury	Larrivée
Layton	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lewis	Loiselle
Lopez	MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Malone	Marin
Martin (Lincoln)	McDermid
McDougall (St. Paul's)	Merrithew
Monteith	Nicholson
Oberle	Paproski
Plamondon	Plourde
Porter	Pronovost
Redway	Reid
Reimer	Ricard
Richardson	Robitaille
Roy-Arcelin	Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)	Shields
Siddon	Sobeski
Sparrow	Stevenson
Tardif	Tétreault
Thacker	Thorkelson
Tremblay (Rosemont)	Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Turner (Halton—Peel)	Vincent
Weiner	Wilbee
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)	
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)	Winegard
Worthy—114	

NAYS

Members

Allmand	Anawak
Assad	Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bélair	Bellemare
Benjamin	Bevilacqua
Black	Blackburn (Brant)
Blondin	Boudria
Butland	Callbeck
Campbell (South West Nova)	Catterall
Clancy	Crawford
Dionne	Duhamel
Ferguson	Finestone
Fisher	Flis
Fontana	Fulton
Gaffney	Gardiner
Gauthier	Gray (Windsor West)
Guarnieri	Harb
Hopkins	Hovdebo
Hunter	Jordan
Karpoff	Keyes
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)	Kristiansen
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)	MacAulay
MacDonald (Dartmouth)	MacLellan
MacWilliam	Maheu
Manley	Marchi
Marleau	McGuire
Mifflin	Milliken
Mitchell	Murphy
Nault	Nystrom
Parent	Parker
Pickard	Prud'homme
Rideout	Riis
Robichaud	Rompkey
Simmons	Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Stewart	Taylor
Volpe	Whittaker
Wood	Young (Gloucester)—72

• (1600)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I declare the motion carried.

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Madam Speaker, on a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The hon. member for Abitibi, on a point of order.

Mr. Saint-Julien: Madam Speaker, I abstained from voting on this motion because mining companies in my riding have a problem with Section 181 of this Bill.

[*English*]

Mr. White: Madam Speaker, I was late arriving for the vote, but I would like it recorded that had I been here I would have voted with the government.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CROP INSURANCE ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Doug Lewis (for the Minister of Agriculture) moved that Bill C-48, an act to amend the Crop Insurance Act, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

Mr. Murray Cardiff (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to present to the House for second reading Bill C-48, which is legislation amending the Crop Insurance Act.

This new legislation amending the Crop Insurance Act is crucial to protect Canadian farmers from economic losses due to uncontrollable natural hazards such as drought, hail, and waterfowl, and many other elements of weather that are uncontrollable by man. Without that protection farmers can face extreme financial hardships. Such risks and disasters are unacceptable for individual producers and our agricultural crop industry in general.

Although responsibility for crop insurance lies with each province, the federal government, through the Crop Insurance Act, provides mechanisms and support to ensure that the Canadian farmers can afford this protection. The federal act is enabling legislation that permits the transfer of federal funds to provincial programs that operate within the Federal–Provincial Crop Insurance Agreements. It is also very consistent with the agricultural policy review that this government has put into place, and the recent conference here in Ottawa last week entitled "Growing Together". It is all part of the safety net program that will be introduced. This is the first part of that program. We feel it is very important to have an affordable crop insurance that will give the producers of crops the protection that is necessary to carry on viable operations right across Canada. We hope with this legislation that provinces will provide the programs which are necessary for that to happen.

The legislation that the House is considering is designed to assist in the economic survival of our crop producers when confronted by natural disasters over which they have no control. We all are certainly aware of those disasters. It seems that they happen somewhere in Canada every year. The amendments proposed in this bill will provide the best insurance coverage at the lowest cost to the greatest number of farmers.

Originally passed in 1959, the Crop Insurance Act was a response to the concerns of both producers and governments about existing levels of crop loss protection. Until that year, crop insurance was really a permanent disaster relief program based on a 1 per cent levy on all grain sold or on *ad hoc* emergency funding at times of crisis. Although these programs did offer some security to the industry, farmers complained that payments were too small and that the program did not distinguish between those farmers with good yields and those with poor yields. In effect, efficient crop producers subsidized less efficient ones.

Ad hoc funding was less popular and producers could never be sure of how much they would be indemnified for losses. It was very difficult to do any financial planning with those types of programs. Governments and producers believed that the Crop Insurance Act was the answer. This act introduced stability into crop production by offering assistance to producers to cover insurance premiums.

Since its inception, the act has been amended several times. These amendments reflected the need to share costs more equitably among the federal and provincial governments and producers to extend coverage to more crops and more farmers, and to reduce reliance on *ad hoc* assistance.

The time has come when we must again amend the act to reflect modern realities.

The new legislation adheres to sound actuarial practices. In keeping with the original intent of the act, Bill C–48 will lessen producers' reliance on *ad hoc* assistance. While providing producers with a flexible and a greater range of coverage, the amendments ensure that the crop insurance pays for itself in the long term.

We have conducted extensive consultations with the provincial ministers of agriculture and with provincial and national producer organizations. Based on these consultations, we are proposing four classes of amendments to the Crop Insurance Act in time for the 1990 crop year. It is very important that we have this legislation passed to give the provinces time for their enabling legislation and regulations to be passed to make sure that it is there for 1990. It is a must that that is in place.

First, one major area of change modifies the calculations used to determine how much producers are reimbursed. This amendment gives the provinces more flexibility in estimating the probably yields for insurance purposes. It raises the maximum coverage from its current level of 80 per cent to 90 per cent and ensures that the price paid for a lost crop is fair.

Second, we have provided a more equitable rate for sharing the cost of insurance premiums. Third, we have strengthened the act's regulations to present more clearly the criteria governing federal support for crop insurance. Finally, we have added special provisions to extend coverage to new and minor crops and to crops lost to waterfowl. That is a new provision totally.

Producers greatest concerns were with three key elements: probable yield, maximum coverage, and unit prices that are used to calculate compensation. All those things are very necessary. We have amended the act to bring compensation more in line with lost revenues.

Looking at the first element, the current act provides a method of predicting yield based on the simply historical average of a producer or a geographic area. Producers consider this method inflexible and often punitive. For instance, the act does not recognize increased productivity as a result of technological imprudence. We all know from the way farming and the production of crops have changed over the last number of years that all of those

things are very important and have to be recognized and considered, and this bill does look after that.

Producers were also concerned that major losses could significantly erode their yield guarantees. Many producers claim that basing yield exclusively on an historical average for a given area disproportionately of benefit to those with lower yields. The area-average approach does not accurately reflect an individual farmer's productivity. Based on sound actuarial principles, amendments in the new legislation offer new approaches to determine insurable yields. These approaches take into account whether producers acquire new technology and buffer producers' yield calculations from successive losses.

• (1610)

The second key area in determining how much a producer is indemnified is the maximum coverage. Many producers feel that the current level of 80 per cent is too low. This new legislation proposes to increase allowable coverage up to 90 per cent for lower risk crops and areas.

Controls have been added to ensure that this increased level of coverage will not be abused. Greater coverage must be statistically justified, thereby ensuring that low yield variability is the basis for higher limits.

The third key element in the compensation calculations is the value of each unit. Provinces will have the flexibility of basing unit prices on market value or on costs of production.

The second major amendment proposes a more equitable cost sharing arrangement. Under the current act, one formula allows provinces to pay all the administrative costs while the federal government and the producers jointly assume the relatively higher costs of the premiums.

The result of this formula has meant that the federal government pays, on average, 45 per cent of costs, the producers pay 45 per cent and the provinces pay 10 per cent. The legislation has been amended to eliminate this formula and in its place is a more balanced method to share costs.

The arrangement is provided for in the current act, although to date only Newfoundland and Quebec have adopted this approach. Under this arrangement, producers pay the same proportion they have paid since 1973. That is, 50 per cent of the premiums and nothing towards administration which means that they pay 45 per cent of the cost. The federal and provincial governments share the balance of premiums and all administrative costs. The two levels of government do that equally.

There have been many enhancements to the Crop Insurance Act, such as the increase of the federal level of funding over the last number of years to make the program more viable. On an annual basis there have been more federal dollars go into the crop insurance program than before. In the 1987-1988 crop year, for instance, it was $181.5 million; 1988-1989 it is estimated to be around $314; in 1990 it is going to cost approximately $233 million. Some of these changes and different figures are because of drought and greater participation in some parts of the country.

I want to make it absolutely clear that this is not a cost reduction exercise. The purpose of this change and amendments to the Crop Insurance Act is to make sure that we have a program that meets the needs of the producers of crops in Canada.

The third major class of amendment strengthens the crop insurance regulations. This is necessary because the regulations in the current act are vague and incomplete. Regulatory provisions have been rewritten to set out more clearly the basis for federal contributions in order to move to a more level playing field by basing federal contributions on a more consistent and sound footing.

The new legislation will clarify many of the vague sections of the current act by including a comprehensive list of subjects to be defined and detailed in the regulations.

Adding new special provisions is the fourth major class of amendment. Crop insurance has traditionally ensured commercially viable field grown crops. However, recognizing that it is in the best interests of producers and government to diversify agriculture production, we have amended the act to cover new and minor crops as well.

Another special provision compensates producers when their crops are damaged by migratory waterfowl. The current approach to compensation has been based on average crop insurance coverage not directly related to the amount or value of the actual crop lost. The

amendment proposes increasing compensation to 80 per cent of the value of crops damaged at no cost to the producer. This provision will give producers a reasonable return on their crops and at the same time it will support Canada's international commitment to protect North American migratory water fowl.

I think it is very important that we have lived up to two obligations here. We have assisted the producers who have experienced damage from waterfowl and migratory birds. Many of us with rural ridings can relate to that problem. In some areas there is always damage by waterfowl. Also I want to point out that this cost is born equally by the federal and provincial governments with absolutely no cost to the producers. These four groups of amendments are improving the method for calculating compensation; providing a more equitable cost-sharing formula; strengthening the regulations; and adding provisions covering new and experimental crops and damage done by waterfowl. These are the major improvements to the Crop Insurance Act. But the new legislation also addresses other very important issues.

The current act has been criticized for not clearly specifying the responsibilities of the federal government and the provinces. Similarly, the conditions under which the federal government will fund provincial crop insurance plans are vague. This lack of clarity has led provinces to form different interpretations of what is permissible. This in turn has led to inconsistencies in the insurance program and varying levels and kinds of protection being offered.

Finally, sound administration is necessary to encourage more producers into the insurance program. Inadequate resources for administration generally results in increased premiums beyond what they should be and could put at risk the financial viability of crop insurance. The new act attempts to rectify this problem by requiring all major elements in the program to be outlined in regulations. We are giving provinces a clear idea of what will and what will not be eligible for federal contributions.

Crop reduction losses can result in financial fluctuations that are not in the long-term interests of either the agricultural industry or individual farmers. We have certainly experienced what has happened to our producers in this great country as a result of those fluctuations in prices and shortfalls that have occurred, particularly in the 1980s.

The *ad hoc* programs that were there were very unpredictable by nature and have made planning federal and provincial budgets extremely difficult. Producers have never been sure of how much support they could expect from one situation to the next. That has been part of the problem in agriculture. We know that the *ad hoc* programs have been very much supported by the producers but it is very difficult for any type of business, including farming, to establish a long-range plan when you are receiving *ad hoc* programs. Whether it be the borrower or the lender, it is very difficult to forecast the future and that is something that we have to do.

This is the first step we are taking to put that in place. It is one of the areas we are addressing. The financial element is a major component of this measure which we feel will assist in long-term planning for the agricultural sector and we look forward to the other measures that will complement this.

A more sound approach for protecting farmers against production losses is multi-peril crop insurance. Through Bill C-48 the federal government will ensure that crop producers can get the protection of crop insurance they need. We are amending the Crop Insurance Act to make it more responsive to the concerns of the provinces and producers.

As we approach adjournment at the end of the season, we would certainly hope that we could give consideration very rapidly to this bill at second reading and send it to committee so that it would be able to work on this legislation as soon as the House resumes in the new year.

I know that the producers of this country are anxious to have this legislation in place, to work with the provinces and have the protection and assurances that we need for the 1990 crop year. I think that will give the producers of this country a lot more confidence in planning for their future.

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak on the crop insurance bill. I have to concur with the parliamentary secretary that the producers want this legislation in place, but not in this form.

The producer organizations asked for a tripartite approach in this legislation whereby they would pay one-third of the premiums, the federal government would pay one-third and the provinces would each pay a third. Consequently, it would be a saving in outlay not only to the producers at a time when farm incomes are going to be down dramatically next year but also a saving to the federal government.

As it stands now the producers pay 50 per cent of the premiums, the federal government pays 50 per cent and it is administered by the provinces. That is why they are referred to as the Canada-Ontario, or Canada-Saskatchewan, or Canada-Alberta crop insurance program.

• (1620)

It is really enabling legislation that is implemented by the provincial crop insurance commission and, of course, these have to vary somewhat from province to province, depending on the crop being insured and the crop being grown.

The coverage under this bill would improve from 80 per cent to 90 per cent of probable yield for some crops. This is an improvement in this legislation, if it is an improvement. However, I have to point out that if a farmer was insuring for 90 per cent coverage in a field of corn, the premium would go up from $5.71 per acre up to $10 per acre. The premiums would almost double for the additional 10 per cent coverage.

In the many years I have been farming, only once have I ever been able to collect on crop insurance, and that was on some new seeding that would have been clover and legumes which smothered under the ice cover. But for those farmers in the drought-prone areas of Canada, particularly the prairies and other areas where we have frost damage and frost risk, it is essential that we have good sound legislation for them.

It is in this context that I and producers across Canada believe that at a time when many farmers are facing financial difficulties it is wrong to have the federal government cut back on its expenditures in this program. Even though it said it will not be spending less, the budget from last April indicated it would save $2 million over two years.

Consequently we feel that we should re-examine this bill and give the farmers a break in the premiums they pay as well as a saving to the federal government by reducing the premiums from 50 per cent for each of the farmers and the federal government down to 33.3 per cent.

The farmers across the country want this tripartite sharing and I think it would be a very solid improvement to a program that has served the farmers of Canada very well in the past.

We have tripartite stabilization payments for pork producers and beef, with the producers paying 33 per cent, the provinces paying 33 per cent, and the federal government paying 33 per cent of the cost. Why not the same for crop insurance? The precedent has already been established. I believe that we should be following through in that context.

We are sharing the risk. After all, the producer has no control over weather, nor does the government either at the federal or provincial level, although some would like to claim they do. Because we are dealing with mother nature and the elements I think we should look for a tripartite sharing of the cost.

I should point out that with the higher premiums which will be required, the farmers will take less coverage and there will be a continuing demand for *ad hoc* programs such as the Special Grains Program, or the drought and flood relief programs we have had in the past five years.

Therefore, I would suggest that we should re-examine this bill and I would ask the government to think very seriously about changing that to a straight one-third, one-third, and one-third arrangement.

This legislation has served the producers of Canada very well for a number of years. But it is on a voluntary basis and the all-risk insurance provides, and most of the provinces demand, that all acres in crop be insured. I would have preferred to be able to insure individual farms if that was possible, and I would like the government to look at this as well, because you do not insure all of a person's buildings and then only give a partial payment if only one burns down. You only pay on the individual buildings.

I think we should consider crop insurance in the same way because within a few miles there can be different levels of rainfall or a low lying area that is prone to frost damage in the fall of the year. Therefore, there are areas where there is higher risk than in others. Unlike fire insurance where the insurance is on individual farms or individual buildings, crop insurance covers the whole property. I think that is something we should be looking at in the future to see if that can be accomplished. Again,

by going with the one-third, one-third, and one-third sharing, the risk would be spread to everybody.

The 90 per cent provision would increase coverage to a maximum of 90 per cent of the probable yield in the area with respect to any farm. The increased coverage would be optional, and not all crops would be subject to the increased coverage. It would be only the low risk crops, and Ontario corn would be one that would fit into that group.

The current act offers production guarantees reflecting the long-term average. The new amendment would base coverage on a probable or expected yield process. This would permit adjustment for exceptionally high or low occurrences while accounting for productivity increases due to technological advance or management skill improvements. For example, the new probable yield would be based on a 10-year trend line as opposed to the 20 to 30-year average.

If the government had accepted the recommendations of the farmers for a tripartite sharing of the costs, I personally could support this bill. The original act has served us well for a lot of years, but it is time for a change. Unless the government does bring in some amendments like that, either at second reading or at committee, then I will have to go against this particular bill.

I look back a few years to the task force report entitled "Economic Growth—A Study Team Report". It was the task force on program review on agriculture. This report is dated February, 1985 and is referred to as the Nielsen task force.

When one looks at some of the recommendations one sees that it certainly has laid out the direction that this government has taken in agriculture over the last several years. One of the things that shocked me was that in this report there were several pages of acknowledgements of people who contributed to this report, including various assistant deputy ministers, department people, a lot of organizations, a lot of individuals, many of whom are academics.

I could only find the names of two farmers. One of these farmers is from Buffalo, Alberta, and the other is the President of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture. These were the only two farmers who were consulted, according to this task force report. I think that is despicable because it is the livelihood of farmers that is at stake. There are literally thousands of farmers in Saskatchewan who are going to be forced off their land this winter through no fault of their own. They had no input into this document that has obviously set the program and the policy of this government.

This policy has resulted in a forecast loss of income for the coming year. I believe it was in *The Globe and Mail* on December 8, where the minister himself stated that one of the biggest factors in the loss of income to farmers in the coming year was the fact that the program expenditures of Agriculture Canada were cut back dramatically.

There were recommendations in the task force report regarding the At and East legislation. It says it does not serve as a vital link in Canadian grain trade. I would have to suggest that the At and East program is a very vital program that provides western Canadian grain to the mills and the ports in Atlantic Canada. There is a bill before the House at the present time, I believe, to dismantle that program. That was one of those identified in the budget last year. It was going to be discontinued. That, of course, is in this task force report.

• (1630)

The crop insurance is touched on here as well in this Neilsen task force report. It makes recommendations suggesting that producers should pay more of the cost. That is one of the options that is suggested. It also suggests that the federal government pay 30 per cent of the actuarial cost. That is the one I am hoping the federal government will look at and increase not just to 30 per cent from the 25 per cent proposed in this bill but up to 33-1/3 per cent.

This task force report also talks about privatizing the Farm Credit Corporation. It talks about eliminating the Consolidated Revenue Fund borrowings and privatizing this institution which has provided money to the farmers over many years. It served very well until it became so harsh and unrelenting on those in arrears in those last three or four years. Policies are forcing farmers off the land through no fault of their own, policies that are not acceptable to the economic conditions of agriculture in Canada today.

Just recently we debated Bill C-36, the Advance Payments for Crops Act to eliminate the subsidy for interest payment under those crops and the interest free part of the prairie advance payments was also eliminated under Bill C-36. That is here in the Nielsen task force report. This plan has been in place for a long, long time. I cannot understand for the life of me why in the world the government did not make this available and talk about this a little over a year ago during the federal election campaign.

Little did the farmers know what was in store for them. The fuel tax rebates as well are being hit hard under this last budget. Then, of course, the national marketing boards and the Marketing Agencies Act are being hit. One of the clinchers is to eliminate the present structure by eliminating all dairy subsidies and putting them under the Farm Products Marketing Agencies Act.

I think that we should be looking at all of this in context and just wondering what is going to be cut next. We do not have much left in the list here, just the privatization of the Farm Credit Corporation and then, of course, the dairy. Why did they not tell the farmers who were here on Parliament Hill protesting on November 22 what they were really intending to do?

Mr. Milliken: It is an embarrassment.

Mr. Ferguson: It is a tremendous embarrassment, but I think the farmers have a right to know. It is little condolence to the thousands of farmers who are not able to afford Christmas this winter.

I cannot get over the fact that of all the people who were consulted in the formation of this report, as I indicated earlier, there were only two farmers. Literally dozens of people from other sectors of the economy, the food processing industry, from various departments, from the National Farm Products Marketing Council, consumers associations, banking institutions and associations were advising the government on how to set the policies for agriculture. They were the ones who convinced the government that it should cut back on all these programs that have provided a safety net to agriculture in Canada for many years.

I cannot accept the fact that there are so many food processors who are finding themselves behind the financial eight ball in view of the free trade agreement that was brought in January 1. Twenty-two further processing companies have either gone out of business or have announced that they will be cutting back and going out of business, three within the last month.

Somehow the government has the feeling that if it can do away with the marketing boards and allow these processors to buy the food at a lower cost, everything will be okay. That is not the case because if we look at the amount of wheat that is in a loaf of bread, the cost of that wheat is 14 cents. The cost of wheat in a box of cereal is 11 cents. The box of cereal sells for over $3. There are three cents worth of wheat in a box of cookies.

A neighbour told me just a few days ago that if we gave them the wheat for nothing, they still could not compete because of what is happening to the food processing industry in Canada at the present time and the pressures brought to bear under the free trade agreement.

We talk about the system in the country to the south of us. We look at what they did in dairy a few years ago when they slaughtered a million cows. A million cows passed through those golden arches and were converted into hamburger. Yet the milk production actually rose during that period.

Then all of a sudden something happened. The returns were so low in the dairy industry in the United States in the last few months, 1 per cent of the producers have been leaving the industry each month. There is a shortage of milk in several states in the United States. These shortages are impacting on the processed cheese industry.

There are shortages in Michigan, in the area north and west of Lansing. If you want to buy milk on a weekend, you have to get it before three o'clock in the afternoon or you do not get any. There is just not enough to go around.

By comparison, here in Canada we have had systems that have served the producers very well over the years. They planned production to our needs within Canada and the potential export markets that we have. It is a system that has given a stable income to the producers and a return on management, risk and labour, the same as any other sector which society has to have if it is going to operate efficiently. We see in this task force report where they are going to eliminate all dairy subsidies and

put the industry under the jurisdiction of the Farm Products Marketing Agency Act.

I was very shocked a little over a week ago by a speech made to the United States Senate Agriculture Committee. The Secretary of Agriculture in the United States indicated that he was going to write the agriculture policy not only for the European common market and his own country but for Canada, Australia, Argentina and Brazil.

I have to wonder if between this task force report, which had very little farm input, and the statement by the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States, that is why we are seeing all of these bills coming forward in this session of Parliament, bills that will tear down those structures which have served this industry so well for so many years.

It is not hard to tear things down, but it takes a lot of imagination, foresight and determination to build them back up again or to establish them in the first place. It is for this reason that I think this government should have thought a little longer and a little harder about the changes here in Bill C-48, an act to amend the Crop Insurance Act.

If we are truly partners in this country, if we are partners of Confederation, I think it should be done in a manner that involves both levels of government and the producers in an equal way. We all have responsibilities to ensure that there are adequate supplies of high quality Canadian grown food available for our consumers. We also have a responsibility to make sure that we not only have these supplies of food, but that there is a continuing supply and that the infrastructure is in place for farmers five or ten years from now to make their way into the industry and to continue that supply based on the concept of the family farm operation.

• (1640)

Dr. John Kenneth Galbraith, who was born in Elgin County, Ontario, and attended the University of Guelph, pointed out to us in October when he was in Glencoe in my riding that the family farm is the most reliable form of food production and probably the most efficient that we have in the world today. It is part of our economy and part of our social fabric, and to allow this to be undermined and destroyed is not acceptable, particularly here in Canada.

I want to say that I hope the government will reconsider what it has here in this legislation. I am pleased to see that it has gone ahead with the increased coverage up to 90 per cent. To allow the government to cut back on its share of the premium from 50 per cent to 25 per cent is definitely not acceptable.

The provinces have increased their share from strictly administration costs up to a level of 25 per cent. I think the federal government should help the producers roll back their input costs at a time when they are facing such financial hardship.

The input costs to the farmers have not decreased. In fact, they have actually increased in spite of the fact the world grain prices dropped dramatically in the summer and fall of 1984. They dropped dramatically in Canada and in some other countries, not through any fault of the producers themselves, but through the fault of governments that failed to respond to world conditions.

There are no big surpluses of grain, no unmanageable surpluses of grain. Because trade has fallen into fewer and fewer hands and the element of greed has made those corporations look for larger and larger profits, the farmer has been at the low end of the totem pole.

In conclusion, I simply ask the government to abandon this Nielsen task force report on agriculture, to stop and listen to what the producers of Canada are saying and to make the amendment to this bill that is acceptable to the farm organizations that contacted us over the last summer.

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Madam Speaker, things are not great in the agricultural industry these days. The position taken by the government on most issues, many of which were just mentioned by the member for Lambton—Middlesex, have not increased the confidence of residents of rural Canada that they are going to get anything better in the future.

Farming is an integral part of rural Canada, but the feeling of being abandoned by the government, by society to a great extent, extends from one coast to the other and through all kinds of rural communities. Regardless of what part of the country you visit, if you go to small town rural Canada, you will find a feeling of being abandoned. As Newfoundlander Gerald Smith from Port au Port put it, people in decision-making circles in this

country are completely out of touch with rural Canada, or maybe they just don't give a damn.

That feeling is common across the country. Both the federal and provincial governments have made a commitment in the last year or two to reduce subsidies. This is especially disturbing to farmers in places like Saskatchewan where the combination of drought and low prices have been devastating and have pushed the return from agriculture to the lowest it has been since 1933. In fact this year, for the first time since 1933, the return from agriculture will not be enough to pay the bills. The actual income from agriculture this year will be negative in Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan has lost 20,000 farmers in the last two decades. That amounts to 1,000 farmers a year or almost three per day for 20 years. At present, Saskatchewan is losing one resident every 20 minutes. More than 200 people are leaving Saskatchewan per day. The cities in Saskatchewan are not getting any smaller. We have to assume then that those 200 people who are leaving Saskatchewan every day are leaving from rural and small-town Saskatchewan. They are leaving because they feel abandoned by society, by the federal and the provincial governments.

Cities like Saskatoon are not able to take up the slack within those areas. Saskatoon, which is a medium-sized city, has the second highest unemployment rate in Canada, following only St. John's, Newfoundland. The drain in population in Saskatchewan is from rural and small-town Saskatchewan. Of the 17,000 people who left Saskatchewan for the first nine months of the last year that we have statistics on, 7,000 were in their early twenties. As the former member from Nipawin who was previously in this House stated, Saskatchewan exports its youth better than it exports its wheat.

Bill C-48 is part of the government's move to reduce the costs to the government in agriculture across Canada. It is very doubtful that this bill is going to do much to improve farm viability or to reduce the exodus of population from rural communities. All it will do is reduce the cost of the crop insurance program to the federal government.

That reduction of cost to the federal government seems to be the only driving priority for the government's changes in agricultural policy over the last few years. It is the only driving priority for changes in legislation, for changes in program and changes in regulation.

The paper entitled *Growing Together* is a discussion paper on farm policy. It covers a number of areas for discussion. Those areas are market development, farm finances, safety nets, supply management, transportation, food safety and sustainability. On the surface it would appear that this is a relatively worth-while approach to be taking and, except in a couple of minor areas, the theme of the discussions which are outlined in the paper *Growing Together* is how the government can cut down its involvement and costs in agriculture.

• (1650)

How can this improve the viability of the family farm? How can the government reduce these agricultural costs? Well, it has been doing very well in the last few years. It has been doing very well indeed. I can list just a few.

Last week we passed a bill which provided for amendments to the Advance Payments Act. It was a move in the direction of reducing costs of this government for agriculture. It saved the government a considerable amount of money, $24 million.

Second, over the last few years the cost of inspections in meat, seeds and almost all areas of agriculture has been moved from the government to the farmer. This has created a saving to the government and an increase in cost for the farmer. It is another move to reduce the expense of assistance to agriculture by this government.

There is the commercialization of the Farm Credit Corporation. At the moment, a considerable amount of money is going out of that, but the aim of that particular move is exactly the same. At some time in the future, the government intends to have the Farm Credit Corporation not costing it a thing. Again, there will be a saving to this government by the removal of assistance to agriculture.

Reduction of the industrial milk crisis sounds like a very easy and straightforward way to go, but what it does do is reduce the subsidies that were given by this government to the dairy industry and reduce the income of dairy farmers in the country. Again, this provided for a saving to the government and a reduction to the income of farmers.

I can go a long way back. We do not have to blame the present government entirely because we have the loss of the Crow rate, a considerable saving to the government but an increase in costs to farmers. We have increased freight rates which a few years ago were kept at a certain level at an expense to the government. This is no longer going to be kept in place. Again, there is a saving to the government and an extra cost to the farmers. The elimination of the fuel rebate provided for a saving to the government and an extra cost to the farmers.

The GST that is being planned is going to increase the cost of production to the farmers and add nothing to their incomes. In fact, if the GST is charged on products of the farm, it is likely that that GST will be higher than the cost of the farm product going in for sale.

We are here to talk about Bill C–48 dealing with crop insurance. This bill also has as its main reason for being an attempt to reduce the costs to the government. In this case I have to say the costs are not being passed on to the farmer, they are being passed on to the provincial government, but they will probably end up coming out of the pockets of the farmers anyway. As far as the farmer is concerned, there is really no appreciable improvement.

The amendments to the Crop Insurance Act will save the government money from crop insurance in most cases because it will only be paying 25 per cent while before it had paid approximately 45 per cent. I want to quote from *Farm and Country* an article by Tom Button. He states, and it is pretty much the viewpoint of much of the farming community at this time:

> If you couldn't afford crop insurance in 1989, don't expect to be able to pay the premiums in 1990.
>
> If you could afford it, but found it so tilted against you that you could almost never expect a pay out, don't expect any improvement.
>
> After four years of crop insurance debate, farm leaders have finally seen exactly how Ottawa and Queen's Park intend to reform the country's crop insurance plans.
>
> They're shaking their heads in disbelief and disappointment.

That is a quote from *Farm and Country* about the changes in the plan in Ontario. In the west, Mr. Speaker, where you and I come from, it is not going to be that much better, although there is a much larger use of insurance in the west than there has been in most of eastern Canada.

We have to recognize that there have been problems with the crop insurance program and those problems are the reason that the government should be moving in that particular area. Most of the problems that were there before are being dealt with in some method in this bill and a lot of that is worth while. But if this bill was intended to improve the lot of farmers, to make family farms more viable, then the government missed the target.

The quote that I just read indicates that the changes are not contributing to the viability of the family farm particularly. The process of change, I guess, is laudable in that a paper was put out for discussion, there was consultation between producer groups and the government, then there was more consultation. The consultation brought in 64 briefs that the government looked at but there was no feedback from those consultations. None of those producer groups were contacted to be asked why they wanted to do what they wanted to do and were not told why the government rejected the proposals.

The final changes in the act were brought forward by the federal and the provincial governments in an agreement in Prince Albert a year ago. That is the basis of the legislation in the House and I think it is one of the weaknesses of our legislative process because quite often the legislation could be improved if the consultation took place after the decision that the government had made to go ahead was already in place.

What does the bill do? It changes the basis of the yields on which you can be paid which is basically a good idea. It increases the maximum coverage to 90 per cent. That is something that the farmers asked for. The result is pretty much an illusion because what it suggests is that you can buy 90 per cent insurance coverage, but according to the Ontario Agricultural Commodity Council, the act will be changed to allow optional insurance coverage at 90 per cent of farm average yields but a restrictive formula would be put in place so that many Ontario crops would not receive 90 per cent coverage.

• (1700)

Farmers have asked for premium levels to be determined for each crop at the 90 per cent coverage level with farmers having the flexibility to determine whether

such rates are affordable. Since coverage levels are now at 80 per cent, improvements in many crops will be either marginal or non-existent under the proposed formula.

In other words, he is saying that the process by which the government has done this and the formula which the government will use mean that the return for the farmer will not be improved at all under this particular act. The formula is a complex one and will not particularly help in increasing the pay-outs to farmers in cases of disaster.

The farmers also asked for extended coverage. I have to say that that is good if it works. I want to talk about how it is going to work a little later.

There is a clause in this bill which suggests that water fowl damage will be paid for. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture made the statement that another special provision compensates producers more fairly for crops lost to protect migratory water fowl. Producers would receive 80 per cent of the value of lost crops. This compensation is cost shared equally between the two levels of government and producers do not pay any premiums.

That is all very nice, except that it is not in the bill. This statement was made by the parliamentary secretary, but all the bill says is that the federal government will share with the provincial governments whatever the provincial governments will share. There is no guarantee in this bill that the provincial government will pay anything. That needs to be looked at very closely in committee before this bill is moved on.

There is a cost sharing concern. Farmers believe that the cost sharing should be improved. They were paying 50 per cent, the federal government was paying 50 per cent, and the provincial governments were paying administration. I did not see too many of the 64 briefs that were presented, but the ones I did see all recognized that there needed to be a change in cost sharing and the logical change was the tripartite system which has been developed and put in place in most of the stabilization programs that we have been working on in the last few years.

We have established that as a basis, but if we had gone to the tripartite system the federal government would have had to pay a little more and, as I said before, the aim of this bill was to reduce the amount of money that the government would have to pay. Instead of a tripartite system we have a system which actually increases the amount that the farmer will have to pay. He paid 45 per cent before. Now he is to pay 50 per cent of the total bill.

Much of the legislation that we pass in this House depends on regulations. It works only if the regulations are properly put in place and are aimed properly for allowing the bill to work. The parliamentary secretary suggested that these regulations were already in place and that we could look at them, but they are not. They are not necessarily available and will not be available when we take this to committee.

In committee we will want to know very specifically what those regulations are intended to do and whether or not they are going to improve the situation and allow the farmer's situation to be improved. The people who work on those regulations should be farmers, not the bureaucrats whose aim is to have the bill work smoothly and not to allow farmers to have a little better deal in the pay-outs from the insurance plan.

As I said before, these changes were started to get rid of the *ad hoc* programs. Again I want to quote from Tom Button's article in *Farm and Country*. He makes this statement:

> Ottawa started its crop insurance review by saying that if crop insurance were more affordable and flexible it could stop making emergency *ad hoc* programs such as the recent $850 million drought relief bail-out.
>
> "Farm groups supported that goal", LeDrew says.

LeDrew is the manager of the Ontario Corn Producers Association. The article goes on to say:

> "But what Ottawa is doing doesn't coincide with what it is saying," he asserts. "Crop insurance isn't going to be significantly more affordable or flexible".

George, who is the vice-president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, adds this:

> "If we get hit with another drought, Ottawa will argue that the crop insurance reforms let it off the hook". He predicts: "In truth, crop insurance really hasn't been reformed, and I am afraid we are going to have a real fight on our hands."

The government has dealt with the shortcomings of the Crop Insurance Act but in the process has reduced the security on which farmers depended in that act. I could talk about the ups and downs and the values and the shortcomings of the act. Those have been dealt with to a great extent, but the net result is something which is difficult for the farmers to understand and to deal with if

the aim of this act were to improve the viability of family farms.

We are in the process of studying all phases of agriculture. In this process we are setting up a number of task forces that are supposed to deal with each of the phases of agriculture. One of the first things that we want to be sure of is that the same thing does not happen in further so-called improvements, that the direction taken by the task force is to improve the viability of the family farm, the viability of agriculture; the viability of the production part of agriculture.

It scares me that this particular paper is called "The Agricultural and the Food Industry". The food industry is not doing badly in many areas, but if there are no farmers on those task forces we are going to end up with another bureaucratic direction which will not increase the possibility of farmers staying on the farm.

Right now in Saskatchewan there are 10,000 farmers who have been served foreclosure notices. A good number of those farmers will be losing part of their land or machinery. The discussion paper which is supposed to cover all of this does not even mention how we are going to keep those farmers on the farm, how we are going to deal with the $23 billion of debt which they carry.

As I started out saying, Saskatchewan, with 110 per cent reduction in income this year, is not in a position to pay more money for crop insurance. Consequently, although we agree with the direction of the bill and will support this in principle, we feel that we must very strongly discuss the shortcomings of it when we take it to committee.

• (1710)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Call in the members.

And the division bells having rung:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(a), I have been requested by the chief government Whip to defer the division until a later time.

Accordingly the division on the question now before the House stands deferred until tomorrow at 5 p.m., at which time the bells to call in the members will be sounded for not more than 15 minutes.

Mr. Hawkes: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Given our experience today, I think it might be a good idea for the console to be manned when the bells are ringing because the House does on occasion defer votes and so on. It would be helpful if it were to be manned at all times, even when bells are ringing.

There have been some consultations, Madam Speaker, and I think you would find unanimous consent for the House to suspend briefly to allow consultations to take place between now and the normal hour of adjournment. I suspect that that suspension may be for only five minutes and then we might be ready to proceed with the next order.

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, there have been such discussions. I just want to point out that it is our understanding that this brief adjournment would not extend beyond the normal hour of termination of our sitting; in other words, this is not open ended.

If at six o'clock there has not been a conclusion to these negotiations, then of course the House would adjourn at six o'clock. With that proviso we are prepared to give that consent.

Mr. Hawkes: That is my understanding as well.

SITTING SUSPENDED

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Is it the wish of the House to suspend the sitting to the call of the bell?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Accordingly the House will suspend the sitting to the call of the Chair.

The sitting of the House was suspended at 5.17 p.m.

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 5.28 p.m.

* * *

HIBERNIA DEVELOPMENT PROJECT ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Harvie Andre (for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources) moved that Bill C-44, an Act respecting the Hibernia Development Project and to amend certain acts in relation thereto be now read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, today is a great opportunity for us to be able to debate Bill C-44 and likewise Bill C-45 which bills represent important stepping stones along the road to a vibrant energy future for Canadians. They give the go-ahead to the development of two of this country's largest and richest energy resources.

Three hundred and fifteen kilometres off the coast of Newfoundland, under 80 metres of water, lies one of the largest deposits of oil to be discovered in this decade anywhere in the world. In all, we estimate that 650 million barrels of oil await recovery under the Hibernia site.

Almost a continent away, in northern Alberta, beneath the earth's surface lie the oil-soaked sands containing one and one-half times the recoverable light crude oil in all of Saudi Arabia—350 billion barrels of oil or 600 times the amount that Canadians consume each year.

Canada has benefited significantly from a thriving oil and gas industry. Today, one out of every seven dollars invested in the Canadian economy goes to the oil and gas sector. To a considerable extent this reflects the importance of the industry in our economy—including refining and petrochemicals, it accounts for about 12 per cent of our gross domestic product. Net energy exports have significantly improved our balance of payments in recent years, reaching about $7.5 billion in 1988.

Even though their economies are diversifying, our western producing provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan rely heavily on the petroleum sector for employment and economic growth.

This government has placed special emphasis on maintaining a strong and active domestic oil and gas industry. We have moved to a more market-oriented energy policy while remaining sensitive to the industry's special needs. When oil prices collapsed in 1986 we also acted quickly to assist the industry. The petroleum industry is so vitally important to Canada, we must ensure that its viability is maintained well into the future.

The government's investments in the OSLO and Hibernia projects are of vital importance to our future oil and gas industry. We are close to peak levels of production from the western sedimentary basin. These fields are forecast to decline in productive capacity.

If this industry is to continue to grow and prosper as we approach the 21st century, Canada must increase its investment in the non-conventional, higher cost deposits in Alberta and off the coast of Newfoundland.

Granted, there are risks involved. These projects will take nearly a decade before peak production levels are reached. Long lead times make it very difficult for the private sector to proceed on its own. Without public support, these projects will stay on the shelf. Our critics would have us pull out of these investments, to hold back, to wait for another day. "The projects are uneconomic," they say, "oil prices are too unstable".

The critics are too quick to judge. This government will not support investments in our higher cost oil reserves unless it makes economic sense to do so. The investment of public funds in both the OSLO and the Hibernia developments is not only wise planning, but it is economically sound.

Let us first speak of the Hibernia project development. The Government of Canada and private companies have already spent millions of dollars testing the

deposit off the coast of Newfoundland and determining how best to extract it.

There are formidable obstacles to be overcome. The waters of the North Atlantic are among the most hostile in the world. Icebergs and storms are an ever-present danger to workers and equipment. Recovery platforms must be located far from shore making them difficult to service. Compounding these hardships is the lack of an existing infrastructure in Newfoundland to support and service this type of an enormous offshore operation.

The Government of Canada has struck a long-term deal which will prove to be a sound investment for Canada. It is true that we are taking a substantial share of the risk in this project, but we will also reap our share of rewards when the returns begin to come in. There is a genuine sharing of these risks—the project's corporate sponsors are carrying their fair share of the load.

The federal government has offered two principal, special incentives—a loan guarantee and a cash contribution. In exchange we will earn a net profits interest as well as normal tax revenues. The province of Newfoundland has complemented these incentives with some adjustments to its royalty regime—principally to make it more profit sensitive.

Our loan guarantee, which amounts to about $1.7 billion, is a key element of the deal. It involves no cash requirement for the government—and its terms give a high level of confidence that our contingent liability will never be called.

The guaranteed debt will be repaid fully at real oil prices above $15 U.S. a barrel. Currently, the price of oil is about $20 U.S. a barrel. This provides a powerful financial leverage to the project with relatively low risk to the government.

Moreover, the government of Canada will contribute $1.04 billion, or roughly 20 per cent of the project pre-production cost in cash. This adds real value to the project. This component is large in absolute terms, but less so in relation to the $20 billion cost over the life of the project.

More important, the federal government sees its cash contribution as part of the total government investment in the project. Even if the prices were to remain at the current real levels, the government could be expected to fully recover all investment—not only our cash incentives, but any incentives delivered through the tax system—in this project and earn a small return.

The government will earn a major share of the upside. Governments' net real revenues from Hibernia will be more than $3 billion if real oil prices average $25 U.S. over the life of the project, from 1996 to 2010. While we all know that oil price forecasts are not infallible, petroleum companies are making long-term decisions based on modest real price projections.

These positive results do not include the considerable external economic benefits that will accrue to the province of Newfoundland and to the rest of Canada. These benefits will indeed be substantial in terms of jobs, spin-off economic benefits, and lower unemployment insurance payouts. In fact, every dollar spent on this project will yield several dollars in primary and secondary benefits to Newfoundland and Newfoundlanders.

Over the life of this project $11 billion in expenditures will pass into the province's economy, as companies drill, operate equipment, and bring the oil from the Hibernia wells onshore.

But the benefits will not stop at the Newfoundland border. About 50 per cent of Hibernia's $5.2 billion development costs will be spent in Canada, with over one-half of the jobs going to Canadians, mainly to Newfoundlanders.

In all, 45 per cent to 50 per cent of the project will be "Made in Canada". Hibernia will have a higher percentage of domestic content than was enjoyed by the British or the Norwegians when they began extracting oil from their North Sea regions.

Without a doubt, Hibernia will be a truly Canadian venture. The main platform to be built for the field—the gravity base structure—will be a massive, reinforced-concrete structure that will extend above sea level to provide a stable base for drilling and production operations. The oil will actually be treated out at sea in facilities built atop this giant platform, and will then be moved to market via ice-strengthened tankers.

The GBS, which will require almost half a million tonnes of high-quality concrete and cables to build, will be able to store 1.45 million barrels of oil. It will be built to stand up against the worst that the North Atlantic has to offer, and it will be built in Canada. It will offer

producers a decided advantage and help offset the difficulties of operating so far out at sea.

Canadians will learn from Hibernia. We will develop our skills, out on the rig 300 kilometres off our coast. We will become experts in offshore oil recovery. That expertise will constitute an invaluable commodity to be marketed around the world.

• (1740)

Environmental reviews of the project have been completed. The Governments of Canada and Newfoundland have held extensive public reviews. We have studied the briefs and concentrated on the concerned parties. The decision of the Canada-Newfoundland Offshore Petroleum Board, issued in June, 1986, was that the project would proceed once the 50 recommendations of the environmental assessment panel were adequately addressed.

Let me remind hon. members that the project must be regarded in the long term. It will span some 20 years, beginning most probably in 1996, and will produce from 110,000 to 150,000 barrels of oil per day.

This is a sound investment, especially in view of the taxes, royalties and profits that we expect to recover for Canada and for Newfoundland. There are no special tax incentives for companies operating in the Hibernia field. All the activities will be carried out within the existing tax system. All financial arrangements are visible and above board.

Bill C-44 and the introduction of this bill today indicate to Canadians how important the future of Hibernia is for Newfoundlanders and for people on the east coast. It has been a great honour for me to speak on behalf of the minister who will be speaking on both Bills C-44 and C-45.

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Madam Speaker, it is certainly with pleasure that I have the opportunity today to address the House on Bill C-44 at this most important stage of the bill, second reading.

Bill C-44 is an Act respecting the Hibernia development project and to amend certain acts in relation thereto. The principle of the bill is to grant the government the authority to enter into an agreement with the other parties involved in the now well-known Hibernia development project.

Nine years have passed since Chevron, on a farm-out well from Mobil Canada Limited and its partners, discovered the Hibernia oilfield approximately 315 kilometres east of St. John's, Newfoundland. After its initial discovery, tests subsequently confirmed oil reserves of more than 500 million barrels in a 20,000-acre area. This is one of the largest offshore oilfields in the world.

The Hibernia development project has experienced nothing but delays since its initial conception. In 1986, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources at that time advised Newfoundlanders in St. John's that negotiations on Hibernia would wrap up in the next two or three months. That was in 1986. After that—two and a half years later on July 18, 1988—the Prime Minister of Canada stated: "—the prospects, the possibilities, the prosperity of Hibernia may now be realized".

This timely comment came three months before the last federal election. It was in reference to the statement of principles signed on July 18, 1988, by the project owners and the federal and provincial governments. That statement of principles confirmed that the legal agreements for Hibernia would be officially signed on March 31, 1989.

However, there is nothing legally binding about this statement of principles. My colleagues addressed this issue in the House immediately after that statement on July 18, 1988. Their concern was for project guarantees for the province and the people of Newfoundland. The Minister for International Trade assured Canadians that day by responding, and I quote:

> —that Hibernia project is going. It is agreed. The companies have agreed. The Government of Canada has made it all possible with the initiative that we have taken and with the agreements that we have made. They will all be legally bound by the end of March.

Here we are in December of 1989—seven months after that statement by the Minister for International Trade—and there is still no master agreement in sight, at least for another six months or maybe a year, who knows?

While the negotiations continue, offshore contractors based in Newfoundland are suffering their worst year since 1977. The delays to the Hibernia project have paralysed a local economy that geared up for an oil

bonanza almost ten years ago. Instead, they have received nothing, nothing but false hopes and false promises from this government.

Today, however, we are debating a bill which allows the federal government to enter into a binding agreement with the Hibernia project owners and the Newfoundland government.

I would like to examine briefly some of the costs associated with this project. The estimated cost of Hibernia has been stated at $8.5 billion. That is for the start-up and the initial development costs. The start-up costs alone are $5.2 billion, out of which the federal government is assuming $2.6 billion, or 50 per cent. This includes contribution to both the capital costs and loan guarantees.

The province of Newfoundland has agreed to contribute $11 million to the project owners out of an offshore technological transfer fund, plus $95 million will be allocated from the Canada-Newfoundland Offshore Development Fund.

In addition, Newfoundland has agreed to waive all of its retail sales tax on all capital items purchased during construction and during operation. On top of that it has further agreed to reduce its retail sales tax that all citizens pay from 12 per cent to 4 per cent for items purchased during the operation of the oilfield.

It is difficult to calculate exactly in dollars and cents just what those taxes would amount to, but certainly the figure would be very, very substantial. Newfoundland's contribution to Hibernia is extensive, when one considers the low returns it will receive and when it receives them for this investment.

The statement of principle that was signed in July of 1988 provides for Newfoundland receiving only a nominal royalty. It starts out at 1 per cent and every 18 months it increases 1 per cent until it becomes 5 per cent after six years. Even that basic royalty will be reduced by the same proportion that the average oil price, current at the time, is below $30 a barrel in U.S. dollars.

Even if everything worked out perfectly and the full average of 110,000 barrels a day were produced for 365 days the first operating year, Newfoundland would only get $6 million in royalties for that year even if the price of oil as it is today increases every year until then by an amount equal to the inflation rate.

• (1750)

I think that we must take into account when reviewing Newfoundland's role in the project that the province represents only 2 per cent of the population of Canada. Therefore, the financial burden being borne by the people of Newfoundland is at least twice that of the people of Canada as a whole. Coming from a small province, Prince Edward Island, whose population is approximately 128,000, I understand and appreciate the extent of this burden that Newfoundlanders must be feeling.

The problem in terms of royalties appears to stem in part from the Atlantic Accord. The accord applies to all gas and oil resources in—and I quote from the document:—"that area below the low water mark lying off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador out to the outer edge of the continental margin, coming within Canada's jurisdiction". Its main financial stipulation is that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador can establish and collect resource revenues as if these resources were on land. However, the form that this revenue gathering will take in the extent of the revenues has already proven difficult. In effect, the accord grants Newfoundland the right to negotiate with oil companies on this issue.

The project owners will be supporting the balance of the start-up costs with what is offered by the federal and the provincial governments. This amount is roughly $2.94 billion for the start-up costs of Hibernia.

After the production start-up costs there is another $3.3 billion that has been estimated for additional development costs, which will be the responsibility of the project owners.

The total private sector contribution to the $8.5 billion project is $5.79 billion, which amounts to approximately 68 per cent of that $8.5 billion.

In July of 1988, when the statement of principle was signed, the document also outlined provisions for industrial benefits to be gained by the Hibernia project. The main concentration for industrial benefits was on the gravity based structure's main support frame and where it was to be built. In 1988 it was agreed that this could be done in the Come By Chance area of Newfoundland. However, in June of this year the Minister of Energy, while speaking in St. John's to the Newfoundland ocean industries, said:

—while industries and governments were prepared to proceed with Hibernia on the basis of the $5.2 billion estimate, we would all feel more comfortable at a lower cost.

To this end Mobil Oil Canada, the leader of the four-company consortium that has agreed to develop Hibernia, is completing a redesign of the project's massive production platform. Needless to say, this new redesign causes the almost certain prospect of fewer jobs in Newfoundland.

This is of grave concern to the province of Newfoundland because under the statement of principles this platform was to be assembled in that province. It guaranteed the province three million man hours. Now it appears that this new platform may be assembled elsewhere.

If that happens Newfoundland stands to lose two-thirds of the original planned construction work. There is is no doubt that the industrial benefits of Hibernia should be maximized in Newfoundland.

Based on the original technical requirements of the project, Newfoundland would have been the location for construction and the mechanical outfitting of the concrete gravity based structure. The general management of the project was to be located in Newfoundland as were the important aspects of the design of the gravity based structure and the topside facilities.

The mating of the topside and base, the assembly and outfitting of the main support frame, the hook-up and the commissioning of the topside were also to take place in Newfoundland. All of these activities were expected to generate approximately 10,000 person-years of employment for the residents of the province.

But the minister's June statement, however, has changed the province's employment prospects. It is no wonder that the government of Newfoundland is concerned. With the new design planned by Mobil, the number of permanent jobs created by Hibernia may only be as many as 1,600. This is a large reduction indeed from the estimated 3,500 permanent jobs summarized in the statement of principles. The fact is that this represents a reduction of 54 per cent.

There is no doubt that regional development concerns are part of the incentive push behind Hibernia. We must ensure that the industrial benefits promised to the province, which are briefly mentioned in this bill that we are now discussing, are met. We cannot ignore the disastrous state of employment conditions on the east coast. Certainly the present conditions in the Atlantic fisheries have created a frightening crisis. Tonight we in this House will be discussing that problem in an emergency debate.

Atlantic Canada does need employment opportunities. Hibernia will answer part of that need.

Energy is the lifeblood of a nation. National energy security must be the long term strategic objective when your country is one of the largest per capita users of energy in the world. Energy policy must anticipate future disruptions at world energy markets. It must be sufficiently flexible to endure those shocks with minimal disruption to the lives of Canadians.

Although energy security is a necessary part of policy, it is not sufficient to build energy policy around this concern alone. Energy development must also be environmentally sound.

Mr. Cooper: I rise on a point of order, Madam Speaker. I apologize for interrupting the member, but I believe that the time allowed her would take us beyond six o'clock.

I think you will find consent amongst the members in the House, Madam Speaker, to allow us not to see the clock, to allow the hon. member to finish her speech and the NDP critic in the area of energy to finish his speech. The House would then suspend at that time until the 8 o'clock emergency debate.

• (1800)

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, I just want to make it clear to the hon. member across the way that we are giving unanimous consent to do this. There is an understanding that the government would not move to extend the hours while the hon. member for Malpeque is completing her remarks, or during the comments of the hon. member from the New Democratic Party. In other words, there is an understanding that there will not be a motion, during the rest of this day, to extend the hours without unanimous consent.

Mr. Cooper: Madam Speaker, obviously we agree to that. We are prepared to say that there will be no further dilatory motions for the rest of the evening.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The House has heard the suggestion made by the hon. parliamentary secretary. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The hon. member for Malpeque may wish to conclude her remarks.

Ms. Callbeck: We certainly believe that those conditions can be met by the Hibernia project, but that they will take continued work, monitoring and action by the government. We intend to ensure that the federal government meets all of its responsibilities to the Hibernia project.

Hibernia is a national project, one which the Liberal Party of Canada has long supported. The commitment of the federal government to Hibernia has been questionable, to say the least. The April 1989 throne speech did not even bother to mention the Hibernia project, the deal that was supposed to be signed, sealed and delivered four days earlier, on March 31.

This bill may be heading toward a master agreement for Hibernia. But there are many obstacles we still must cross before this project is the best deal for all Canadians. Hibernia is seen as the cornerstone of the Canadian offshore industry. Hibernia could be the key to future development, it could be the springboard discovery which provides us with much of the infrastructure, the technology and the impetus for development of our eastern offshore industry.

My colleagues and I will support the second reading of Bill C-44, which serves as implementation legislation. What it really does is allow the federal government to enter into a master agreement with other parties involved in Hibernia. We note that the minister shall present a summary of each of the agreements before the House. Certainly I am looking forward to this bill being sent to the legislative committee. I hope that it will lead to a far swifter management of the Hibernia project than this government has demonstrated to date.

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Madam Speaker, I must say at the outset that I intend to take the liberty of addressing both this bill and Bill C-45.

Given what I understand to be the principle both of this bill and of Bill C-45, the bill which sets up the fiscal regime for the government's participation in the OSLO project, and given that the central principle in each bill is to create the fiscal structure under which the government will participate, and given the sums of money involved, I must say that I am somewhat surprised that these bills are sponsored by the minister of energy and not the Minister of Finance. However, they are sponsored by the minister of energy and must therefore be seen to constitute, at least in part, the government's energy strategy. So, I will be dealing with that aspect of the bills as well.

If I might, I would like briefly to summarize the two bills. Both of them set out the proposal for the expenditure of government money in the two projects.

In the case of Bill C-44 which deals with Hibernia, we are talking about a grant for the defraying of capital costs in the amount of $1.04 billion. We are, as well, talking about loan guarantees on the capital project of up to $1.66 billion, a direct loan in the amount of $300 million, loan guarantees for what is called a temporary financing facility in the amount of $175 million, and interest payable guarantees on the $1.66 billion loan guarantee. In other words, if the loan is going to default what the government has guaranteed, not only will we pay the principle but we will pick up the interest charges as well.

Therefore, we are talking about a direct expenditure, a grant to Hibernia of up to $1.04 billion, a $300 million loan, and various and sundry loan guarantees and interest guarantees in the amount of $1.835 billion for a total possible government investment of $3.139 billion, a tidy little sum in anybody's books.

For OSLO, we are talking about a grant for the capital costs of up to $425 million. We are talking about a price of oil production subsidy of $48 million. This is a sort of project specific guaranteed floor price for oil. If the cost of production of oil exceeds the price the OSLO project is getting, then this $48 million will kick in. You will find a floor price for Canadian oil in no other aspect of the industry even though New Democrats, federally and provincially, have been vigorously calling for such a thing for many years now. However, for OSLO this is a sort of "most favoured" status, I suppose.

OSLO will have this $48 million floor price guarantee. As well, there will be loan guarantees on the capital project of up to $642.5 million. There will be loans—the terms are not set out, of course, in the bill—of up to $250 million. And loan guarantees, again, for this temporary financing facility of $62.5 million. We are looking once again at a direct expenditure in OSLO of up to $425 million, direct loans of up to $250 million, various

guarantees of up to $705 million, for a possible total government involvement in OSLO of $1.4 billion.

These bills would allow the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, with the approval of the Governor in Council, to enter into firm agreements on both the Hibernia and OSLO projects, thus involving the potential for government fiscal involvement in the two projects of up to $4.5 billion.

I do not want to consider these complex financial arrangements or get into the details of the bills today. That is a job most properly left to be handled in the committee. I want, instead, to deal with the principle of the bills which is the commitment of this amount of money to these particular projects. I also want to deal in part with what I understand to be the government's energy policy, of which these two projects are definitely centrepieces. In other words, I will make some general remarks about where these bills fit into that over-all policy.

Since the initial plans for these projects were drawn up, there has been a revolution of sorts in the energy sector. Canadians, regardless of what their governments have done, believed or wanted, have themselves added a new criterion to those by which energy policy is to be judged in Canada. Canadians have added the new criterion of the effect of our energy sources on our environment.

After all, in the words of the Brundtland report called *Our Common Future*, quoting from page 7-1: "—choosing an energy strategy inevitably means choosing an environmental strategy".

I would note that the government has been very quick to adopt the rhetoric of the Brundtland report. But they seemed somewhat more reticent in adopting the counsel of the Brundtland report.

Listen to what the Prime Minister said on June 27, 1988 at the International Conference on the Changing Atmosphere held in Toronto. He said at that time: "The world is coming to recognize what we believe to be self-evident—that development and environmental protection are mutually reinforcing, not mutually exclusive. Our economic activity must be increasingly compatible with today's environmental facts of life".

Later, in the same speech the Prime Minister added: "In no area is the link between our economic activity and environmental disruption more evident or more troubling than in the area of energy policy".

• (1810)

This is not Audrey McLaughlin speaking, this is not Ed Broadbent speaking. This is the Prime Minister of Canada, the leader of the Conservative Party. He goes on: "Canada is committed to applying the principles of sustainable development to our energy future".

That is commendable, Madam Speaker. One of the most important environmental issues of the day is global warming. In the statement coming from the Toronto conference that I just finished quoting, the International Conference on the Changing Atmosphere, June 17, 1988 entitled "The Changing Atmosphere: Implications for Global Security" stated: "The earth's atmosphere is being changed at an unprecedented rate by pollutants resulting from human activities, inefficient and wasteful fossil fuel use and the effects of rapid population growth in many regions".

It was stark language that the conference used in speaking of the changing atmosphere, and again I quote: "Humanity is conducting an unintended, uncontrolled, globally pervasive experiment whose ultimate consequences could be second only to a global nuclear war". These are very strong words and in the opinion of many, absolutely warranted words.

The Prime Minister, again a fine sounding environmentalist, on March 11, 1989, signed The Hague Declaration entitled "Our Common Future: It's in our Hands". That declaration emphasized the importance of all countries doing their bit to prevent atmospheric pollution and stated: "Because of the nature of the dangers involved, remedies to be sought involve the duty of the community of nations *vis-à-vis* present and future generations to do all that can be done to preserve the quality of the atmosphere".

So on the level of official pronouncements, the Mulroney government is quick to agree that much needs to be

done to protect the environment, but its pronouncements do not mean anything significant, because Canada has to begin to put its own house in order.

We clearly have a valuable role to play. After all, while Canada is directly responsible for only about 2 per cent of the total global CO_2 emissions, carbon dioxide being the key greenhouse gas, we are one of the most energy inefficient countries in the world. Canadians consume more energy per person than is the case in the U.S.A., Sweden, Germany, the United Kingdom and Japan, and the situation is getting worse. From the perspective of energy use per $1,000 of GDP, we also use more than the U.S.A., Sweden, the United Kingdom, Germany and Japan.

It is true we live in a cold country. Mainly our population is spread out along a long thin southern line. Our industries have to deal with the effects of cold winters, as do our people. But this is no excuse, because in taking account of all that, nonetheless we are extremely wasteful energy users. We could use substantially less energy, thereby polluting much less, without significant changes to our way of life.

So far the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources has been running in the wrong direction and has been using as an excuse that he favours a market oriented approach. So what has the government done? In the last budget, the government eliminated completely the 12 conservation and renewable energy offices across the country. These offices were run on a shoestring and provided information to people in the regions on how they could save money and energy at the same time. They were not even a significant intrusion into the market-place. They were funded at too pitiful a level to be that. Nonetheless the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources closed them all down.

As well, the government also dismantled the branch of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources that oversaw research on energy conservation and alternate energy sources. The government cut funding for conservation and renewable energy—using its own department's figures—from $410 million in 1984-85 to $49 million in 1989-90. What is the justification for all this slash and burn of alternatives and conservation? The argument is that conservation efficiency and renewable energy sources just cannot compete. They cannot compete. They are not as marketable, they are not as efficient.

There is not a free market in energy in this country, there is no so-called level playing field between the fossil fuels and the alternatives, between spurred consumption on the one hand and conservation on the other. To all Canadians who may have any doubt that there is not a level playing field in energy resources in this country, I simply say, look at Bills C-44 and C-45: up to $4.5 billion in government commitments to two fossil fuel projects.

This government, in proposing to provide the $4.5 billion to these two energy projects, is simultaneously slashing funding for conservation and energy alternatives to just $49 million per year. That is the government's level playing field. That is the government's demonstration of the hallowed free market in action, an increase of $4.5 billion for just two fossil fuel projects, and a decrease to $49 million for all energy conservation and renewable projects.

Most Canadians believe their tax money should be put to wise use, in part to influence the choices that we will have in the future. That is why most Canadians want their money to help prevent environmental degradation. But these bills will use their money not to fight global warming but to add to it.

Think for a minute of how far $4.5 billion could go in the sectors of energy conservation, efficiency and renewable energy.

We could have perpetual energy savings by encouraging better insulation of the houses of ordinary Canadians. We could have energy savings through the use of energy efficient lighting in commercial buildings. We could have vastly more fuel efficient cars. We could have greatly enhanced support for public transportation systems, especially in the urban areas. We could have the development of an ethanol fuel industry in Canada. We could have viable co-generation production. We could have solar power. We could have small, independent power producers feeding into provincial grids. Think of the harnessing of a good portion of the wind energy streaming off the mountains in southern Alberta or around the Great Lakes and Hudson Bay shorelines of Ontario.

As the August, 1989 DPA study conducted for the minister recently pointed out, many of these investments would not only save energy, they would also save money.

Let me offer an analogy. Let us say you want to wash the walls in your living room and for this purpose you have a bucket, but the bucket has a number of holes in it. These holes, when the water runs out of the bucket, gets your beautiful carpet wet. So you have a choice: you can spend your time and money pouring in more water as fast as you can and rushing the washing job before the carpet gets completely soaked, or you can plug the holes in the bucket and get on with the job.

What will OSLO and Hibernia mean for the environment? They will mean more CO2 leaking out the holes. The parliamentary secretary made mention of the Environmental Assessment Panel and the study conducted on Hibernia in 1985, and as he correctly noted, they came up with 50 recommendations. But that study did not even consider CO_2 emissions. It was never on the agenda. It was not considered and no recommendations were forthcoming. You can bet that people in Atlantic Canada will be very interested in whether the changes in design will affect the project's safety.

OSLO will doubtless mean a greater burden of sulphur dioxide emissions on to the soils in northern Alberta and even more in Saskatchewan. During the recent environmental review for the ALPAC pulpmill, it was pointed out that the vast majority of these soils are very sensitive and prone to acidification.

When it comes to carbon dioxide, environmentalists know and have told us that heavy oil is particularly bad from a global warming perspective. A recent paper by H. G. Hengeveld, on staff at Environment Canada's Atmospheric Environment Service, titled "Climate Change Implications for Energy" points out that on the basis of emissions of carbon dioxide per unit of energy, energy from oil sands is worse in the sense of being a greater producer of CO_2 than biomass energy, gas, oil and even coal. I hope that our scientists in the various pertinent departments are studying this aspect in some detail, because CO_2 emissions are clearly going to be an important issue when these bills get to committee, especially when there is considerable pressure for Canada to reduce over-all CO_2 emissions by 20 per cent by the year 2005.

• (1820)

The best estimate that I have seen is that these projects combined will cause, and contribute to, the emission of between 20 and 30 metric tonnes of CO_2 each year. That is one hell of a lot of CO_2. It is an increase in total current Canadian CO_2 emissions of between 4 and 7 per cent, and that is just between these two projects.

Even the energy minister is worried about CO_2 emissions and global warming. I was delighted to read in the transcript of the hearings of the environment committee on December 11 last week that the minister stated, and I quote from the transcript:

> Based on every information I have received in the department from the scientists and others who are working on global warming within the department, I am convinced that we have to reduce emissions, that they have negative effects on climate, that they have negative effects as described by those who have studied the project in detail.

Admirable, Mr. Minister. Unfortunately, these projects fly in the face of that statement. However, I consider that to be the minister's problem, not mine.

Let us ask for the moment what will the projects mean for jobs and regional development. There is no question that jobs will be created. Any large capital project creates jobs. When you are talking about $4.5 billion in maximum total contribution to the two projects, you have to be talking about a lot of jobs. The question is how many jobs and at what cost per job?

Canadian experience shows it is quite common for large projects to be very inefficient creators of jobs. Indeed, I would note parenthetically that decentralized energy efficiency programs would probably be much more effective job creators. In Atlantic Canada, people are more deeply concerned about jobs than ever because of the actions of this government. I note, for example, the cuts in unemployment insurance benefits; the ACOA funding being spread over even more years and, of course, for all the reasons that will be made clear during the emergency debate tonight, the threats to all of the jobs in the Atlantic fisheries.

Yet the number of jobs for Newfoundlanders and for Albertans that will be created by these projects will, I think, be few in terms of the capital invested. We know from past experience with energy megaprojects, that the

dollars per job created is incredibly high by any kind of economic average. But I assume that this too will be the subject of extensive study in the committee.

In that committee, we will also be looking at the question of royalties and tax revenues that will accrue to the provinces involved and to the federal government. Many people doubt the glowing estimates that were made just a few years ago, and they have reason to.

If I may, I would like to return to the question of the government funding, especially in light of Section 3(2)(a)(i) in each of the bills. Those are the sections in each of the bills that mandate the gifts of money, the $1.04 billion for the Hibernia project and the $425 million for the OSLO project. These are gifts. This is free money. No strings attached. It is an incredible thing. I have not really encountered anything like it before.

At the Ottawa Airport this afternoon when the plane came in I was talking very briefly to a member of the government benches who expressed surprise to me when I told him that this was not equity for the federal government, these were gifts. We get nothing in return for this $425 million and $1.04 billion. That is absolutely astonishing. Even in Alberta we know from our experience with the Syncrude project that you can get equity in an energy megaproject for the government that is shelling out the money. We did that in Alberta with Syncrude. That, too, is something to which we will be paying very close attention in the committee study of these bills.

I would like to conclude by reviewing the four conditions for these projects that my party set in a news release and background paper on November 7, 1989, the same day the minister introduced Bills C-44 and C-45.

The government is obviously going to press ahead with these bills. Consequently we want to have on record for the government's consideration, as well as the consideration of others, those four very constructive suggestions that, I will note, received the approval of the energy and environment critic for the federal New Democratic Party in this House, and as well, of the energy and environment critics of the New Democratic Party in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta—that all four of these individuals could come to an agreement on anything is little short of miraculous; in this instance, I think it doubly so.

Let me note very clearly that we are not opposed in principle to these two projects. We are opposed to the fiscal arrangements set out in the bills, and we are opposed to the government's energy policy generally because of the lack of cognizance it takes of environmental concerns.

However, with specific regard to the two projects, the following four conditions constitute the minimum acceptable for the projects to enjoy the support of the New Democratic Party.

First, no investment of public money without equivalent equity held by the Crown.

Second, guarantees, in the agreements among the parties, that production costs will not be subsidized, now or in the future, by the public purse, unless, I will note, such floor price subsidization applies to all oil and gas production in the country.

Third, the immediate restoration by the federal government of expenditures on research into, and development and commercialization of, energy alternatives and conservation up to a minimum of the $400 million budget in 1984.

Fourth, concrete steps and guarantees to minimize the environmental impacts of the projects, including: (a) complete, thorough, joint federal–provincial environmental impact assessments, with extensive consequent public hearings featuring full intervenor funding, to be undertaken in each instance prior to any project commencement; (b) in addition to all measures implemented or planned for the purpose of reducing Canada's CO_2 emissions by 20 per cent by the year 2005, the further reduction of CO_2 emissions, principally through conservation and greatly enhanced use of fuel ethanol and propane, to a degree equal to the total CO_2 emissions from the projects, such that the projects result in no net increase in Canadian CO_2 emissions; and, (c), the use of best available technologies for pollution abatement and emissions control, especially with regard to CO_2 and SO_2.

These are not unreasonable conditions. In fact, these are conditions that I think most Canadians, on reflection, would find not only warrantable but indeed necessary.

I would just note that because the government at the moment cannot for whatever reason see its way clear to accepting these conditions, especially with regard to these two projects, we cannot, in conscience, accept the principle of the fiscal arrangements set out in the bills

and consequently will not be supporting them at second reading.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): It being 6.29 p.m, I do now leave the Chair until eight o'clock, when the House will proceed with the emergency debate on the situation in the Atlantic fishery.

At 6.29 p.m. the sitting of the House was suspended.

[*Editor's Note: For continuation of proceedings see Volume B.*]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, December 18, 1989

[Editor's Note: Continuation of proceedings from Volume A.]

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

[English]

MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S. O. 52

ATLANTIC FISHERY

Mr. Speaker: The Chair has granted leave to the hon. member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso to move the adjournment of the House pursuant to Standing Order 52 for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, namely, the situation in the Atlantic fishery.

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso) moved:

That this House do now adjourn.

Mr. Speaker: I understand that an arrangement has been entered into among all three parties in which it is the disposition of the House to hear the right hon. Leader of the Opposition, but on the understanding that the hon. member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso will be heard later. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking my colleague from Cape Breton Highlands—Canso for moving the motion which we are debating before Your Honour tonight.

This young member has shown more compassion and more concern for Atlantic Canada in one year than the federal Conservative government has shown in the last five.

What we are debating here this evening is not just another crisis. It is not just another local problem. What we are debating here this evening is the collapse of the entire Atlantic fishery. I want the people from other parts of Canada who may be watching this debate this evening or following Parliament to understand the depth of what we are saying here.

For many Canadians, Atlantic Canada seems remote. Put yourself in a situation where the entire steel industry of Sault Ste. Marie or Hamilton were to be closed down, everybody thrown out of work. Imagine what the reaction would be in the province of Ontario, particularly when the Prime Minister of Canada told them they never had it so good. It is as though the financial district, Montreal or Toronto, was closed down and then the prime Minister were to tell the workers, clerks, office people, they have never had it so good. This is what this Prime Minister has said to the people of Atlantic Canada.

It is more than a crisis. It is a calamity. It is a calamity which is driving people out of the Atlantic provinces, a calamity which is wiping out whole towns and villages, a calamity which is destroying a way of life. What has this government done? Let's look at the record of the Prime Minister who in 1988 said during the last federal election in Saint John, New Brunswick on October 13, 1988:

I feel something special for Atlantic Canada and its needs.

If that is something special, the people of Canada want something different and they want something different fast. What are we seeing? We have seen the Marine Ecology Laboratory at the Bedford Institute disbanded, repeated cuts in the fisheries staff, mismanagement of the fish stocks, slashed unemployment insurance payments to Atlantic Canadians.

The federal government has withdrawn the government's contribution to the unemployment insurance fund, reduced commitments to post-secondary education and health care. The provinces of the Atlantic are particularly vulnerable. It failed to renew regional development agreements, closed Armed Forces bases in Atlantic Canada and announced a new national sales tax which in most crippling to Atlantic Canada, because the

farther a region of the country is from the source of production the more transportation is needed to bring that good to market, and the more that tax will bear.

[*Translation*]

To this show of serious concern on the part of the Prime Minister shoud be added the pirating of our fish stocks, something the government does not seem to want or be able to stop. It lets Spanish and Portugese fleets pillage our fish stocks, it lets France steal what is left, and it lets the Europeans set incredibly high quotas.

The present government is being made a fool of by others and, instead of defending the interests of our fisheries, yields to the demands of other countries.

France wants more fish? Our government sees no problem! Just reduce the quotas for our own fishermen. If French traulers don't catch enough fish, our government gives them a consideration to compensate for their loss.

Spanish and Portugese fleets sailing under flags of convenience exhaust the fish stocks just outside our territorial boundaries. What could be more normal.

[*English*]

Let us turn to the United States. The Americans do not like our fish processing regulations. They are the regulations which used to ensure that fish caught in Canada would be processed in Canada. It meant that the Canadian fish plant workers on both coasts, on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, had jobs. This government sold out the fish processing industry in the trade deal with the United States because it gave up our right to impose an export tax on fish, thereby allowing us to be competitive in the fish processing markets.

Mr. Crosbie: What does that have to do with it?

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): That export tax was permitted under the GATT.

Mr. Crosbie: Show us the relevance.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): The Minister for International Trade is here and he ought to be ashamed because he sold out our remedy to the United States.

An Hon. Member: He sold out his province.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): And who is paying for the mistake of the member for St. John's East?

Mr. Tobin: West.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): St. John's West. He will be St. John's nowhere in the next election, I can tell you. Who is paying for his mistake? The people of Canso. In the town of Canso in the constituency of Cape Breton Highlands—Canso, 742 plant workers have just lost their jobs, in a town of 1,200 people.

Mr. Crosbie: Malarkey.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): What does it mean to the people of that community, or any community of that size? Not only the fishermen and the fish process workers, but take any small business in the town, the general store, a real estate operator, a food supplier, a clothing distributor, take any professional; who is going to pay for the service? Who is going to pay for the food? Where is the money going to come from? What is going to happen to the only equity that most of the people in Canso have, namely their own homes? What is going to happen to home values as people try to get out, finding no market for a lifetime of saving and equity based in that home.

What is a fisherman going to tell his children on Christmas morning? What is he going to give his teenage son or teenage daughter? It will probably be a one-way ticket to Montreal, Toronto or Vancouver because there will be nothing left for them in Canso.

An Hon. Member: Shame.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): The only choice they have is to move out. The irony of it is they will not even be able to take the train out any more because the government has cut the VIA Rail service to that part of Nova Scotia.

It is the same story in North Sydney where another 280 workers are losing their jobs, and in St. John's, Newfoundland where 492 workers are being let go without even getting a severance payment. It is going to be a bleak Christmas for Atlantic Canadians. An estimated 6,000 more jobs are expected to be eliminated in the next few months. Fishery Products International is expected to announce major layoffs very soon.

What about National Sea's U.S. operations on the east coast, their operations in the state of Florida and in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Why is this Canadian company closing Canadian plants when it's U.S. plants are not affected? It's former president was one of the great promoters of the free trade deal. In 1987 he said

the deal would create 400 new jobs. Now, only two years later, his company is closing its Canadian plants.

• (2010)

[*Translation*]

How did the Prime Minister react when we raised the question here in the House? He had no answer and no plan. He brandished statistics. He said the Atlantic region was doing well. He even quoted double-digit unemployment in Newfoundland as if it were an achievement, and the trained seals behind him applauded enthusiastically.

The answers given by this Prime Minister and this government are invariably the same: it's all the Liberals fault! Mr. Speaker, I think we should recall that the Conservatives have been in power for five years, and it was the Conservatives who formed this government.

[*English*]

The Canso closure is a direct result of this government's mismanagement of the fishery in Atlantic Canada. Chalk up yet another ghost town to the Tories.

Premier Joe Ghiz was in town today, talking to the Prime Minister about Summerside. Summerside, now Canso. That is something this Prime Minister has been well trained for because he closed Schefferville. At least in those days he was only taking orders from Cleveland. Now he gets them direct from Washington.

The Prime Minister also promised that a committee of cabinet would investigate and come up with a plan to deal with the crisis.

Mr. Crosbie: This is your swan song, is it?

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): They said that there would be compensation for those thrown out of work. They said that there would be other programs, other initiatives. Where are those other programs? The fish processing workers on both coasts are still waiting. They are going to join that long line of other employees across the country who are being thrown out of work by the trade deal, waiting for the adjustment programs the Prime Minister promised and continues to promise.

Do you remember those programs, Mr. Speaker? Do you remember that commitment? The only people in Canada who no longer remember that commitment are the Tory ministers who made it.

One of the main reasons they have done nothing is that under the trade deal with the United States they have agreed over the next five to seven years to negotiate the definition of an unfair trade practice or a subsidy with the American government. What has happened is that the government's own trade deal has tied its hands. This government is afraid to come to the aid of a threatened fishing industry because the Americans have told them that any financial support for that industry, particularly when it is export-based, will be considered to be an unfair subsidy by the United States. We are being told by the Americans now much we can finance and rescue our perishing industry in Atlantic Canada.

What about the rate of exchange? The high value of our dollar is killing our exports of fish.

Mr. Crosbie: What was it when you were in?

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): I believe, as do many others, that there was a side deal—

Mr. Crosbie: What was the dollar when you were there?

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): —there was a side deal transacted with the Government of the United States by the minister's predecessor, which allowed our dollar to rise because the Americans would not have considered this kind of an agreement if they had not got a commitment on our exchange, as well. What about the U.S. lobster law signed by President Bush?

Mr. Crosbie: What about your dollar?

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): We have the hon. minister from St. John's. I tell you he ought to feel red as one of those lobsters because even he couldn't be exported to the United States under those rules. He is as red as a lobster tonight when he listens to the truth here in the House of Commons.

What about that U.S. lobster law? It was signed by the president. Has our Prime Minister told his great friend, the President of the United States, that this is a serious blow to Atlantic lobster fishermen? Did they discuss the issue at all, at his last visit? Or is a Kennebunkport

lobster worth more to the Prime Minister of Canada than the lobsters from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and the east coast of Quebec?

Take another little incident. What about the ramming of the Canadian destroyer *Saguenay* by the U.S. scallop dragger *The Concordia*. In this and other instances of American overfishing our government has allowed us to be internationally embarrassed by the fact that we cannot arrest American boats which flagrantly fish illegally in our waters. The minister should refer back—

An Hon. Member: What would you have done?

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): There is a back-bencher who is skulking, he is skulking—

An Hon. Member: What would you have done?

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): I will tell you what I would do. The minister and the back-bencher who has just spoken, behind the curtain, should refer back to the? *I'm Alone* case of 1929 to understand the international rules of hot pursuit moving from within territorial waters into international waters. In 1929 the U.S. Coast Guard pursued a Canadian vessel, the *I'm Alone* for two days and nights in international waters and finally sunk it when its captain refused to surrender.

I am not suggesting that we need to blow U.S. fishing boats out of the water. What I am saying is that it is about time that we started to uphold our rights to protect our fish stocks from this kind of piracy from American and French boats by arresting them and bringing them back into Canadian waters.

The Secretary of State for External Affairs is here and he is one of the nice guys, one of the international patsies on behalf of Canada. When we have got a problem he cannot stand up. We concede, we make concessions, we yield but never when there is a confrontation do we stand up and protect our rights.

As if our fishing industry were not in enough trouble, the government has slashed the unemployment insurance scheme. The Minister of Employment and Immigration who has defended the cuts to the unemployment insurance program tells us that by cutting benefits and putting money instead into training her department is doing a great and wonderful thing.

We all ask the question, on this side of the House, training for what? Are you going to train a New Brunswick fisherman to be an automobile worker? Training for what? Where are the opportunities? Where are those other industries? The minister can talk all she wants about her training programs. It is a wonderful theory, a wonderful plan on paper, but what does it mean to the people in those communities where there are no other job opportunities.

In the words of one local co-ordinator: "It is a disguised resettlement program". In other words, if you want a job to use that retraining, move to Halifax or Montreal or Toronto.

[*Translation*]

And the Prime Minister blames the Senate for delaying legislation on unemployment insurance reform that will raise variable entrance requirements from 14 weeks to 20 weeks.

The Prime Minister failed to tell Canadians that every year since 1977, we agreed here in the House to an exemption for our fishermen which set this requirement at 10 weeks. His government has failed to table a similar bill. In fact, the present government has put everything into one single bill, and is trying to blame the Senate for its own incompetence. The Maritime Provinces and the rest of Canada will not swallow this explanation, Mr. Speaker.

[*English*]

The government has been talking about taking action to meet the crisis in the fishing industry. It has been talking for months about the crisis brought about in large part by the mismanagement of the industry by this government. It is all talk and no action. The government is bankrupt of ideas. It is about time they faced the brutal truth. It is their own mismanagement which has got the Atlantic fishery into this mess.

In October the minister of fisheries, who is here in the House, said the industry was in good health. That is about the dumbest thing that any fisheries ministry in this country has said since Confederation. Here is how Brian Giroux, Executive Director of the Nova Scotia Dragger Fishermen's Association responded to the minister's ridiculous statement. He said:

> Maybe he should have his salary tied to our fish quotas. We have got to take a 30 per cent cut in our quotas. Maybe if he had to take a 30 per cent cut in his pay he would think different.

Well, I would think different too. A 30 per cent cut. That minister ought to have a 100 per cent cut.

This same minister is now telling impoverished east coast fishing towns that lose their fish processing plants that, in the minister's words, and I quote *The Globe and Mail* of December 12, 1989: "They have a bright future". The people of Canso, the people of the Avalon Peninsula, the people of the Acadia Peninsula, Caraquet and Tracadie, you have been told by the minister of the Crown that you have got a bright future. What a minister.

Here is another example of his great compassion and understanding at a time when thousands of Atlantic fishermen are being laid off and thousands more are facing incredible hardship. The minister said this, and I am quoting *The Toronto Star* of a conversation he had December 17, 1989: "Some of those guys are making over $100,000 a year. You sure would not know it the way they sing the blues". If that is sensitivity, I want to hear something else.

We have a Prime Minister who has joined the jet set, burning up fuel not to mention taxpayer's dollars with fleets of government jets to take them all over the capitals of Europe, Africa and Asia, not to mention those obligatory stops in Washington. What does he do when he gets there? What does he talk about when he meets all those leaders? Why has he not been able to convince his counterparts in Europe that the quotas they set for the northwest Atlantic are totally unrealistic? Has he ever raised the issue with those governemnts or is he just there for a few photo opportunities and really does not want to deal with the tough questions?

• (2020)

This government has cut Atlantic Canada adrift. This is not nation building. This is not national reconciliation. This is not building a stronger, more prosperous, more independent and sovereign Canada. This is the destruction of an entire region of Canada, the destruction of a way of life, the destruction or the dreams of thousands and thousands of people who trusted their government to defend their interests.

Frankly, I bleed for the people, the fishermen and the fish workers of Atlantic Canada, good hard-working honest Canadians who have been sold out by their government. My cry to the people of the country and to this House of Commons: Let those of us who are members of this place take notice of the negligence of this government. Let us condemn this government for that negligence, condemn it for the shameful and utter disregard of the people of Atlantic Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised and disappointed—

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): Where is the minister?

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): —that in the light of these very serious problems being faced by the citizens and by the communities of Atlantic Canada—

Mr. Tobin: Will the real Mister of Fisheries please stand up?

Mr. Clark: —what we received from the right hon. Leader of the Opposition tonight was just another partisan speech, partisanship as usual. He talks about free trade. Free trade has nothing to do with this problem as he would admit if he were seriously interested in the concerns of the people of Canso, North Sydney, or St. John's.

He suggests we go to war with France, with Spain, with Portugal.

Mr. Mills: That is ridiculous.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, this is pure bunkum, and the right hon. Leader of the Opposition knows it. He insults the people of Atlantic Canada by putting his shrill partisanship ahead of their real interests.

Sir, we are discussing tonight a very real national problem. It directly affects whole communities of Atlantic Canada. It affects directly the livelihood of thousands of our fellow Canadians. It is not just a regional problem, but one that requires national attention as earlier crises in Canadian agriculture have required national attention and received it from this government.

Mr. Robichaud: What are you doing about it?

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Nor is it just a fishery question. It involves the broader question of the long-term health of Atlantic Canada. Nor, Sir, is it just a federal matter. We have our responsabilities as a national government and we intend to continue to meet them, but the policies of provincial governments have

contributed to the problem and naturally provincial governments must help contribute to the solution.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Because it is a major national problem with significant international implications the Prime Minister established a committee of senior ministers in May to design effective—

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): You are trying to blame the provinces.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, I find it surprising that having sought this debate, having sought a discussion of serious problems affecting the communities and individuals of Atlantic Canada, instead of proposing anything, the Leader of the Opposition simply repeats partisanship as usual and now his colleagues, when I try to set forth some of the action this government is taking to respond to that serious problem, try to shout me down.

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): You guys are to blame.

Mr. Speaker: I should remind hon. members that when the right hon. Leader of the Opposition was speaking he was extended the courtesy to which he was entitled.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): From time to time.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister established a special committee of senior ministers to design effective short-term help and constructive long-term measures to assist communities and individuals who would be affected by serious changes in the Atlantic fishery. I chair that committee which has met a dozen times and drawn together ministers with a particular interest and responsibility in Atlantic Canada. It is supported by a task force of senior officials chaired by Ken Stein, a task force which has met extensively with the fishermen, with the industry, and with provincial governments.

The problem, Sir, is the following: In January of this year federal scientists determined that northern cod stocks were not growing as fast as predicted. There were fewer fish to catch. Unless the quotas were reduced we would seriously jeopardize future stocks and thereby put the industry at even greater risk. Quotas for 1989 were reduced from 266,000 tonnes to 235,000 tonnes. Dr. Les Harris has been asked to check those scientists' findings. If his report confirms the lower growth of the stock an even lower quota will be required for 1990.

Members of the House should understand that the northern cod stock is the largest commercial fish stock in the northwest Atlantic. The fishery is the sole source of employment in hundreds of communities in Atlantic Canada. Many of those communities are isolated from other economic opportunities.

Mr. Tobin: We knew that a long time ago.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): In Newfoundland the fishery accounts for more than 20 per cent of total provincial employment. In Nova Scotia it accounts for more than 6 per cent. A week ago—

Mr. Tobin: I don't believe this. What insulting pap.

Mr. Speaker: Just a minute. An application was brought to the Speaker for an emergency debate. After appropriate consideration we are now having it. I want all hon. members to respect each minister or member who is speaking. When this is done I would hope that some of the people who are a lot more unfortunate than others in this country may feel that at least there had been an appropriate exchange.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A week ago, as the House knows, National Sea Products announced the closure of fish plants in St. John's and Canso and the significant downsize to the plant in North Sydney.

That day my colleagues, the Minister for International Trade and the Minister of Public Works announced an immediate assistance plan to help the individuals and the communities involved. That plan involves counselling, training, income assistance under unemployment insurance and special help under the program for older workers. These programs are designed to provide immediate help to the individuals and the communities concerned.

Once the full extent of action to be taken by large companies is known, we will be able to give more details about the amount of assistance. What is important at this stage is that each and every affected worker has complete access to the short-term programs that we will have available. The larger challenge for all of us, Sir, is

to deal with the long-term impact of these changes in the Atlantic fishery.

We have been reviewing the role that the federal government plays in areas such as scientific assessment, enforcement and regulations. We believe there are ways in which these functions could be better carried out and in some instances we have already taken action. We expect to receive the Harris report before the end of this year.

We are continuing our work with the provinces with a view to identifying the most effective means by which we can encourage the long-term diversification of the Newfoundland-Nova Scotia economies. Newfoundland, in particular, is far too dependent on a resource that is cyclical. Obviously, this is due in part to a lack of other viable options. We will do our utmost to identify effective options for viable diversification of these economies and to create a more viable and a more reliable fishery.

While it is important to find alternatives to the fishery it, of course, will continue to play a major role in the economy of these provinces. We must take steps now that will allow these important stocks to grow at a sustainable level. No quick or magic solution is available. What is needed is years of prudent conservation oriented management. The temptation to artificially prop up the industry is strong, obviously. However, it would be in no one's interest to do that. The problem we face today has been faced and avoided too often before. If we put off dealing with these problems now they will only return again as they have consistently returned throughout the past.

What I can promise tonight is the commitment of this government to find viable and effective options for those communities and those individuals who have been affected or will be affected. The work of the Stein task force, the Haché task force, the panel of Dr. Harris, will all be important parts of the process determining what action we can take and should take.

In addition to the work of the cabinet committee, my colleagues and I have been actively pursuing the problem of overfishing outside the 200-mile limit of Canada. The Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization, known as NAFO, was established in 1977 to ensure that the fisheries in the areas outside Canada's 200-mile limit are harvested in accordance with sound conservation principles. From 1977 until 1986 when Portugal and Spain joined the European community NAFO operated effectively and all members benefited from this co-operation.

There are 12 members of NAFO. The European community is one member. NAFO traditionally reaches decisions by consensus and until recent years that consensus was respected and maintained. The NAFO agreement contains an opting out procedure which enables a member to object to its NAFO quota and to set its own quota instead. Clearly such a procedure was intended for exceptional circumstances since to use it frequently would undermine the whole system of conservation management. If NAFO were to collapse chaos would ensue with every fishing fleet battling for as much as could be caught. Harvesting in those circumstances would become strip mining. There would be no winners.

• (2030)

Every year since 1986 the European community has invoked the exceptional objections procedures and has established its own unilateral quotas at levels often many times higher than those approved by NAFO. Those quotas have been so high that they have never actually been caught. Even so, the actual catches, mainly by Spanish and Portuguese vessels, have far exceeded the European community quotas set by NAFO. Thus the European Commission has abandoned in the north west Atlantic the very conservation principles it applies off its own coast. The problem of overfishing has been exported to the other side of the Atlantic, to our side.

All other members of NAFO, including the U.S.S.R., Japan, Norway, Cuba and eastern European countries, have continued to accept their NAFO quotas and abide by the NAFO conservation regime, sometimes at great sacrifice. Only the European community has resisted doing so in spite of two NAFO resolutions appealing for respect of NAFO decisions. The result, Sir, is a very serious threat to important fisheries stocks, an obvious and an unnecessary threat. Much damage has been done and we are seeing the price that must be paid for that damage here in Canada. The situation can still be remedied, but the point of no return is approaching rapidly.

In the past several months, the Prime Minister, the Minister for International Trade, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, and I have put substantial effort into making the European community aware of the serious consequences of overfishing. The right hon. Leader of

the Opposition asked the rhetorical question as to whether the Prime Minister has raised the question. Of course he has with the leaders of Spain, with the leaders of Portugal and with the leaders of the European Commission directly. We will continue to do that. We have stressed the importance of consistent conservation rules for the long-term viability of these stocks. This has been done through political pressure and through diplomatic pressure, and it will continue to be done until the problem is resolved.

The Minister for International Trade, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and I have met several of our counterparts in the European member states. In Brussels last week, I took the opportunity to discuss our concerns again with Hans Andriessen, the European Commissioner for External Relations and Trade, and with the Foreign Minister of Portugal, de Deus Pinheiro. We have also done this through a public information campaign in which federal and provincial governments, parliamentarians, industry and labour have all participated. To enhance and co-ordinate those efforts, we designated a special ambassador for marine conservation, Mr. Alan Beesley, who has been leading our campaign since the summer.

We have been able to correct some misconceptions regarding the seriousness of the problem of the fishery in the north west Atlantic and to establish the urgency of addressing these problems. We have made some progress that would not have been made without that kind of pressure.

Mr. Mills: What about the progress?

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): I will tell you about the progress.

This year, for the first time since 1985, the European community has recommended unilateral quotas which in some cases accept NAFO quotas and in other cases reduce the European community quotas below the level of actual European communicty catches in recent years.

We were particularly interested to note that the commission was proposing a reduction for two flatfish stocks, American plaice and yellow tail flounder, and for one cod stock, 3NO cod on the southern tail of the bank. This is a positive step and is consistent with decisions taken by NAFO.

Unfortunately, however, the proposals of the commission include quotas which far exceed those of NAFO for the 2J3KL cod stock. Some 27,000 tonnes of stradding stock cod are proposed as the unilateral European community quota, as opposed to a quota of zero set by NAFO.

Clearly there is still a long way to go on this problem, and it is essential that Canada continue the discussions with the community on all aspects of fisheries managements and fisheries relations.

While this first step taken by the European community is important and welcomed, I urge the community to take a giant step now and work with all other NAFO members along the difficult but rewarding path of sustainable development, because if they do not, as the Prime Minister has made clear in his representations directly to European leaders, it is not simply Canadian fishermen who suffer. When the stock is depleted regularly as is now the case by overfishing by European nations, it affets the livelihoods and the future of fishermen everywhere. It affects them here directly, of course. It affects them in the community as well.

The problems that we face in the Atlantic Canada fishery are complex and they are difficult, but they are problems that affect the lives of thousand of Canadians and we must alleviate that burden as much as possible.

Over the coming weeks and months, my committee and our officials will continue our work in this direction. We will be continuing our discussions with the provinces on a long-term diversification program in which we expect them to play a full part. We will be providing the short-term adjustment programs that are necessary in these difficult times, and we will be looking into decisions that we can take that will help us to better manage this important resource. We recognize that the effect of this problem upon the lives of Atlantic Canadians is considerable and it is difficult.

I can assure this House that we will do our utmost to ensure the long-term economic security of the affected regions and to ensure also adjustment assistance for the affected individuals.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, as we go into the Christmas season there is a sense of desperation in Canada. It affects many communities. It affects many family homes, many apartments. I would be the first to admit that it does not hit each family in each community, but its grasp is extensive and it affects the lives of many Canadians.

Communities will lose their train service next month, farm families will lose farms that have been in the family for generations, miners in my own community of Lynn Lake will not only lose their severance pay as a result of a mine closing. Towns like Portage la Prairie have not only had the government action of closing down a military base but have also had Campbell's Soup announce that it will be closing its plant as well.

There is desperation for many Canadians who only have short-term jobs and know that they will lose their UI benefits. There is desperation for families who are hard pressed to pay their own bills and who found out on Friday that their children's education is going to have a surcharge put on it, that the government wishes to charge hundreds of dollars to an average student in order to pay for the privatization of the Canada Student Loans Program.

Area of this country that had hope for their own future now see cut-backs in regional development programs, in tourist programs, and in forestry agreements. People are uncertain whether under the free trade agreement this government will ever again help their region or help their industry. People feel that the government is continuing to turn its back on the Canadian people. Nowhere is this more true than in Atlantic Canada and no industry was more directly hit than the fishing industry.

Last week we heard question in the House about the closure of National Sea Products, one of the two largest fishing corporations in Canada. It announced a series of plant closures that will affect 1,500 workers and their families in Atlantic Canada. The plant in St. John's, Newfoundland will be closed and will eliminate 492 jobs. The facility at Canso will close throwing 742 people out of work. This processing facility is the largest single employer in that community. The plant in North Sydney, Nova Scotia, will be converted to a salt-fish operation with a job loss of 280.

Earlier in the year, the National Sea Plant at Lockeport, Nova Scotia, was closed with a job loss of 220 people. Another 150 jobs were lost when the Port Mouton facility of Clearwater Fine Foods closed in March, while another 100 plant workers in New Wave Fisheries found themselves unemployed when their plant closed. That is the action so far and we are now awaiting the Fisheries Products International announcements which are also expected to be very devastating to Atlantic Canada.

One of the most upsetting things about listening to the Secretary of State for External Affairs speak earlier today was the appearance that this was a new problem, the kind of feeling that he was trying to give people in Atlantic Canada and people in the House that they set up a committee six months ago because they discovered there was something new, something which was very damaging to the Atlantic Canadian fishing industry. Nothing could be further from the truth.

• (2040)

We have known for years that the fishing industry was in jeopardy. As far back as 1981, when the government through its own report *Resource Prospects for Canada's Atlantic Fisheries, 1981-1987* allowed for a projected increase in the resource, it stated the following:

> While 1981 predictions are based largely on formal calculations—projections of stock status in later years are to considerable extent best guesses, based on inadequate knowledge.

No action was taken. In 1982 the Kirby report, while projecting a northern cod stock viable enough to have a total allowable catch for 1987 set at 380,000 tonnes, contained the following statement:

> A reliance on growth cannot be sustained indefinitely and in many stocks the biological limits of prudent harvesting have been reached, or nearly so.

Again no action was taken, except that Kirby went to the Senate.

In 1987 the federal government commissioned the Alverson report which examined the trends of the cod stocks off Newfoundland. This report warned, and again I quote:

> Estimates of the growth in the total stock may have been overly optimistic and—has not reach expected levels.

Again no action was taken.

Finally in early 1988 there was the Canada–Newfoundland Inshore Fisheries Agreement which contained the following:

> With few exception the fishery resources of the Atlantic have reached their maximum utilization and in some cases there is an indication that overexploitation is occurring.

Again no action was taken.

There have been years and years of Liberal and Tory governments, years and years of government reports, and years and years of Liberal and Tory inaction on a very important process.

Mr. Milliken: Years and years of NDP whining.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, one of the Liberals sitting in his little box back there says that we were whining. Yes, we were whining. We were complaining about Liberal inaction just like we are complaining about Conservative inaction now.

It comes to the same issue when it comes to foreign overfishing. It is nice for the Secretary of State for External Affairs to get up and say that we have had a special high ranking commission, with he himself as the head of it and with senior cabinet ministers, that has been meeting for six months. In addition we have officials, all of a very senior level, and they have been meeting for six months. Why were they not doing something when this was a problem four, five and six years ago?

The problems that Atlantic Canada faces now in the fishing industry are not new. They are not something which occurred six months ago. The overfishing is not something that occurred six months ago. The only thing new is that now government is trying to do something to save its own political rump, while Atlantic Canadians are losing their jobs and their homes.

There are things that could have been done and there are things that can be done now. In Iceland, for example, there is a program to make sure that there is no overfishing in the spawning season. We have a spawning season in Atlantic Canada for the cod, which is basically mid–March to mid–May. Why do we not have a similar program in place? Why was this not in place not six months ago but six years ago? Why has that not happened? When is the government finally going to announce that we will have a similar program in this country?

Again, with all the concern that we have as Canadians about our lack of ability to have adequate surveillance off the Atlantic coast, why has the Government of Canada announced this year that the work of the Tracker aircraft will be suspended in that region? Why is it, in the same year that a Canadian destroyer cannot adequately protect our shores, the government is not announcing something to ensure that we can have the necessary surveillance both by ship and by air of our Atlantic fisheries?

Again, this is a government that has prided itself on environmental assessments, saying it is necessary for every major undertaking of the government. Why have we not had a full environmental assessment of the process by which quotas and allocations of our fish resources are set? Why has that not been done? These are not new ideas. These are ideas that the government could have been acting on for years.

Why have we not had Canadian leadership to fight the foreign overfishing off our coasts? Why have we always reacted? Why have we reacted to the lobster decision? Why have we allowed Portugal and Spain continuously to overfish in our areas and off our 200–mile limit?

We listened to the government. We sense that government members really do not have a plan. With each and every decision, whether it is by National Sea or by Fisheries Products International, we get the sense that all of this was a surprise, that they did not know the decision was going to come down, and that they did not know the Americans were going to make the decision on the lobsters. Yet, they have reports in the Deparment of Fisheries and Oceans which indicate that they knew what the American decision was going to be. For that matter, from the department's own report, they actually defend the upcoming American decision with regard to the lobsters:

> For conservation reasons, the U.S. government is trying to increase the size of lobster that can be caught or imported into the United States.

This government, in its own report, knew what was coming. You would never know it from the reaction of the Minister for International Trade who shouted once the decision was finally made that the full weight and influence of the Canadian government will be brought to bear on the U.S. Congress and the U.S. administration in

an attempt to settle this very serious problem in the interests of our fishermen in eastern Canada.

We are waiting to see what reaction is. The people of Atlantic Canada are wondering why there was no protection earlier. Obviously the Department of Fisheries and Oceans knew that this was going to happen.

The same thing is true with regard to the situation with Spanish and Portuguese overfishing. Why do we continue to pretend that this is a new problem? Why do we continue to pretend that the first time ever we have to go to Spain or we have to go to Portugal to deal with this matter?

We have known about it for years. If it is this most recent government or the government that preceded it, it has basically been a program of reaction, a lack of any leadership, a lack of any planning.

I mentioned in my opening remarks there is a sense that the Canadian government has turned its back on many Canadians and that is especially true in Atlantic Canada. When you see your train service going and you see your fisheries going; when you realize tourist programs are not being renewed; when you see that the government cuts back on its own touted Atlantic Canada Development Agency; when you see forestry agreements not being renewed; or agreements when they are renewed, such as the tourist agreement, have only half as much money put into them; when you know that you can no long afford to send your children to university and the government says "go get a student loan and we will charge you a surcharge on that now," costing as I mentioned earlier, hundreds and hundreds of dollars to an average family; when you get that happening time after time, day after day, how can people in Atlantic Canada say that the federal government is going to represent them?

How people in Atlantic Canada say that their members of Parliament from that region really are concerned with the decisions that are made in cabinet? How can any Atlantic Canadian feel that this Parliament and this government is addressing his or her concerns?

• (2050)

I have received more phone calls today on this issue after it became known that I would be speaking for our caucus, than I have on a number of other issues over the last few months. There is a real desperation out there and without all the political rhetoric there is a real need for real government action to make people in Atlantic Canada feel that we care and that government is going to do something more than hold a committee for a mere six months.

Mr. Reid: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I think you will find that there have been discussions and that all sides would consent to allowing the debate to proceed past midnight so that all members can be heard on such a particularly serious issue and an issue of such great concern to all Canadians.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, as the spokesman for the Official Opposition, I confirm that we would extend the hours as the parliamentary secretary has indicated.

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): Will the ministers speak?

Mr. Speaker: I wonder if the hon. member for South West Nova would leave it to others who have been designated to assist the Speaker.

I recognize the hon. member for Kamloops.

Mr Riis: Mr. Speaker, I simply want to say that we in the New Democratic Party would be more than willing to co–operate on this most important matter and to indicate that our leader will be speaking later in the debate when she returns from the west coast.

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, it is with gravity and emotion that I rise this evening to address a matter of the utmost importance for Atlantic Canada and indeed for the country as a whole, that is the crisis of the Atlantic fishery. That industry employs 10 per cent of Atlantic Canada's workforce, contributes millions to the Gross Provincial Product of the four Atlantic provinces, sustains hundreds of coastal communities and is a way of life for thousands of families throughout our region, a way of life which is now in peril.

I want to begin by expressing my sincere thanks to Your Honour for granting this emergency debate and thereby raising the profile of this issue to the top of the national agenda. My colleagues from Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island will speak to the dimensions of the crisis in their provinces. I will focus my remarks on Nova Scotia and in particular on the town of Canso.

The town of Canso is located at the eastern apex of mainland Nova Scotia and has been the heart of the fishing industry in that area for nearly 400 years. The communities which surround Canso have been dependent upon the fishery, on inshore fishery and on the offshore fishery, for generations. The Canso plant, now known as the National Sea Products plant, has through successive ownerships sustained an industry and an economy stretching from Canso all the way to Antigonish. It is the main employer in that area.

A week ago, National Sea Products Limited announced the closure of its fish processing plant and its trawler port thereby directly affecting some 800 to 850 workers. If the decision is not reversed, a $1 million monthly payroll will dry up. Local services which depend on the fishery will be crippled. The town and county, faced with the loss of its tax base, will be unable to cope. The closure of the National Sea Products plan in Canso, if it is not averted, will mean the devastation of not only the town of Canso but of the entire county of Guysborough and much of eastern Nova Scotia.

I was in Canso on the weekend, I spoke with workers at the National Sea Products plant. I spoke with trawler workers, those hardy souls who pursue their livelihoods on the stormy seas of the north Atlantic. Across the street I met with Cansonians doing their pre-Christmas shopping at the co-op store. I met with the mayor, Mr. Ray White, and members of his council on the prospects for the town and surrounding communities in light of the National Sea Products decision. Mayor White and the warden of Guysborough County, Herman Long, have travelled to Ottawa to attend this debate and are in the gallery tonight.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): They and the council of the town of Canso want to underscore the importance of this industry to their future.

The reaction of Cansonians to the National Sea announcement has been one of disbelief. They do not believe that a company which as recently as a month ago praised the workforce at its Canso plant and on its trawlers would suddenly close the entire operation. They cannot believe that a community which has survived on fishing for 400 years, a community where no other conceivable economic alternatives exist, would permanently shut down because of a temporary depletion of fish stocks.

That National Sea Products would choose to pull out of Canso and close its other Atlantic plants after spending millions of its recent profits to acquire a vast international empire, including processing plants in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in the United States, is unbelievable to the people of Canso.

What Cansonians find most difficult to believe or what they cannot accept is a Canadian government, which purports to speak for all Canadians, which is a shareholder in this company, and which has known for months that the situation facing the Atlantic fishery, has so quietly acquiesced to this corporate decision.

The crisis facing the Atlantic fishery was not begun with these recent announcements of plant closures by National Sea Products. The writing has been on the wall for many months. Little has been done to offset this crisis.

When questioned on the matter, the government has always evaded the issue by stating the facts and figures of scientific studies which have been proven to be an inaccurate measure at best. Then they stalled by saying that they are waiting for the reports of Harris and Haché.

It is fine to have independent studies done, but why have they not come up with a strategy for saving this important industry? As usual, the cart is before the horse with this government and the blame falls on poor leadership and mismanagement by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

The government response to the plant closures announced by the Minister for International Trade in St. John's last Monday, and echoed I presume by the Nova Scotia minister in Canso, is a slap in the face to the workers who have invested their lives in this industry.

What is new about telling workers they will be able to qualify for UI? What is new in that? What is new in telling them that they can be retrained for some other industry? What is new in that? What is new in telling them that they can retire early? What is new in telling them that they can leave Canso and find jobs in some other industries elsewhere? That is not a response to an urgent crisis.

The response of the Minister of Fisheries is even more contemptible. He says the fishing industry is fine. His response to the workers is: "Don't worry! Be happy". They are worried in Canso and they are not happy. They are worried about their future and they are worried about the loss of their livelihood.

Phyllis MacDonald spoke for all fish plant workers in Canso when she told me on Saturday: "I've worked for ten years at this plant. I'm trained to process fish. I'm good at what I do. I don't want to be trained for something else. I don't want UI. I just want to work."

• (2100)

Canso has become a symbol. It is a symbol of the neglect of Atlantic Canada by this government. It is a symbol of the insensitivity of this government to the regions of this country. And it is a symbol of the gross mismanagement by this government of the Atlantic fishery.

How else can one explain the sudden revelation that fish stocks throughout Atlantic Canada are seriously depleted? Who has been managing these stocks for the last four years? Who is responsible for licensing and regulating fishermen and fishing vessels? Who determines where and how much can be fished? Who monitors and collects information on fish landings and on fishing activity? Who polices, or does not police, illegal overfishing by foreign vessels in Canadian waters? Who has been issuing foreign licences to foreign factory-freezer trawlers from Russia, Spain, Portugal, Poland, from everywhere? Who has turned a blind eye while the mid-shore dragger fleet off the Scotia shelf suddenly tripled in capacity at the same time as stocks in this area and in Georges Bank were being decimated? If this is not mismanagement, Madam Speaker, then what is it?

This government talks about diversification. It promises a community development fund to wean fishing communities off fishing and onto other activities. But who can believe the government when it slashes regional development spending in Atlantic Canada, when it pulls out of towns like Summerside after promising the moon during the election campaign and when the minister for ACOA announces in Port Hawkesbury, two weeks before the election, that Thyssen of Germany will invest $58 million and create 500 jobs in the Strait of Canso area, and a year later nothing has happened?

The people of Canada are fed up with empty Tory promises. This government, unable to come up with solutions of its own to the messes that it has created with its policies, is constantly asking the opposition, and in particular the Liberals, for solutions. Well here are some solutions.

Begin by lowering interest rates and the value of the Canadian dollar, a policy which is crippling the export industries of the Atlantic region. Sit down and, in return for a package of assistance, oblige National Sea and Fishery Products International to spread out its quota among Atlantic plants so that towns like Canso, with an historic attachment to the fishery and no alternatives, can continue to survive and stay in the fishery until fish stocks improve. Find innovative markets and uses for under-utilized species, encourage Canadian fleets to catch these species and process them in Canadian, not foreign, plants. Put in place stock-management programs that make sense and that provide benefits to Canadians, not to foreign governments.

I recognize that the Atlantic fishery must continue to be economically viable and that to force companies like National Sea Products and Fishery Products International into bankruptcy would not contribute to its health. However, the Government of Canada can never forget that the fishery belongs to the people of Canada to be managed for the benefit of Canadians, in particular Canadians in Canada's coastal communities who depend with a larger stake in the Atlantic fishery, with a more legitimate claim to this resource, than the town of Canso and the surrounding villages of eastern Nova Scotia. They must not be allowed to die.

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Madam Speaker, to paraphrase my colleague who just spoke, the Government of Canada will not forget the communities of Atlantic Canada and does not overlook the fact that the fish stocks of Atlantic Canada belong to Canadians, but especially to those of Atlantic Canada who have depended on them for their sustenance and livelihoods for centuries.

I understand the intensity that the hon. member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso brings to this debate and I compliment him on requesting that this debate be

held this evening. I listened carefully to his comments. Having grown up in a small coal-mining town myself and having seen a succession of mine closings I think I can personally feel the hurt, the anxiety and the frustrations that are being experienced in communities like Canso as we approach the holiday period.

I recognize that Mayor White and an alderman from Canso are in the House tonight. I have had the privilege of visiting communities like Canso, Black Tickle and Meteghan up and down the coast of Atlantic Canada. I know that there is no option that the fishery, particularly the inshore fishery and the fish plants, is really what give people an adequate income in a situation where they can properly raise their children and look forward with confidence and optimism toward the future. So I do not take lightly any of the contributions that have been made this evening to this point and I will listen with great interest to the balance of the speeches this evening.

I think we all feel a special admiration for men and women that go down to sea and we must share their sadness when tragedy strikes, as occurred last week when the *Johnny and Sisters II* sank in a fierce storm, losing Captain Harry Thorneburn and eight men of the crew, including his son. I think all members of the House would want to send our heartfelt regrets to the families of these lost fishermen.

The problems of the Atlantic fishery are not problems that have just sprung upon us. Were I sitting on the opposition side I would probably be as wont to finding simplistic excuses or criticisms to offer. These problems have been a fact of the fishery for as long as it has been conducted but have become increasingly difficult in these times when we have modern, sophisticated industries and technology allowing us to sell a very valuable product into an international marketplace where we are very vulnerable to the swings of supply and demand and exchange rates.

Even more seriously, we are constantly faced with the increasing advancement of technology and the ability to find fish wherever they are, to put large nets in their path and to harvest them in abundant quantities. Coupled with that, we have to face the real problem that our science is not as highly developed as it ought to be because there are many things that defy the ability of scientists to make accurate predictions about the magnitude of the fish stocks.

I want to point out for the benefit of members that the life cycle of the Atlantic cod being eight years plus makes it very difficult to learn about the first two or three years of that life cycle in order to be able to predict the abundance and set quotas for that stock from five to ten years after it was originally spawned.

We have developed a very elaborate system over the past 15 years, at least since the extension of jurisdiction, to involve all of the interested parties, all of those whose future hinges on the health of the fishery to be a part of the quota-setting process.

• (2110)

So we have an elaborate system of consultation which involves the input of scientific advice produced by our scientists who we believe are among the world's finest. They present, through the Canadian Atlantic Fishery Scientific Advisory Committee, quota proposals based, as I conceded a few moments ago, on an inadequate understanding of how many fish lurk beneath the surface of the sea and how they are managing in terms of food supply, in terms of water temperature and currents and the presence of predators. We take this scientific advice and we then sit down with all of the industry groups each autumn through a structure called the Atlantic Groundfish Advisory Committee and together with scientists and officials discuss what the quotas should be for the coming year.

That consultation culminates in a meeting each December between myself and the Atlantic provincial fisheries ministers at which the proposed groundfish management plan is further discussed and at which time I try to seek the support of the four maritime ministers, the Newfoundland minister and the Minister of Fisheries for Quebec as we finalize a document which contains the proposed quotas for some 50 groundfish stocks in Atlantic Canada.

This process has evolved, as I mentionned, over some 10 to 15 years and it represents the finest example of consultation in reaching decisions which contribute to the orderly and sustainable management of a finite resource. The policies within which those decisions are taken are modified as a result of suggestions from the Atlantic Regional Council. You yourself, Mr. Speaker, in another incarnation, created this policy advisory group which helps us to decide the forms of policy by which the Atlantic fishery is managed.

All of this to say that the question of what went wrong is not simply a matter of accusing or laying the blame at the feet of any particular individual or agency of government. This is a complex process and one which has improved and evolved. I think it was the member for Selkirk who made some helpful suggestions of things we should be doing to better assess the environmental sustainability, I think was how he put it, of these precious stocks of fish. In fact, that is what we have been doing. For some two to three years now we have been working to improve our knowledge of this resource and the means by which we predict the quotas.

I would like to just list a few of the things that I have been privileged to initiate in the more than four years that I have been Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and to state that we would not have taken these initiatives if we were not concerned about the future stability and integrity of the Atlantic groundfish industry.

In January, 1986, at an Atlantic Council of Fisheries Ministers meeting in St. John's we tackled the problem of foreign fishing within and beyond the Canadian 200–mile limit. As a result of that and numerous meetings that I have held with Atlantic provincial ministers, we announced a new policy in June of that year which involved the re–arming of our fisheries patrol vessels, an increase in fines under the Coastal Fisheries Protection Act from a level of $50,000 for a summary offence to over $500,000. We introduced armed boarding parties. We apprehended and pursued vessels half way across the Atlantic and beyond. As a result of the intensification of our enforcement against foreign vessels that would violate our fishing zone, we saw in the subsequent years, 1987 and beyond, a substantial decline in the number of sightings of and alleged offences by these foreign vessels. We introduced full observer coverage on all foreign vessels fishing within our waters.

Another important initiative that we decided was that no longer should the right to fish our precious, non–surplus cod stocks in Canadian waters be tied to some kind of market access consideration. We said the only quotas available within our waters would be of surplus stocks, that is, those which were not of interest to the Canadian fishing industry. We said the countries, in most cases members of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization, which qualify for these quotas would, in turn, have to exhibit good behaviour in terms of meeting our conservation requirements. We introduced increased aerial surveillance, with both fixed–wing aircraft and helicopters, in both the Newfoundland and the Scotia—Fundy region.

One of the most important initiatives of all that I recall taking arose from my visits to small inshore communities in Newfoundland in the summer of 1986, and then Newfoundland and the coast of Labrador in the summer of 1987. I listed to fishermen. I visited them at the wharves early in the morning to learn that they were extremely alarmed and troubled by the shrinking size and the disappearance of the inshore cod that they had been traditionally accustomed to catching.

I was troubled by this to the extent that we took major initiatives early in 1987 to end the practice of discarding young fish at sea and to placing observers on our domestic offshore vessels when they were fishing in areas where the cod would be spawning at that time of year. We introduced stiff penalties for the discard and wastage of young northern cod and required that the fishing effort be spread out among the three sub–regions known as 2J, 3K and 3L. This had some initial effect, we believe, in helping the inshore fishery to begin to recover as it appeared to do in 1988.

But when I returned in the summer of 1987 the fishermen were still alarmed. They felt that the quotas which had been set in the mid to late 1980s as a result of the projections of scientific advice in the late 1970s and the advice of the people who advised the Kirby Task Force apparently were too high. The inshore fishermen banded together and created a group called the Newfoundland Inshore Fisheries Association and demanded that we set the quota lower. Contrary to scientific advice, I set the quota lower and at the same time I commissioned a group of eminent international scientists headed up by Dr. Lee Alverton of the University of Washington, Dr. Pope of the University of Lowestoft in Britain and other acknowledged experts to find out whether our scientists were properly predicting the abundance of the northern cod stock.

As we look back now we can see that those were the beginnings of a process which has led to a much more accurate means of predicting the abundance of cod stocks. The age classifications and the survival rate of each age group is much more carefully taken into account. The result was that the scientific advice presented for northern cod last winter suggested that our quotas had been far too high, that the overly optimistic notion that we could extract some 400,000 metric tonnes of cod from the northern cod resource was vastly

exaggerated and that we would have to lower the quota to about half of that and perhaps even less still.

• (2120)

In February of 1989, early this year, I had to take the difficult choice, notwithstanding all of the consultation and all the advice we had received, of reducing that quota temporarily to 235,000 metric tonnes. I commissioned Dr. Les Harris, President of Memorial University; Dr. Alverson, other scientists and other leaders of the Newfoundland fishing industry to re-examine this whole question as to whether we were using the proper scientific methodology to predict the abundance of these stocks.

I am elaborating on this because the member for Selkirk seemed to suggest that we should be doing some kind of a comprehensive environmental study of this resource. In fact, that is the process that has been evolving for three years. We are trying to find the cause of the problem to fix it. I am sorry to say that our findings are not producing popular results. In fact, there are many people who do not want to believe the scientists and do not want to believe these international experts. Those who have made investments predicated on a continuing healthy offshore fishery have now had to re-assess those decisions.

We have all had to re-assess the size of this industry in terms of the capacity that was encouraged by the restructuring of 1982 and 1983, by a royal commission of inquiry at that time, by the pouring of tens of millions of dollars into creating and industry predicated upon certain expectations about the abundance of the resource only to find, as we have suspected for some time, that the resource cannot sustain the levels which had been envisaged for it.

Something has gone wrong in the projections of the resource but all is not disaster in the Atlantic fishery because we have some 50 stocks of Atlantic groundfish producing over 850,000 metric tonnes of abundance. We have the problem of an excessively high price for cod block in 1987 which collapsed in 1988. We have the problem of a declining appetite for fish in the large United States market which is important. Most of all, we have the problem of communities dependent on fish plants which are the very heart and soul of those communities.

We have to find solutions through the package of economic measures which have been described in this House this evening and last week and which we will elaborate upon in the coming days. No amount of economic assistance, no tens of millions of dollars will restore the self-respect, the sense of pride, the sense of fulfilment and happiness that we wish for all Canadians at this time of year.

I hope through the findings that I have described tonight, this new scientific advice, through measures we are taking to tighten up on the overcapacity in the industry, through increased fines under the Fisheries Act for domestic violation, and through the initiatives to end the blatant foreign destruction of our stocks beyond our 200-mile limit, that we can create a greater sense of optimism about the fishery of the future.

It troubles me no end that we have something in the order of 325,000 to 350,000 tonnes of very fine protein in the water of Atlantic Canada which our Canadian industry is not interested in catching; whether this be in the form of redfish, turbot, Greenland halibut, capelin or other species. Under the international law of the sea and Canada's international obligations, if Canadian interests—fishermen and investors—are not willing to harvest that resource, other nations, in this case through the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization, have an opportunity to ask our permission to harvest it. It does not belong to Canada but as the coastal state we have first refusal on it.

Last year some 160,000 of those surplus species were allocated to Canadian companies and something less than 50,000 tonnes were harvested. There is a surplus there of about 120,000 tonnes of these species which I believe we can further develop and further exploit for the benefit of communities such as Canso, St. John's and others.

I am not saying that this is the solution to all of these problems but we are putting together a pool of these under-utilized species, and I believe that with the kind of assistance available through the Community Development Program and the economic diversification initiatives that this government will be funding we can help some enterprises in some of these communities to find ways to harvest that significant amount of Canadian resource which, for many years, has been left in the

water or given away to the foreigners. In fact, we could claim the full 325,000 or 350,000 tonnes if we could make it work for us.

That is the commitment that I am making together with a commitment for additional measures to bring the capacity growth under control, to create a fishery in which we all show more responsibility toward the resource. In a more personal sense, we need to create a future, to create an industry and to add diversification to that industry in the communities such as Canso and Lockeport and other which have not yet been named to ensure that ther is a continuation of a strong and healthy fishery in their futures.

I ask all members of this House to try to understand the complexity of the issue but yet to share with me the optimism that the problem can be solved for the greater good of all Atlantic Canadians.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and there is an agreement that, at least in so far as the members of the Official Opposition are concerned, speeches from this point on by members of the Official Opposition will be limited to 10 minutes each. So we would have two 10-minute segments for each member of the Official Opposition recognized.

The government may wish to do that in so far as members on that side are concerned after the speech of the Minister for International Trade. The New Democrats may choose to do so after their Leader has spoken.

Mr. Speaker: The House has heard the proposition put by the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands. I take it that there is agreement?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Beauséjour): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by congratulating the hon. member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso (Mr. LeBlanc) for persevering in his request for this emergency debate. I also wish to thank the Speaker of the House who approved this request. It is a sign that the Chair has fully understood the seriousness of the situation. There are more than enough problems in the fisheries, whether we are talking about the Atlantic, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, eastern Quebec and New Brunswick, or about the West Coast, with the salmon and herring fishery. We also have problems with pollution in certain waterways on the coast of British Columbia. We have problems in the Artic fishery. We have problems in the Great Lakes. We have problems across Canada, but we have one major problem, and that is that our fisheries have no one to defend them. We saw an example of that this evening. When it is time to talk about the fisheries and to provide solutions, who rises in the House to talk about the fisheries ? The Minister of External Affairs (Mr. Clark). That is the problem. Because the Minister, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, has been given a free rein to visit foreign countries and conclude all kinds of agreements, we have lost the fisheries. The Minister is simply out to lunch as far as the fisheries are concerned. That is our major problem.

• (2130)

Mr. Speaker, to get back to the Atlantic region, what we are now seeing is a major crisis. For us, in the Atlantic region, it means our economic base is crumbling. Our cod stocks are disappearing. We are faced with overfishing by foreign fleets and a government that refuses to act, a government that lets everything pass. We have been hit by unilateral action taken by the Americans, a decision that restricts exports of lobsters to the United States. The crab season has been a real disaster. There again, stocks are exhausted, which has a particular impact on New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.

In New Brunswick and elsewhere, we have been hearing about plant closures, which in some cases, especially in Canso, will cause an entire community to disappear. The community will close down. And what does the government do? What does the government say? Not much! And the worst of it is that the government is siding with the big corporations instead of defending the interests of fishermen and plant workers. What the government fails to understand is that the fish stocks in the sea are there for all Canadians and for the communities that depend on them. So far, this government has refused to protect this resource for those communities. The government has preferred to listen to the corporations which want to do what suits them and transfer fish stocks from one location to the other. In the

case of Canso, the whole economic base will disappear. There will be nothing left in that part of the province. We have a government that promises assistance, assistance that has yet to materialize, although the plant closures have already been announced. Those are a few of the reasons why I support the motion by the hon. member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso. This perseverance is truly admirable.

Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to say a few words about the serious impact of this crisis on the fishery in New Brunswick. I realize that my colleagues from other provinces will consider the specific impact on their respective provinces.

We in New Brunswick sympathize with other Atlantic communities because we know what it means to lose a community's only source of income. I would like to quote what was said by the hon. Denis Losier, New Brunswick Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, who stated: "New Brunswick's economy will lose as much as $130 million this year because of declining snow crab stocks and the low prices offered for lobster and herring roe".

The snow crab fishery is in trouble. We had a terrible season last spring, catches were very low and quality was poor. A number of communities have been affected, including Caraquet, Shippegan, Cap-Pelé and Shediac. Some examples: Chaleur Bay Packers closed down in Bas-Caraquet; 160,000 people are out of work. Three hundred people lost their jobs when Connors Brothers closed in Shippegan; 250 jobs were lost at L. Gauthier and Sons in Shippegan. The situation has taken on crisis proportions, and this is just in the snow crab industry.

Now a few words about herring roe. Here again, the season was a disaster, not because there wasn't enough fish, but because prices were so low, it wasn't worth the effort.

And now about lobster. Last summer in my riding, fishermen were practically giving the lobster away. They were selling it for $1.50 a pound. Why? Because the packers were stuck with big inventories. Why were they stuck with big inventories? Because our lobster was too expensive for the American market. They were too expensive because the Canadian dollar was too high as result of this government's high interest rate policy. The government refuses to budge. Our lobster is no longer competitive on American markets. We are losing our export markets.

An Hon. Member: Not true!—

Mr. Robichaud: Not true—Tell that to the people of New Brunswick! Tell that to the packers! Just look at the inventory they have. Just try and sell lobster to the United States. You can' sell it. You'll have to give it away.

[*English*]

Madam Speaker, as if we did not have enough problems, the Americans have given us some more. They came up with legislation that will limit the import of lobsters to the United States. This will affect about $30 million worth of lobsters.

This means that we will have to process that lobster. We will not be able to sell it live on the American market. Why? Because the Americans decided to bring in a regulation that limits those exports, after the Prime Minister said that he would do everything to stop that measure from going through. What did he do? Well, we do not know. We know that whatever he tried did not work.

And what do we hear from this government?

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, I have come to the end of my speech. We would like to see a far more positive reaction from this government. The government has to act aggressively. It must be prepared to do some serious funding. It must ensure that funding is available to promote the use of under-utilized species. It must help fishermen make the necessary adjustments to be able to catch those species. It must also help the processors and the plants to change their equipment so they can process these fish.

The government must also make and effort on the marketing end, to promote species that will no longer be under-utilized, species that our fishermen will be able to catch.

Finally, Madam Speaker, this government must provide assistance to communities and help them through this crisis, so that as soon as fish stocks have been rebuilt, these communities will still be able to make a living from the fishery.

• (2140)

[*English*]

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Madam Speaker, I understand that by virtue of a prior agreement I have only 10 minutes to speak on behalf of—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I will try to be helpful to hon. members who are sharing a 20-minute period.

If one hon. member takes 12 or 13 minutes, to be fair to everyone in the House I will have to cut the other member short after seven minutes. I will try to be helpful to hon. members and let whoever has the floor know when there is a minute left in the 10-minute period. After that I will have to cut short the intervention in order to be fair to everyone.

Mr. Simmons: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As I was saying, I have only 10 minutes to make some points on behalf of no fewer than 16,000 or 17,000 fishermen and plant workers who live in the riding of Burin—St. George's. I understand the reason for the agreement and I respect it because so many people in the Official Opposition want to speak on this very important issue.

First, let me deal with a very important specific that has come up already in this debate. I hear members of the NPD with their fairly limited knowledge of fishery from the perspective of that great ocean-going fishing port of Churchill tell us that it is not a new problem. No, it is not a new problem, and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans says it is not a new problem. But it is a problem that has taken a new twist in the last few years.

When we talk about overfishing I invite members to look at the figures. The overfishing began in 1985 and 1986, after this government took office and after it sent out a very different signal to the foreigners than was being sent out by previous governments. The basic signal being sent out by this government is, "Rape my fish, but love me. As long as you love me, as long as you smile at me, what difference about the livelihoods of fishermen and plant workers?"

My friend from St. John's East, myself and others were in Portugal in November of this year. We had the Director General of Fisheries, Dr. daBreto, look across the table at us. He said to us in the fall of this year, in November, "If the overfishing problem is as serious as you fellows say it is, why are we only hearing about it now?" Why did it take four years to realize that maybe the minister of fisheries, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, and the Minister for International Trade, should saunter over to Europe and tell the boys and girls over there, we have a problem? Yes, we have a problem, a problem these people created by not sending out a signal that they were going to fight for the fishermen and the plant workers of Atlantic Canada.

Now we have another problem. It is not called the overfishing problem, it is the underfishing problem. The ever-accommodating minister of fisheries took time from his busy schedule to rush into cabinet one day last month to say, "Look, our good friends the French have not caught quite enough fish, I think we owe them a few bucks". He then goes and pays them $456,000 and has the gall in the process to say it is because they have reduced quota. I know he has his usual good academic explanations for this, but it is another example of his not knowing what side he is on or who he is fighting for.

I am glad he spoke because he gave us what must be the best academic discourse we have had in a long time. What was lacking from that minister tonight, as is always lacking, is something in the gut, some feeling for the fishermen and plant workers he is supposed to be fighting for.

If the government is looking for suggestions—and I noticed my good friend from St. John's West is writing very hastily over there—why does he not put down this one as a first step? Step one, get rid of the minister of fisheries. Take over the job yourself, boy. At least you know what it is all about. You know one end of a fish from the other. At least you will have something in the gut for those people down there. God help us if you do not have any more in the gut than you had for your own people in St. John's last week, though, when you stood by and let the facility down there be shut down.

The minister of fisheries tells us that he believes in the future of the fishery, that it is going to be a stable fishery. He should compare notes with the fellow who spoke before him, the Secretary of State for External Affairs who was talking about diversification. That is a fancy

term for saying we are going to have the fishermen do something else other than fish.

What is it they are going to do in Ramea, an island off the south coast of Newfoundland. Are they going to have a chocolate bar factory there, maybe, for them? How about a car plant on the island where Gaultois is located, on the south coast of Newfoundland? Maybe there could be a bit of agriculture in Habour Breton, if you can find room to get the roots down between the rocks. Maybe we will move the Canadian Mint to Grand Bank. That ought to do the job. And what are you going to move to Fortune, to Burin, to Marystown and to Burgeo? How about St. Lawrence, Rose Blanche, Codroy, and Belleoram? You are going to need a lot of diversification.

I have a better idea. Why do you not have these people do what they know how to do well? Why go through the handstands of diversifying, of training, of retraining? These people split fish very well. They catch it very well. And if as the academic the minister of fisheries tell us, it is only a matter of time before the scientists get this thing in hand, and if it is all going to bounce back in four or five years, then does it not make some sense to you, Madam Speaker, that we ought to preserve our facilities, keep the skills in those communities so that when the fish stocks rebound there will be people there to catch the fish, to process the fish, to get a livelihood from the fish, to continue the way of life that they have had for four or five centuries on that particular coast? Why diversify? Why not find something, maybe a share of the paying process? Maybe we cannot have all the plants operate 12 months around. These people have said community by community that they are prepared to have something less than a full loaf during the short term for the next four or five years.

If the government wants a plan of action, I have a plan of action for it. And it is not fancy words like "diversification". It is the suggestion that it draw on the strengths of those people.

What this government needs to do is to go out and take the initiative, with a bit of seed money, and undo that terrible decision of National Sea last week as it affects St. John's, North Sydney and Canso and forestall the decision that we hear FPI is about to let drop on us in some of the communities that I mentioned a few moments ago. Find a bit of seed money.

Do you know why the government cannot do that? Because just as it sold down the river is landing rights on the British Columbia coast and sold down the river its option to do anything for the lobster fishermen in Atlantic Canada, it has also sold down the river to the Americans under the free trade agreement the ability to subsidize a bit, to shore up this industry a bit, at this particular time.

This is what puts the lie to the statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs that this has nothing to do with free trade. This has everything to do with free trade. The government's response or lack of response, its mealy-mouthedness talking about diversification and so on and so forth is uncoded, an admission that because of the free trade agreement the government is now leaving 16,000, or most of them, fishermen and plant workers in my riding, plus tens of thousands of other fishermen and plant workers throughout Atlantic Canada, dangling. Why? Because our friend the Prime Minister had to choose between Ronald Reagan and George Bush and some fishermen. And guess who he chose, one more time?

It is not fair. It is not good enough. I see the gentleman from St. John's West is getting in gear. When he gets up, after he gets through with the bafflegab and waving his arms, I want him to respond to my suggestion. If the stocks are going to rebound, as his colleagues have been telling us all night, will he in the interim put to cabinet the idea that the limit of stocks ought to be shared among the several plants to help them continue do do what they do well until the stocks do rebound? Will he do that for us.

• (2150)

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I want to address myself tonight to the people who may be watching, in particular those from the district of St. John's West, Trepassey, St. Marys Bay, St. Joseph's—

Mr. Tobin: You'll need all the saints to save you after this.

Mr. Crosbie: —from Peter's River, Fermeuse, St. John's from elsewhere in Newfoundland because we do have a serious problem, and not for the first time in the Atlantic fishery.

The last time we had a severe problem it was caused by human mistakes. The crisis of 1981 to 1983 was caused by record high interest rates, by double digit inflation, all during the time of the previous Liberal government. That is what induced our last fisheries crisis in eastern Canada. That compares to the fisheries crisis that we have today, which is not caused by anything this government has done or not done. It is caused by a lack of fish, as reported to us with a changed estimate by our scientists earlier this year.

The brilliant analysis is this. Our problem is caused by the fact that we no longer have fish in the water in sufficient quantities to feed the plants that are in trouble now or may be in trouble in the next several months. The fish are no longer there. Why are they no longer there? I do not know why they are no longer there, but I know this. Last year, 1988, the fishery scientists of the Government of Canada said that the total allowable catch for northern cod could properly be 295,000 tonnes. I know that we set the total allowable catch in 1988 at 265,000 tonnes to make sure that we were not taking too much fish.

I know this too, Mr. Speaker. In January and February of this year the same scientists came along and told the Government of Canada that the northern cod fish stock was not as they had thought it was, but that this year, 1989, we could take only 125,000 tonnes fish as our total allowable catch, a reduction from 295,0000 tonnes to 125,000 tonnes, which is a reduction of 170,000 tonnes in just a few months in the estimates by our scientists of what we could take. That is what has caused this present situation.

We set the total allowable catch at 235,000 tonnes this year. Why? Because we were not going to wipe out the whole eastern Canadian fishery on the whims of scientists who one year say that it is safe to take 295,000 tonnes and the next year tell you that you can only take 125,000 tonnes. Whole communities, whole economies cannot be held up to ransom at the whim of scientists. No.

We saw that the total allowable catch for this year was set at 235,000 tonnes. That is a reduction of 31,000 tonnes from the actual amount set last year of 266,000. We appointed Dr. Harris and the eminent people serving with him to review what had gone wrong in the scientific assessment and to tell us what the safe total allowable catch might be for next year and the years to come and what needs to be done so that this does not happen again.

We are advised in an interim report that the safe TAC for next year of northern cod might be 190,000 tonnes. If it is, that means that the catch has to decline again next year by a further 45,000 tonnes. That is why Canso is having the diffficulty that it is having. It is being told by National Sea that the Canso plant must shut. That is why the St. John's plant has been told by National Sea that it must shut. That is why other plants in my province are in danger of having their own fish plants shut as well. It is not by some human error of this government, not by interest rate policies, not by the economic conditions that a government allowed to be created, but by this totally unexpected calamity visited upon us that is no fault of ours but which we are trying to deal with.

I never heard tonight one suggestion as to what other approach we could take, other than the approach we are taking.

Mr. Robichaud: You did. You were not listening.

Mr. Crosbie: I have serious matters I want to discuss with the people in my district and the members opposite are not interested. The people of my province are interested.

Mr. Tobin: You're the minister for all of Newfoundland, not just for your own district.

Mr. Crosbie: I do not want to have to contend with the braying of the untutored and the uncaring.

I quote now from the Kirby task force report. Mr. Kirby was appointed by the last Liberal government to look at the crisis it created with interest rates and double digit inflation. What did he recommend? He recommended enterprise allocations. Fifty-one of these 57 recommendations were approved. One of them was enterprise allocations or company quotas to the large offshore companies.

He said in his report that the northern cod quota was projected to reach 380,000 tonnes by 1987. What was it in actual fact in 1987? It was considerably less than that. In 1987 the actual total allowable catch was 256,000 tonnes, not 380,000 tonnes. Even the great Kirby was far out in his projections.

Then there was an Atlantic Fisheries Restructuring Act. What was the purpose given in the legislation? To facilitate the development of viable Atlantic fisheries that are competitive and privately owned through the restructuring of fishery enterprises. That was what the last government did. The last government put over $300

million into these companies—Fishery Products and National Sea they eventually became. It put $300 million into companies.

It was the one who introduced the big company solution of 1983, which members opposite now decry and would they blame us if we give these companies any understanding at all or try to see that they remain viable economic units. There is nothing but scorn from the other side. These are the companies created by the big company solution, the Liberal solution of 1983. It was their restructuring which did nothing for the smaller companies and the inshore sector.

This time that is not the route we are going. We are going the route of helping the communities. We are going the route of helping the people and helping the fishermen of Atlantic Canada.

We are looking at two things—a long-term solution which was never attempted by the last government. That involves the restructuring in Newfoundland and Labrador of our fishery. Just listen to these figures and give some thought to what they reveal.

Fishing contributes 6 per cent only to the Newfoundland Gross Domestic Product but 25 per cent to total employment. Is it any wonder that our people who are in the fishery and in fish processing have only low incomes to look to?

The average Saskatchewan farm family in 1986 had an income of $32,000—34 per cent from farming, 40 per cent from other employment earnings, nothing from UI and 26 per cent from other sources.

The average Atlantic farm family had an income of $33,750.

The average Nova Scotia fishing family had an income of $35,000—53 per cent from fishing, 25 per cent from employment earnings, 16 per cent from UI and 6 per cent from other sources.

In Newfoundland, the place that I am most concerned about, the average fishing family income in 1986 was $19,850 of which only 24 per cent came from fishing, 30 per cent from other employment earnings, 41 per cent from UI and 5 per cent from other sources.

Is this the state that we want to leave our people in who are engaged in the fishery in Newfoundland now or do we want to build a viable fishery? I opt for building a viable fishery, and that is what we are darn well going to do.

Just consider this. In 1975 we had 10,283 plant workers in the fishing plants in Newfoundland. In 1988 we had 28,446 just about triple.

In 1975 we had 15,812 part-time and full-time fishermen. In 1988 we had 29,826 full-time and part-time fishermen.

Is it any wonder that the people involved in the fishery have low average incomes with a large percentage of their income coming from UI. What can we do to change this?

There are two approaches to this problem that we are taking. One is to deal with the immediate results of plants that might have to close because there is no fish there to put through the plants.

Mr. Tobin: Why is there not fish?

Mr. Crosbie: Why? I do not know. I can only tell you what the scientists tell us.

What is the approach? In a community where a plant has to close or is severely affected, all regular programs of course apply—UI, the industrial adjustment service, Community Futures, all of the help that can be given for training or retraining or helping somebody secure other employment. This is an industry where the workers have no rights to pensions. They do not even have a right to separation allowance in Newfoundland. We have the program for older workers which we have introduced and which the Newfoundland government is going to participate in. Those 55 and over who cannot get other employment will receive assistance up to $1,100 a month, 70 per cent if their UI benefit until they become pensionable.

• (2200)

Apart from that program which applies to those 55 and over, we are going further. We are introducing a supplementary plan in this extraordinary situation in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. In this extraordinary situation we are introducing the same kind of benefits to those 50 and over who cannot secure other work or who cannot be retrained for other jobs. We are looking after

the people, not the big companies that were looked after by the Liberals in the early 1980s.

In addition, for the immediate crisis we are establishing a community diversification fund to help the local communities see what other job opportunities can be created, what other industries can be introduced and what other work can be made available. That is an additional program. That is for the immediate problem that affects the communities that are now affected by the plant closings. That is our approach, not the corporate approach, not the pouring of $300 million into two companies as was done by our predecessors.

For the longer term program, we are working in Newfoundland with the government of Newfoundland to see how we can build a viable fishery, to see how we can create diversification in the economy and other job opportunities, because this industry cannot support the number of people now involved in it as the figures show. It cannot support them with a decent income, so other measures had to be taken to try to give those people another income. That is what we are doing. We are not sitting in this House hurling abuse every day at someone else with no constructive alternatives.

What do some people in responsible positions think of that? If we look at what Premier Wells has been saying in Newfoundland, we are not getting a parade of abuse from him. I am reading from a transcript of a December 11 press conference where he states:

> The federal government has clearly acknowledged its responsibility and is prepared to take it, and I express appreciation to the federal government for that.

That is a Liberal who is in a responsible position expressing appreciation. He said this at page 10:

> I think we're seeing the beginning of a significant change in the Newfoundland fishery, and we must stop burdening the fishing industry with the responsibility to be the employment opportunity of last resort. We must find the means, and this is what we've been saying for two years in the Liberal Party. We must find the means of providing alternative economic opportunities, and the federal government has a responsibility, along with the provincial government because they can benefit, in fact, even more than the provincial government can by doing so. But we must stop burdening the fishing industry with the responsibility of being the employment opportunity of last resort for our people, and provide other alternatives.

That is from Premier Wells, the Liberal Premier of Newfoundland who approves absolutely of what we are doing. He is not sitting there cackling and abusing the government. He is saying the government is doing the right thing and the Newfoundland government is going to participate with us in doing the right thing, building a viable future for the Newfoundland people in the fishery.

Here is a statement made on the same day by Premier Wells which states at page 4:

> We have worked closely with the government of Canada on this problem. Despite some early differences of view on the magnitude of the problem, our discussions have focused largely on appropriate response measures, and I am pleased to state that these discussions have proceeded in a positive atmosphere of common concern and common purpose.

Where is the concern on the other side of the House. Did I hear any concern expressed tonight? Not likely.

On page 5 of the same statement it states:

> I wish to commend the federal and provincial task forces for the diligent manner in which they have conducted their work—I also commend the federal government for recognizing its ultimate responsibility for its resource management decisions.

On page 6 it states:

> Considerable work and discussion have taken place on this proposed program which could be cost-shared by the federal and provincial governments.

Further down it states:

> This would be a long term process and the province is prepared to provide a substantial sum each year for this program over the next 10 years.

That is what is going on. There is no lack of action. You will hear what the program is, Mr. Speaker, when we have finished and completed the details of it with the Government of Newfoundland.

What else are we doing? We are pouring more money into northern cod research with an additional $3 million being spent this year, additional electronic equipment obtained to improve the efficiency of the research, the computer upgraded at St. John's to handle the increased amount of the data, the *Gadus Atlantica* will be modified during the winter to utilize research acoustic equipment in ice-infested waters and the amount of acoustic surveying in 1990 to be increased significantly, including a doubling of surveys inshore. Additional tagging will be carried out. Other activities being funded include neces-

sary electronic equipment to go aboard fishing vessels to collect oceanographic data.

Those are some of the other things that are being done. Much is being done. Much is being done by our Minister of Fisheries whom hon. gentlemen opposite try to criticize and denigrate and knock down, but who is doing a great job on behalf of the fishermen and the people of Atlantic Canada.

In 1988 we had a TAC of 266,000 tonnes. I have in my hands a list of Fishery Products' various plants and how much capacity was utilized in the plants. Even when the TAC was 266,000 tonnes they could only utilize the capacity at Marystown 53 per cent; Trepassey, 60 per cent; Harbour Breton, 49 per cent; Ramea, 88 per cent; Gaultois, 43 per cent; Bonavista, an inshore plant, 29 per cent. There is the problem. Even in a year when the TAC was 266,000 tonnes, not 190,000 tonnes, this was the capacity utilization of their plants.

It is suggested that somehow they can keep all plants open and just open them for several months or a few months a year. That way they will go to their economic doom. If they cannot be economically viable entities, who is going to lend them money? Who is going to give them credit? Who is going to invest money with them? No one. Unless they can be economically viable, they are finished. If they are finished, who is going to operate these plants? Not the government. I hope to God it is not the government. That is the kind of problem that we have.

Let us look at the inshore and the offshore catches. In 1982, 113,000 tonnes were caught inshore, 117,000 tonnes caught offshore; 1983, 106,000 inshore, 126,000 offshore; 1984, 97,000 inshore, 135,000 offshore. I will skip up to 1988, 102,000 tonnes inshore, 156,000 tonnes offshore. Now we are faced with a situation where next year the TAC may be 190,000 tonnes. That is the problem. It was not caused by this government. It was not even caused by the last government because they knew nothing about the fact that the cod out in the water was not as the scientists were saying it was, that the mass had not quintupled, that it had only tripled, which we were told last February. It is not even their fault.

To set the record straight with reference to the free trade agreement, the free trade agreement does not prevent us from subsidizing plants. If we want to subsidize plants, it may or may not result in a countervail case in the United States. There was a case in the United States against the fishing industry in 1985. It has nothing to do with the free trade agreement. The free trade agreement does not give them the right to take a countervail action or not take a countervail action. They have that right under their own domestic legislation. They have that right under their own domestic legislation. They had it in 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, well before 1989 which was the year of the free trade agreement. The Leader of the Opposition knows that but gets up tonight and says something different. Instead of going out taking the larger view, he is going out with this kind of—well, I will not even characterize it. I do not want to waste time.

The free trade agreement has nothing to do with this situation. If we want to subsidize plants, if that was the way to go, if that was the answer to the problem, we could do it and take our chances on countervail. There was countervail in 1985. There is a countervail duty now of 5.82 per cent on fresh. Atlantic groundfish. It is not the free trade agreement.

• (2210)

These are the people I represent, all these people in Newfoundland. I am the cabinet minister in this government who represents them and I have not had a worse six months in representing them since I have been here. I want to tell them tonight that I am making every effort that I can to see that this problem, this crisis, is resolved in the way that is best for them and in the way that is best for their children. If I don't succeed, they can let me know that they think I have failed them and I am quite willing to resign, or they can deal with me at the next election. I can tell you as long as I am here, every possible effort is going to be made to resolve this crisis. The people of Newfoundland, and the fishermen and the fish plant workers will be looked after to the best of my ability, or the best of the ability of any government that can do that.

I am confident that before this is over we are going to have a better fishery in Newfoundland, a more viable fishery, a fishery that contains fishermen and fisherwomen who are better paid and better recompensed and fish plant workers who are better looked after, who are going to have pension rights, and separation allowance rights. That is what we are going to have in the next 10 years if

we are successful in the longer term approach that has never been taken before.

I want to repeat here tonight something the Prime Minister said on December 13. The leader of this government said this: "We have taken some substantial actions and we propose to take more. Let me summarize for my friend. When the farmers of western Canada were hurting, this government took action, When Atlantic fishermen are hurting, we will take action as well."

That is the pledge of the Prime Minister. That is the pledge that I expect the Prime Minister and the government to fulfil. That is the pledge we are going to fulfil. There are going to be a lot of tough times. It will not be helped by hon. gentlemen opposite with their cheap shots, but by God, with the help of my colleagues in this government, with the assistance of the Newfoundland government, with the support of the Newfoundland people, we are going to overcome this problem, and when we leave we will leave behind a better, viable fishery, better for the people in it, better for the people who participate, better for their families. That is our pledge. We are going to go through some rough times, but they are going to find me by their side. They are going to find the government by their side and together we are going to lick this problem, not caused by us, but caused by events that were outside our control.

Mr. Speaker: There has been some discussion with all sides of the House. Ordinarily, I would recognize a member from the New Democratic Party. I understand the hon. member who might have spoken wishes to stand down at the moment. I am informed that the leader of the New Democratic party is on her way and I am sure that hon. members would co-operate in that. Therefore, I will go onto the next on the list and look to the government side, to be followed by a member from the official opposition.

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): If you are trading, you trade with the Liberals.

Mr. Speaker: The New Democratic Party is not at the moment prepared to put up a speaker. They want to stand down and hope that their leader will be here. I have been informed, and I think members can accept my word, that she is on her way. I understand that.

In the event that she is not here, on the list that I think has been accepted by everybody, I must now move to the government side, followed immediately afterward by the official opposition.

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to begin by thanking you for allowing this debate to take place this evening. I would like to compliment the hon. member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso for bringing this very important matter to the attention of the House and for providing us with an opportunity to discuss these very serious matters.

It is my view that Atlantic Canada has generally fared very well under this government, and indeed the statistical data that we have seen from time to time brought before this House has made that abundantly clear. However, I have to say in all honesty that coastal Atlantic Canada today faces the greatest challenge it has faced sice the post-war depression of the 1920s. Fifty per cent of the economy of coastal Atlantic Canada, in particular Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, is directly dependent upon the fishery and that fishery is in a very difficult situation, especially I might say the groundfishery which has always been thought of as the backbone of the Atlantic fishery.

It is important to note that there are other sectors of the fishing industry that are doing extremely well. The shrimp fishery is healthy. The tuna fishery, the scallop industry, the sword fishery, the mussels and other mollusc industries are all doing extremely well right now. Indeed, our lobster fishery is healthy although we do have a problem to face with this pernicious piece of legislation that has recently been passed in the United States and which I am sure will be a temporary thing in view of the fact that it will be thrown out because we have access to a free trade panel as a result of the free trade agreement signed a year ago.

Our coastal communities grew up around the groundfishery. The groundfishery and the plants as well as the fishermen are the key to the social and economic life of the communities along the coast of Atlantic Canada and in particular in Nova Scotia. When you close a plant you close a town. It is not like the prairies where the farmers have an idea of what their harvest is going to be. They are able to know pretty precisely what is going to happen. From time to time, they have to put up with the difficulties of grasshoppers, drought or whatever, but

they can see it coming and know it is going to be different the following year.

Fishing communities are in a very different situation because you do not know what the harvest is going to be in any particular year. You can set tax and quotas and so on, but when you go to sea, you go as a hunter and you are never quite sure what you are going to find or what you are going to bring back. As the people of Sandy Cove, Shelbourne County, found out last week, and as everybody who lives in a coastal community knows, you are never quite sure even if the men themselves are going to come back. It is a hazardous and difficult life.

When the fishery is in difficulty, it has a domino effect throughout the community because within a fishing community you have not only the fishermen but you have the plant workers. Indeed, if the fishing industry is not healthy, not only do the plants have a problem but the boatbuilders and the people who support the industry, not to mention all the other people in town, the merchants, the grocers, the restaurateurs, everybody suffers if times are tough in the fishery.

When we look at what is taking place in Atlantic Canada right now, we see that it has a profound impact on communities that are frequently very isolated. I am not so sure, quite frankly, that people in the west or in central Canada fully understand the depths of this issue. We are told sometimes that we should consider it just a problem and not, as some of us have said, a crisis in Atlantic Canada. They say: "Let's not escalate this to be a greater problem than it really is."

I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that it is a problem and anybody who does not recognize the profoundness of this problem for coastal Atlantic Canada should have been with me in Lockeport on Saturday last when they opened a community support group in that town and asked the question: "Why is it necessary?" "Why do we not have the government solving our problem?" As we heard from the last speaker, it is not as simple as the government being able to create fish. Anybody who suggests that this is not a serious crisis should go to Port Medway. They should go to Port L'Hebert, Woods Harbour, Bear Point or Shag Harbour. These are only communities within my own South Shore riding that have suffered plant closures in the last year.

I see the mayor and a councillor from the town of Canso here tonight. They can tell you about the crisis that exists in the life of their community with the closure of a plant. It is a serious problem, one that we all have to recognize in a national context even though it applies to us in our small coastal communities.

The concept of crisis is a very simple concept. Crisis is something that happens to your town, to your community, to your family or to yourself. If you happen to be in a remote community that for 400 years has relied on the fishing industry there does not sometimes appear to be alternatives. Let there be no doubt in coastal Atlantic Canada there is a crisis today and a crisis to which the government must respond.

I would suggest that there are three means by which the government can respond. The first, of course, has to do with dealing with the resource itself. That is the responsibility of the minister and the Department of Fisheries. Their responsibility is to see that this problem is indeed temporary and that those stocks will regenerate themselves. At the same time, part of that process is allow the industry to rationalize itself in such a way that we have those numbers participating in it that the resource itself can sustain.

• (2220)

I must say that measures have been and are being put in place as a result of the capacity committee struck by the minister a couple of years ago, the outcomes that will occur from the various consultations in the Stein task force and the special cabinet committee and indeed the Haché report. It is tough to say no because everybody wants to go fishing. Everybody wants a licence. Everybody wants a quota. If the resource cannot sustain it, it is the responsibility of the minister to be the guy who has the tough job of saying no to people. Thank goodness that we have a minister today who has the responsibility and the integrity to put in place measures that within three or four years will see the regeneration of our groundfish stocks so that once again we will have a healthy groundfishery in Atlantic Canada.

The second responsibility of government, of course, falls within the domain of Employment and Immigration Canada and the special cabinet committee and that is to provide the support that is necessary to families and communities during this transitional three or four year period until such time as we can both have economic

diversification as well as the regeneration of a strong fishery in Atlantic Canada.

I look forward to the measures being brought forth. We have had announcements that there will be special measures brought forward. The hon. Minister for International Trade made some reference to it in his remarks tonight, but what I am looking forward to is support for families as well as communities, at least until we have the restoration. We have programs in place such as community futures and we were very pleased to see that program beginning to be put in place in the county of Shelbourne. I look forward to it being put in place in Queen's County as well where the Port Mouton plant was closed.

We have excellent work being done by the industrial adjustment service committees in Lockeport and Port Mouton, and of course the changes that are being introduced to the Unemployment Insurance Act will make available more funds to improve the quality of the labour force development strategy programs, programs that are going to enable Canadians and communities to get back to work again.

Would hon. members opposite be kind enough to suggest to their colleagues in the Senate that they let the will of democracy be done and the government's will be done as it should be and stop the interference of that which on January 6 could cause grievous damage to people in Atlantic Canada.

We look forward to more support coming with the announced package. Particularly, I look forward to and urge the government to provide support to the municipal units involved. The town of Lockeport depends 55 per cent on its municipal tax base for the National Sea plant that has now been closed. With a reduction in the value of that plant, the revenues available to that town will make it difficult for the town to function as a municipal unit. There is a growing need to have assistance provided there to make these things work effectively for the town.

These support measures are an interim thing that are very important. We look forward to the government's announcement being made and I urge it to make sure that it is fully comprehensive and includes not only those communities affected by the northern cod difficulties, but the problems with respect to the Scotia–Fundy region as well.

I will be particularly looking to see support for Queen's County and Port Mouton and indeed for the town of Lockeport in particular.

The third arm or the third challenge to the government is in the area of economic diversification and development. Here I look to Industry, Science and Technology and ACOA, as well as the co–operation and participation of the provinces. Clearly the number one challenge we face in Atlantic Canada, and our greatest need, is to reduce our dependency on the fishery as a resource for economic development. We have to look to other potential industries. Tourism is an industry with tremendous potential in Nova Scotia, and indeed in the Maritimes. We have to see this as a potential primary employer and not simply as a secondary industry.

We need more Michelin plants. The government has said that Canada is open for business and we are attracting interest from potential investors all over the world, but we have to see the deals closed. We had an announcement that the Tissan Corporation was going to settle. What a marvellous thing that will be for eastern Nova Scotia when that first plant comes. We look at that company eventually having the impact that Michelin has in Nova Scotia, with its three plants providing 4,300 excellent jobs for people. But the deal is not done. Why is that deal not done? There is an industry anxiously interested in settling in the town of Bridgewater, but the deal and the contract is not signed. When can we expect that?

There is potential for development for Aspotogan. There is another for the north shore of Nova Scotia. I urge the government, and particularly the ministers involved in economic development to get on with getting these deals signed so that we can see the diversification beyond the fishery.

We also have to diversify within the fishing industry itself. The minister spoke about 350,000 tonnes of fish not being utilized by Canadians. We have to utilize those fish and we need to have an economic development diversification fund that will encourage the use of these resources.

Unfortunately my time is up. There are a number of things we have to do and in the last minute I will just mention some of the things we have to do in the fishery. All parties involved in the fishery must not see it as a partisan issue but work co–operatively together with it. We must get rid of the misconception and stick to the facts. Let us solve the problems that exist rather than those that do not. Our fishermen must be prepared to obey the law. We must use science but not be the

captives of science. We must preserve people and community as well as stocks. We need to work together and have effective working relationships with the United States as well as to see that they obey the laws that we have set and we must be prepared to enforce them.

My time is up, Mr. Speaker. I thank you for your indulgence. I have to say this: it is a tough time and it is going to be a tough time for a few years for us in southern Nova Scotia, but we have had other tough times and we are going to overcome this one. As the member for South Shore, I am going to continue to work with the government and with members opposite if they wish to work with me to see that better days are ahead.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Charles-Eugène Marin (Gaspé): Madam Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to rise in the House and speak to the opposition motion requesting an emergency debate on the present situation in the Atlantic fishery, following the closing of processing plants on the east coast and U.S. legislation restricting imports of Canadian lobster in the United States.

No government can remain indifferent to the difficult economic situation now prevailing in the fisheries industry in the Atlantic region and the Gulf of the St. Lawrence. Today, workers at National Sea Products in Canso and St. John's have been laid off. A few weeks ago, Madam Speaker, the entire Gaspé area was facing the same problem.

The Atlantic fishery is going through a difficult period, due to reduced quotas, overcapacity of fishing boats, a fiercely competitive market and the high value of the Canadian dollar. These are some of the factors that have made fishermen and their communities feel powerless, bitter and desperate.

Madam Speaker, I may remind hon. members that what we are seeing and experiencing today is a very complex phenomenon that would take some time to explain.

We are all aware of some of the factors that have led both National Sea Products and independents in Quebec to close some of their processing plants.

The crisis now facing fishermen and their communities is due to the natural environment, the present state of our scientific knowledge, to administrative decisions and, of course, to market forces. The interaction of natural and human factors is constantly changing and thus unpredictable, hence the onus on the government to act with prudence and discretion.

Before considering the concrete measures that have been taken to deal with this crisis, Madam Speaker, I would like to recall a number of facts and figures to illustrate this complex situation.

About 65,000 registered commercial fishermen, nearly 30,000 fishing boats, 890 fish processing plants and about 309,000 plant workers, spread over 1,300 communities in five provinces in Eastern Canada, are involved in the Atlantic fisheries.

About 95 per cent of all fishermen are in the coastal fishery, which consists of relatively small fishing boats, not more than 65 feet long, which are owner-operated. These fishermen take about 60 per cent of all catches on the Atlantic coast.

Annual catches in this sector total 1.2 million tons, with a production value of $2.1 billion. Over 80 per cent of these catches are exported.

Groundfish, especially cod, is a very important part of the Atlantic fishery. Groundfish accounts for two-thirds of all fish landings and for over 40 per cent of the total value of those landings.

Catches of northern cod make up 50 per cent of cod catches on the Atlantic coast.

Madam Speaker, I would like to dwell on an increasingly serious problem in the Atlantic region which plays a decisive role in the present crisis, and I am referring to overcapacity of fishing vessels.

Nowadays, fishermen are more efficient than ever before. A recent study conducted in the Scotia-Fundy area reported that the groundfish fleet already had twice the capacity it needed.

Today's vessels are faster. They have electronic equipment capable of locating the fish and they have far more sophisticated fishing gear. Therefore, catches are larger and fishermen can now catch in one to three months the same number of fish they used to take a whole fishing season to catch.

• (2230)

In the past, an ordinary trawler could catch 33 tonnes of fish. Today, it can take 164 tonnes in the same fishing season. The cost of the trawler has gone from $200,000 to $750,000, which is a much bigger investment for fishermen.

As you see, Madam Speaker, any improvised solution to the problem of overcapacity could have disastrous consequences not only for the fisheries themselves but also for many fishermen and their families.

Our government reacted. If you look at our government's four initiatives, (1) the Special Committee of Ministers, (2) the Harris Committee, (3) the Scotia–Fundy Task Force and (4) our reaction to overfishing and plundering of fish stocks, you will have to admit that they show the government's determination and are a positive step to help ensure prosperity for the fisheries in the 1990s.

However, I would have liked our government to be more attentive to our fishermen's requests and to control the seal population which is so destructive of living resources.

If additional resources are required to help people, to diversify the industry, to develop new technologies and to discover new markets, our government is ready to consider these options. We will ensure that federal government agencies and departments are prepared to support the people of the Atlantic region as well as possible during this period. Furthermore, we intend to propose amendments to the Fisheries Act in the near future, partly as a result of suggestions from many representatives of fishermen and the industry who are demanding heavier penalties for fisheries infractions.

These amendments will stress stronger deterrents, more efficient enforcement and an updated and improved fisheries management system.

Madam Speaker, if we want our fishermen and plant workers to continue to earn their living from marine resources, we must stop dramatising. We must instead deal attentively with the problems, as we are now doing, find long–term solutions and apply management principles which will ensure the future of our fishing communities and provide them with a relatively stable income. Only when we have finished analysing the present problems can we give lasting answers.

There are no miracle solutions, Madam Speaker, but if everyone in the fishing industry works together with management, I am sure that we will find innovative management methods to conserve and protect our precious resources for future generations.

[*English*]

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton–The Sydneys): Madam Speaker, I have been listening tonight to the most unbelievable, crass bunch of windbags I have ever heard from the government side of the House. Their completely preposterous arguments do not hold any water whatsoever. This is what they are giving as an excuse to the people in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland for the botched up policies of the fishery since they have come into power.

Canso has been a fishing community for 400 years. It has withstood the 30–year war, the 100–year war, the 7–year war, the Napoleonic wars, the Crimean wars, two World Wars, and the Korean war, but it could not withstand this Tory government. It could not withstand the Mulroney government. They are trying to tell us that after 400 years the fish lost their way and did not come into Canso.

It is unbelievable, crass and obscene to pass off the arguments they are making on to the people of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland.

The Leader of the Opposition said that this is a crisis. Make no mistake about that, it is a crisis. I say to people in other parts of Canada who may not think this is a crisis that they had better wake up. Not only is this happening in Atlantic Canada. With this government in power it could happen anywhere in Canada because people do not matter. They do not matter.

The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans is telling us that we brought forward a plan in 1983, that we are responsible for that plan and that we are responsible for the fishery. What unmitigated poppycock. Michael Kirby did not take those shares with him when the Liberal government was defeated and the Mulroney government came into power. Some 20 per cent of the shares of National Sea belong to that government in power on the other side of the House. What has it done with them? It has chosen not to represent the Government of Canada

at the board of directors meeting. It has chosen not to act upon its shares.

What happened in 1988 when the fishery was coming apart all over Atlantic Canada? National Sea chose to buy a Treasure Island fishery in the United States at a cost of $28.6 million. It chose to buy two French companies at a cost of $16.4 million. It chose to buy 50 per cent interest in an Argentinian company for $12 million, to raise its indebtedness to $200 million.

This is after two years of profits. In 1986 National Sea made $36 million. In 1987 it made $24.8 million. Where did those profits go? They went into buying foreign fishing companies, not into looking after the fisheries in Atlantic Canada. The purpose of expanding to the 200-mile limit was not to safeguard and make big fishing companies wealthy. It was to look after the fishing communities and the people in the fishing industry in this country.

This government has breached the faith with the people of Atlantic Canada. It has completely neglected to look after their interests. It has completely destroyed any confidence that the people of Atlantic Canada would have in this government now or for any time in the future.

If this government allows the trawlers to be moved from Canso or the fishing vessels to be moved from North Sydney or St. John's to another port, it is in fact saying that this fishery does not belong to the people. It is saying once and for all that it is acting in the interests of the big companies. That will result in nothing more than theft from the port of Canso, the town of North Sydney, the city of St. John's, Newfoundland and other fishing communities that may have the misfortune to have their fish plants closed in the future as a result of this non-caring, nonsensical government.

It is absolutely devastating to see what is happening, to experience what we are experiencing here in this House and what people are going through in Atlantic Canada. What are we getting? We are getting programs that are in the system for months. Yet, the Minister for International Trade said this evening that the government knew in February the quotas in the opinion of its experts were going to be reduced from 295,000 tonnes to 125,000 tonnes. That is 170,000 tonnes in a few months.

It is not strange that these experts and this government were predicting 295,000 tonnes during the election campaign when National Sea was advertising in all the major newspapers in this country that free trade was going to mean the success of the fishery in Canada? What treachery. This government is in league with big business at the expense of the fishery and the fishing communities of our country.

We have seen the result in less than one year after we were told what a wonderful thing free trade was going to be. The Leader of the Opposition told us what free trade would be like. He told us about free trade because under the GATT we are not allowed to restrict the export of unprocessed fish and we could put an export tax on that fish so that it would not be able to leave the jurisdictions. Because of the free trade agreement we cannot place an export tax on that fish. As a result, we cannot restrict the export of that fish.

The United States wants to be given national status on point 105 of the free trade agreement. It wants to be able to buy over the side of vessels all of the fish it can handle while they are still at sea and before they come into port. How will we ever know, then, how many fish are being caught?

• (2240)

How will we be able to judge the quotas? How will we be able to judge the catches? This is a mess we are in. They are bailing out. They are not providing answers. They are running and hiding. They are falling over one another. They are whimpering and whining on their own behalf, not on behalf of the people who are affected. They say: "We did not know. Who could tell? Our experts told us. By gosh, what could we do?" The Conservatives tell us that 400 years is only a blip in time. Canso was bound to have a string of bad luck sooner or later.

The people of Atlantic Canada are not going to be fooled. This government has run out of any credibility in Atlantic Canada. It is an insult to the people of Atlantic Canada to have to listen to this nonsense day after day from this government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to participate in this debate this evening. The crisis in the Atlantic fishery, particularly in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, strikes close to home.

Although the crisis has not struck my riding in the same magnitude as it has in St. John's and Canso, we in Cardigan certainly know the frustration, the hardship and the fears caused by this government's callous and incompetent approach to the industry which is a region's economic life line. In Atlantic Canada we are still reeling from the blows struck by the multinational corporation, National Sea Products, in the closure of its plants in Canso and St. John's.

My constituents and I feel for our Atlantic neighbours. Our thoughts and our prayers are with them as they face the bleakest Christmas they have ever known. I have some trouble reconciling this government's intentions and actions. On December 11, 1989 the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans stood in this House and said:

> We are very much in tune with the needs, sentiments and anxieties of the people living in these communities.

How do we reconcile these words with this government's inaction, its failure to avert this crisis? The people in St. John's and Canso have no where to turn.

Yes, a special cabinet committee is looking into the problems in the Atlantic fisheries. We have the Haché task report and the Harris panel, but what concrete measures has this government taken to save the industry, the mainstay of the Atlantic economy?

We are not talking solely of money, although that is certainly what the government cares about. We are talking about our history and our heritage, a way of life that is precious to us and Atlantic Canadians. This government seems to think it can solve this problem merely by handling out money in the short term while saying it has something up its sleeve in the long term. Who knows?

Maybe it will provide the unemployed fish plant workers with transportation to Toronto or some other thriving metropolis. It will not work. The Atlantic fishery must be saved. Fish plant jobs must be saved. The government must explore other avenues and alternatives. We need a solution that will allow Atlantic Canadians to stay in their homes with their roots and their families, where their children would grow up and continue their culture and heritage.

The problems in the fishery in eastern P.E.I. and Cardigan start at the very foundation. The basic infrastructure of the industry is literally rotting away. Our harbours and wharfs are in desperate need of repair. Maintenance and in many cases reconstruction are necessary.

My fishermen might as well be knocking their heads against a brick wall as asking this government to fix their wharfs and keep them in workable condition. How can lobster fishermen make a decent living when they have no room to moor their boats or set their traps because big sections of the wharfs are unusable? For that matter they may not even be able to get their boats to the wharfs because the harbour is not properly dredged. They run the risk of getting caught on the sand bar and damaging their vessel.

The lobster fishery in P.E.I. is equivalent to the groundfish industry in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland in economic terms. Our lobster industry in 1989 was not as healthy as it has been in the past. Inventories were high, demand was down and prices were soft. These problems were felt in Cardigan in a concrete way. A fish plant in my riding closed its doors, leaving 150 workers unemployed and over 100 fishermen with no place to sell their lobsters, groundfish, herring and scallops.

More bad news came to the P.E.I. lobster fishermen with the passing of the U.S. legislation banning the import of Canadian whole live lobsters that do not meed the American minimum size of three and three–quarter inches.

This measure is based purely on protectionism. It will certainly distort our markets. It will close the doors on fishermen who would like to ship whole lobsters of the intermediary size to those states outside New England. It is estimated that the loss of these potential markets will cost Prince Edward Island lobster fishermen approximately $2 million. That is a large figure in a small economy. So much for open access to the American markets promised under the free trade agreement.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, Hear!

Mr. MacAulay: This government has to stand up to the Americans and stop allowing them to bully us. The handling of the case of the American scallop dragger fishing in Canadian waters was an absolute disgrace. The American vessel should have been stopped by our

warship. The crew of the American vessel should have been brought back to Canadian waters and arrested. Instead the dragger went back to its U.S. port where it will receive a much softer penalty.

This incident is especially frustating for the people of Summerside. It has been confirmed by a senior DFO official in Halifax that a Tracker aircraft stationed at CFB Summerside first spotted the American vessel in Canadian waters. This only spells the lack of logic in the decision by the government to cease the operation of the Tracker squadron at Summerside.

The government is cutting down fisheries surveillance at the very time we need more. Overfishing by the Spanish and Portuguese has gutted our valuable fish stocks, cutting off the life line of our region of the country. The government has been ineffective in controlling foreign plundering of our ocean's treasures.

In conclusion, there are families and communities in Cardigan and the rest of Atlantic Canada who are suffering at the hands of this government's mismanagement of the fishery. This government must take a good look at how it has contributed to this crisis, and it must undertake saving this industry which is at the base of our Atlantic economy.

It is about time this government proved that Atlantic Canadians are part of this country.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Ross Reid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to speak in this debate tonight. I think, like all members of this House, I would rather that this debate did not have to take place.

I, like other members in this House, sympathize greatly with the people of Atlantic Canada, and particularly the people of my province and my city who have felt the despair and hopelessness of this last eight or nine days.

The announced closing of fish plants in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland just before Christmas poses more than economic problems for workers and their families. For many, drawing a living from the sea goes back to ancestors who first settled our coastline many hundreds of years ago. Fishing is literally the soul lifeblood of many communities. I realize that asking whole towns to give up this livelihood is like asking someone to relinquish a precious family heirloom. It is an heartbreaking and emotional issue.

I want to assure the House that this government has already stepped into those communities most affected by the closing. The programs those people need to survive are already in place, but more than that, the assistance this government provides today is not going to last until plants reopen or entire towns disappear. The support that we offer today and tomorrow is propelled by a vision to stabilize the economy of Atlantic Canada and sustain the fishing resource.

• (2250)

It is a fact that the environmental realities of the ocean stocks are dictating the need for management. Scientific studies tell us that the oceans are not as fruitful as even a few years ago. Those who make their living from the fishery have no choice but to withdraw for a while so that the resources can renew themselves.

What does this intentional slowdown signify for those who work in the fishing industry? It means that fishing may be a more viable industry in the future. It also means that communities have to find an alternative means to survive and perhaps eventually to thrive. They need new industry and new skills so their economies can be diversified. We will assist them in those efforts.

National Sea Products announced the lay–off of 1,562 last Monday. Within hours Employment and Immigration personnel moved in with the Industrial Adjustment Services Program. They are setting up a committee of employers and employees to respond to the shutdown by helping workers find new jobs, training and counselling.

Also within a short time of the announced closings, unemployment insurance officials set up shop in plants to help the employees start their claims as quickly as possible. The aid programs that we have provided have had an immediate impact on the lives of workers and their families, but that is not all we are doing.

New skills and businesses can breathe life into communities that previously depended on fishing. Since 1985 Canadian Jobs Strategy programs have been operating in Atlantic communities to retrain people and encourage entrepreneurship. Building on the individual needs of a community and its citizens, innovative programs have been created to revive former fishing communities. In the long haul the initiatives under the CJS aim to equip

people and towns to be competitive and prosperous for a long time.

I need not tell members of this House of the success of the Community Futures Program particularly in a community like Port aux Basques in the constituency of the hon. member for Burin–St. George's. Through a number of initiatives from the people and the employers in the area companies were recruited to open plants, including one Norwegian fabricating company that created more than 200 jobs.

As well, more than $1 million in Community Futures funding has been used to train 120 residents as high–tech welders, pipefitters and sheet metal workers. Some 70 are now working full time, another 30 are working part time and the rest are still in school. Further assistance was provided to 24 residents to start their own businesses through the self–employment initiative.

This is just one example of how innovative and flexible programming can serve the needs of communities that must adapt and that must change.

In the last fiscal year the government directly invested $17.4 million in Canadian Jobs Strategy projects in the fishery sector. Of course when the fisheries workers are without work so too are service workers, be they pharmacists or shop keepers, who depend on their business. The strategy helps those too.

Altogether in the last two years $434 million in Employment and Immigration Commission funding has helped 145,000 people in Atlantic Canada attain worthwhile skills that allow them to contribute to their communities. In addition, for several years now the government has responded with additional emergency job development money for fishing industry workers in the region and in Quebec. In 1989 we provided more than $5 million. About 4,000 workers are training and working on employment projects which will allow them to qualify for unemployment insurance while learning new skills.

Let me remind the House also of the recently announced community development fund which will allow for community directed investments to strengthen the local economy and create meaningful job opportunities. Fishing communities can use it to supplement existing adjustment programs. Moneys can be directed at attracting small businesses and establishing a base, for example, for a viable aquaculture.

Furthermore, as the Minister for International Trade announced last week and has said tonight, we are working with the province of Newfoundland and Labrador to develop a program that will take care of the older workers affected by changes in the fishing industry.

Adjustment strategies for fisheries workers have not been developed in a vacuum. The fact is our attempts to create jobs and businesses for the long term have the approval of the provincial governments. Newfoundland and Labrador's Fisheries Minister Walter Carter said recently: "The fishing industry can no longer be the centrepiece of the province's economy. It can and must be an important employer however and, with the help of the federal government, new industry and training can help stabilize the economy".

Bill C–21, having passed through this place, sits in the other place today. The changes brought in by that legislation will free up $800 million which will be used to train UI claimants and encourage the start–up of new business ventures under the Labour Force Development Strategy. Under that strategy funding for industrial adjustment services would be doubled and Community Futures will be boosted by an additional $50 million. Both programs help towns and workers who once depended on fishing for a living.

The government is sensitive to the historical and economic importance of the fishery in Atlantic Canada. We want to help workers in communities affected by those changes. The support we are offering goes beyond helping people buy groceries and pay their rent. In the long run, our programs assist people in communities to build a stronger and stable economic foundation for themselves.

The fishery, under proper management, will survive and will provide good jobs for Atlantic Canadians. We recognize its indispensable economic value and the important contribution that it pays to our economy and our way of life, but we know it will not be worth anything if we keep combing the depleted Atlantic waters. Our programs meet the needs of fishing communities undergoing change. While workers are learning skills and new businesses are established, workers, communities and

provinces will be creating with this government's help a viable fishery for the future.

We face realities in the fishery. Decisions must be taken that none of us like. These decisions, with the innovation and the determination of the people in Atlantic Canada, with the support of this government, members on this side from Atlantic Canada and hopefully members on that side from Atlantic Canada, will see a viable, professional fishery that can be depended upon in good times and bad and that can support our communities well in the future because have strong fisheries management and we have a government that responds when the need dictates it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Darryl L. Gray (Bonaventure–Îles–de–la–Madeleine): Madam Speaker, I would like to start my comments this evening by saying that to us in the Gaspé and the Magdalen Islands, in Eastern Quebec, the fishery is vital. And in addition to everything that has been said this evening in the House, I would like to say that technological change has necessarily had an impact on the catches of groundfish in the Gulf. The quantities of fish that are available are caught far more quickly and as a result, the fishing season gets shorter and shorter and plants are swamped at certain times of the year.

[*English*]

In taking into account this statement that has been made, I must say that as a member of Parliament involved in a constituency with a very large fishing industry we should look also at what the government has done. However, I think that we should go beyond the politics.

I would hope—and I speak on behalf of small fishermen and big fisherman and fish plants in my riding—that we would leave politics aside. We know there is a crisis in the east coast fishery and that we can work together.

• (2300)

I state, for the record, a couple of statements that had been made after the federal minister met with provincial ministers. I quote Walter Carter, Newfoundland's fisheries minister: "We welcome these changes to the Fisheries Act".

The second quote is from Donald McGuinnis, Nova Scotia's fisheries minister: "Fishermen are ready for new measures".

The Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture echoed Mr. Siddon's remarks and added: "These issues are important to all Atlantic provinces and I appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the decisions that affect all of us".

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, this was also said, in French, by the New Brunswick Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. The pressing need to change this legislation was also stressed by Mr. Denis Losier, the New Brunswick Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, who said these changes should have been made a long time ago.

Finally, Madam Speaker, Mr. Michel Pagé, Quebec's Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, sent a message to Mr. Siddon in which he said: "I wish to join my provincial colleagues in co–operating with the federal government, in order to obtain the necessary assistance for fishermen in the Gulf and the Atlantic and for their communities".

[*English*]

We listened to those remarks that were made by people across provincial governments and across different party lines. We must realize when we talk about a crisis in our fisheries that we have one. We have created that.

What we have become in terms of our fisheries is hunters. We are not farmers. With the equipment that we have, with our boats, with our sonar, with our radar, with everything we have, we have become hunters. We have an overcapacity of fish plants, an overcapacity of boats. The big get a little bigger and the little get hurt a lot more.

What we have to do is come from all sides of this House when we talk in an emergency debate. We must say to our inshore fishermen as well as to our offshore fishermen that we are not Liberals, we are not NDP. We do not come from Newfoundland. We do not come from the Gaspé. We want to work together. We have to work

together, because we must have a sustainable resource. If we do not have a sustainable resource, then we are going to be in trouble.

We listened to the people heckling across the House this evening. They are not serious, because they are playing petty politics. I do not play petty politics with my fishermen. I say to my people who are listening this evening, my fishermen and my fish plants, the women and the men who work in the fish plants and the small fishermen, that when they have their quotas, we must stabilize our fishing industry, whether it be in the Gaspé or whether it be in the Magdalen Islands, whether it be in groundfish or whether it be in lobster. Whatever we do, we must work together on this and we must put aside our petty politics.

I would put three recommendations to the House this evening. First, with a reduction in jobs for the surveillance of our fish stocks, priority must be given especially to the inshore fishermen that they will work on the surveillance. I would impress upon the minister of fisheries that he take that into consideration.

Second, for new species that are non utilized presently, we ought to look into the harvesting of these stocks and going into secondary and tertiary transformation of those.

Third, which is a very touchy subject that no one has dared to mention this evening is that of seals on the east coast. People on the other side are talking because they might find me a little boring. We have the question of the Malouf commission, the question of the seal harvesting, the breakage in fishermen's nets, the consumption of fish by seals on our eastern coast stocks and then there is the cod worm. What we should do is look at the three recommendations that I have proposed this evening very seriously and what we do as an outcome of our debate tonight–

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, at the end of our debate this evening, I hope the opposition will be able to say: We are going to work together to help our fishermen. These fishermen are not interested in political factions, Madam Speaker, they are interested in their work, and they want the fish to be there. That is what we want, Madam Speaker.

[*English*]

Hon. William Rompkey (Labrador): Madam Speaker, I sometimes wonder why the party across the hall fought the last election. The Tories fought to win the government. They are the government, they have got the government, that is where the responsibility lies.

I heard the hon. member talking about non–partisanship and this is everybody's responsibility. The buck stops with the government and they can talk all they like about what affects the stocks. I will tell you one thing that affects the stocks. Sure, there is some Canadian overfishing, but there is a lot of foreign overfishing too. This government has failed to stand up to the foreign interests that are raping and pillaging our stocks, particularly off the nose and tail of the Grand Banks.

If the stocks are in crisis, it is because of overfishing, yes, by some Canadian fishermen but also by foreign countries too. Clearly, the responsibility for that lies with the Government of Canada.

The Europeans are thumbing their noses at the Government of Canada. The Secretary of State for External Affairs and the Minister for International Trade travel around Europe offering some comforting words but no action is taken. When foreign vessels invade our waters, Canadian ships are sent out and, again, no action is taken and those ships are not brought to port and no fines are levied.

Off my own coast, 27,000 tonnes is what the European community has set for its own quota this year. NAFO, the toothless tiger of which the Government of Canada is a part, said: "You can catch no fish at all off the Labrador coast this year". The EEC says: "We're going to catch 27,000 tonnes whether you like it or not. It may be affecting your fishermen."

Do you know how many jobs a tonne of fish will create? Roughly 30 jobs, so you can imagine how many jobs are being lost potentially by the action of the European community off the coast of Labrador. The Government of Canada allows that to go on. It takes no sanctions whatsoever. It does not stand up to the foreign fleets and the hon. member has the audacity to say that this is a non–partisan problem and there is nothing the government can do about it.

The government can do something about it. The Tories can stand up to the Europeans. They can say this is our fish and it is affecting our employment and we are going to do something about it.

At the same time as those stocks are being depleted, what does the Government of Canada do? The Government of Canada chooses that particular moment to cut back on the surveillance of our fishing zone. We fought for a 200-mile limit. We got a 200-mile limit. We do the economic analysis in it and we protect those stocks.

What does the Government of Canada do as those stocks are in jeopardy? It cuts back on the surveillance. It is known that no plane, the Aurora included, can do the kind of low-level surveillance that the Tracker aircraft out of Summerside, P.E.I., can do. The people in the Armed Forces will tell you that. The fishermen will tell you that. Everybody in the industry will tell you that. Yet, the government has chosen this time to say, "We are closing down Summerside and we are moving those Tracker aircraft out of there."

The Tracker aircraft has another 10 years of life at a minimum investment, relatively speaking. Yet this is the time that the government chooses to cut back on the best means of support we have.

Apart from that, the whole co-ordination of surveillance off the east coast needs drastic revision. There is a hodge-podge of government agencies and vessels and equipment and personnel trying to do a job. It needs much better co-ordination.

The stocks off our coast are being fished by the Europeans and they are being fished by some large Canadian companies too. Who does not have access to those stocks? Many of the smaller fishermen on the Atlantic coast have been denied access to those stocks.

• (2310)

I am glad the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans is listening because he will know that both co-ops on the Labrador coast have applied for a supply of offshore fish and have been denied. The Europeans, the French, have been given 8,000 tonnes off the coast of Labrador this year as an enticement to get them out of the Gulf.

The large companies from Canada and other countries are fishing off the Labrador coast, but the two fishermen's co-ops on the Labrador coast wanted to deep-sea fish and applied to the government and were turned down.

If you want to see the difference between Liberal policy and Conservative policy, here is where you have to look. Let me take the example of shrimp. In the late 1970s, we discovered a shrimp stock off the coast of Labrador and the northeast coast of Newfoundland. The government of the day and the minister of the day took the decision that those people who were closest to the resource got a priority. It was not all theirs. It was to be shared, but the priority was given to those people who lived closest to the resource and depended on it. That is the way the shrimp stocks were divided up and that is the way the licences were allocated.

But in cod, with this government, it is a different thing altogether. The priority is given to the foreign countries. The priority is given to the large companies and the small inshore fishermen, whether they are individual fishermen or whether they band together in co-ops, come last. That has got to be changed.

At the same time as the stocks are in jeopardy and as the surveillance is being cut back, this is the time the government chooses to gut the only support system that we have which is the unemployment insurance system. Let us look at special response first of all.

The member for St. John's East mentioned that program a moment ago. He knows and I know that that money is not going to support those who need it most. I will tell you what the figures are for the Labrador coast. We have 129 people who qualify, we have 128 people who do not qualify. Those fishermen and plant workers in my area, 50 per cent of them who qualify and have a long-term attachment to the fishery, are getting no help whatsoever. They are being forced to fall back on welfare. Well, you cannot fall back on welfare because you cannot qualify for welfare if your are able-bodied.

So what will people do this year? I will tell you what they will do. On the Labrador coast this year, there will be people bartering, there will be people trading goods and materials and food as they have done in the past. That will be happening in Canada in 1989. So much for the special response feature.

At the same time as that is happening, action is being taken now to completely gut the unemployment insurance system and the government is withdrawing completely from that system and turning it over to the private sector instead of making the kind of changes that would make sense.

On the coast of Labrador, for example, the cut-off date for unemployment insurance is May 15. Yet the ice is there in the bays until the end of June. That is the kind of sensible change that should have been made and that could have been made now while that act is opened up, to give some fairness and some justice to the people who live on that coast.

The government saw fit to ignore changes like that, sensible changes that would have given some income support to those who need it. Instead the government is withdrawing completely from that system and, indeed, putting hurdles in the way of people who want to depend on that for a support system.

What about channelling the money into training? What do you train a 40-year old fisherman for? The answer is that this government has instituted what amounts to a resettlement program. The Minister for International Trade, when he was speaking about the response of the government, did not say that the largest amount of money of all in the government's response program is $5,000 for moving to other places. That is what will happen. We have seen it. We have seen them moving from the northern peninsula. We have seen them moving from small communities all over the province to places in central Canada, to places in western Canada.

That, unfortunately, is going to happen because of the lack of imagination and the lack of charity and the lack of concern of this government. Now is the time.

What could they have done? Now is the time to start building infrastructure. Now is the time to start building wharves. We have communities where there are no water and sewer systems. We need road connections. There are all sorts of things that could be done now, action that could be taken by this government to build the infrastructure so that when the fish stocks revive, and they will, then we will be in a position to do the harvesting, to have the onshore facilities that will help us to build in the future. But that kind of imagination was not used. Those dollars were not put into those programs, because this is not a government that wants to invest. This is a government that wants to cut the Atlantic provinces adrift. If you cannot survive in the private sector, well, that is too bad. There is no recourse as far as this government is concerned.

Our people do not want to move away. Their families have lived there for 400 years. Fishing is what they do best. These communities have survived on fishing. These communities are made up of very strong families who want to live there and they can live there. This is the richest resource anywhere in Canada and the richest marine resource possibly in the world. The irony is that with that kind of resource off our shores we, because of the carelessness and the lack of imagination of this government, have no alternative but to move away. But the people will remember, and they will survive. They will outlive this government. Long after this government is gone, these communities are going to be there.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Hunter—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Madam Speaker, it is always difficult to speak following the member for Labrador because the member for Labrador has demonstrated, in the years he has been in this House, a particular passion, a great ability to articulate the views of the people of not only Labrador but all of Newfoundland.

I want to contribute to this debate by referring to a letter I received in the mail today from my riding. I just want to quote a couple of lines. The letter reads:

> Dear Mr. Tobin:
>
> It seems it's getting a bit tougher all the time as you know. This has been a very bad year for fishermen—I know for a fact it's going to be a very tough winter—
>
> My Dear God, is there some way to knock some sense in the heads of that crowd we call a government? My God, we will have no one left in Newfoundland; they will have to leave Newfoundland or starve.
>
> It's ridiculous, the Minister of Fisheries is saying there are too many fishermen. Utter nonsense. Oh, yes, drive them out of their fishing boats and let the bloody French have the fish—
>
> I am a senior citizen with nobody but myself and I find it tough. My heart goes out to those who have only one income in the house, and that one very small. I just don't know what is going to happen. I'm very, very concerned—
>
> That free trade deal with the U.S. What a nice thing that is. Crosbie said we could get out of it in six months. It's about time this government started to get us out. Everything is turned bottom up. Food prices have never been higher, and things we sell have never been lower. May God help us.
>
> Trusting you can knock some sense into McDougall and the others who have anything to do with these programs.
>
> Yours truly,
> Eli Payne,
> Cox's Cove.

Now, that is a letter from just one gentleman, a senior citizen. But it could have been a letter from John Hedderson from Straitsview. It could have been from Cook's Harbour or Boat Harbour or Green Island Brook or Port au Choix or Castors River, Nipper's Harbour, or it could have been from the sea.

What Canadians have to understand and what this government has chosen to ignore, other than dealing with statistics, other than dealing with numbers, other than dealing with limp-wristed explanations for the failure of this government to manage the fishery properly, what this government has to look at is not its own face in the morning when it wakes up. This government has to leave this gilded chamber with these fine wrought-iron chandeliers and these great stained-glass windows and the ministerial cars waiting for cabinet ministers warm outside this Chamber, where the temperature is minus 20.

This government and the ministers have to go down to Atlantic Canada, out of the hotels and the ministerial suites, and into the communities and onto the streets. They have to look the Eli Paynes in the face. What they will see when they look into the faces of the fishermen and the plant workers of Atlantic Canada, contrary to what they are hearing here tonight, is not anger because we are angry, is not great emotion because we are emotional and is not a sense of outrage because we are outraged. What they are going to see when they look into the faces of the fishermen of Atlantic Canada is a profound sense of betrayal, of abandonment on the faces of a people who understand what they are undergoing and are victims of a cultural genocide. It is cultural genocide of a way of life, a rural, labour-intensive way of life that is being brutally destroyed by a government that has been indifferent, not to the statistics because we can quote statistics, but indifferent to the human beings who live in those communities and the sense of community and shared values that they have created over 500 years. That is what is happening in Canada today.

• (2320)

I find it incredible that members opposite say: "Let's be non-partisan. Let's all be together. Let's find the solution". It is just like Clifford Olson saying, when he stands condemned before the dock, that it is all a mistake, that he misunderstood the values of this society, let us just forget it and from now on he will be good.

This government has managed the fisheries over the last five years and it has taken a deliberate decision that nobody on the other side has talked about, because while the total allowable catch is being reduced from 290,000 tonnes in 1988 to 190,000 tonnes this year–a 100,000 tonne reduction–within our 200-mile zone this year, France took 15,600 tonnes of fish, a quota the French set for themselves. Next year they are going to take 15,100, a quota they set for themselves. The year after they are going to take 14,600, a quota they set for themselves within Canada's 200-mile management zone.

In my riding, an area called the Great Northern Peninsula, an area of a splendid national park, great peaks and the most beautiful scenery on the planet, an area that people are proud to be in and make a living from, this government is ripping the "Great" out of the Great Northern Peninsula because this year the fishery was an utter failure. Those inshore fishermen are being told that next year, they will have no fish. But you know what, somebody is going to have fish there next year.

In the Strait of Belle Isle, there are nine miles of water between Quebec and Newfoundland. Do you know who is going to be sailing through those nine miles next year when the fishermen in my communities are told to stay home? French factory freezer trawlers are going to take 4,000 metric tonnes of cod with the permission of the Government of Canada in the middle of a crisis.

Some Hon. Members: Resign!

Mr. Tobin: This minister of fisheries, if he had any sense of being the voice of fishermen around the cabinet table, rather than cabinet's apologist to fishermen in the fishing communities, if he had any backbone, if he believed that there was a role for him to play around that table for people who do not have the privilege to speak for themselves around that table, if he had any pride in his responsibilities and the traditions of those who have gone before him, he would resign today in protest at the cruelty inflicted upon the people of Atlantic Canada.

Let me say, and if it be partisan to say it then so be it, I am partisan, that I have never before in this House been ashamed of a colleague of mine from Newfoundland. I have been partisan, I have been angry, I have disagreed, I have had battles, but I have never been fundamentally ashamed of a colleague from Newfoundland, but the

spectacle of the member for St. John's West, Newfoundland's member in the cabinet, tonight in this House was pathetic. It reminded me of the words of Marie Antoinette who said of the peasants in France: "Let them eat cake". Well, in Newfoundland they are not going to eat cake and there is going to be a revolution because we are not going to take this kind of treatment by our national government.

I hope Canadians realize that we are here tonight, and the fact that we are here is an extraordinary event. As you know, Madam Speaker, there are countless petitions for emergency debates, and 99.9 per cent of the time they are turned down. But the Speaker of the House of Commons said in response to the member for Cape Breton Highlands–Canso that indeed in the Speaker's judgment, and he is not partisan, he is not playing a game, he is presiding over this Parliament and we call upon his judgment from time to time, there is a crisis of national importance in Canada today.

What we ask of this government is a substantial response to the human plight and misery that exists in Atlantic Canada and what we ask of our fellow Canadians, what we Liberals are sure of, is that our fellow Canadians will give us their support because we know that while this government believes it can turn its back on Atlantic Canada, we know that Canadians from coast to coast shall rally to the cause of those who are in greatest need among us.

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton–Charlotte): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to be in the House tonight speaking on this most important concern to Atlantic Canadians. It is a debate, as many have mentioned this evening, that I guess many of us would be happy not to have to take part in because it clearly indicates there is a crisis in Atlantic Canada, one that we would much rather not have.

Thinking that this is December 18, we are only one week away from Christmas, many individuals are going to have a very difficult Christmas in Atlantic Canada. Many of them, of course, are fishermen who have worked their entire lives on the water and have made their living from the water. This year of all years, they have found it most difficult, very, very distressing and are having a most trying time doing the things they have traditionally done.

I believe that the Government of Canada does understand the problem. We are trying to do something about it and obviously that has to happen in this House. I do agree that the problem has to go beyond partisanship, that we can blame one another, we can blame successive governments, we can blame provincial governments, we can blame the federal government, but I think that if we are going to approach this problem, we have to approach it in a very positive sense. That is what I propose to do.

If I could, I would like to go through some steps that I think we should take as Canadians. Perhaps I could refer to something I would call the fishermen's bill of rights.

Whereas the primary goal of fisheries policy is to maintain successful and sustainable fisheries an whereas the fishermen of Canada are the people most affected by and most knowledgeable about successful and sustainable fisheries, therefore Canadian fisheries policy shall be founded upon and guided by the following principles: (1), that fishermen, as the people with the most immediate knowledge and interest in the fishery stocks of a region, shall be consulted to the maximum extent possible whenever stock assessment procedures, conservation measures or quotas are in issue; (2), that no action detrimental to the interests of the fishermen of any region be implemented until all available appeal mechanisms have been fully exhausted; (3), that in all instances government or departmental decisions relating to stocks, licensing, assessment or quotas be made known to the fishermen of the region affected at least one year before they take effect; (4), that licensing policies be consistent, practical, equitable and predictable, that no such policies be given retroactive effect; (5) that regulatory changes be unambiguous and understandable and be available in both languages at least six months before they are implemented; (6) that public hearings with sufficient notice be part of this stock assessment and quota setting process; (7) that in the development or enforcement of any policies relating to the fisheries the health and safety of fishermen be a paramount consideration; (8) that fish allocations be made with particular regard to communicaties dependent on the fisheries to maintain a traditional way of life; (9) that fishermen be entitled to compensation for the unfair taking of any licensing or quota privileges and that any changes or reductions not complying with this preamble be deemed an unfair taking.

• (2330)

I think we have to be constructive in this House and that is what I am attempting to do. I do not think it does anyone any favour to simply point fingers, holler, shout and wave arms. It is pretty good theatrics but it does not put bread on the table, and I think that is what we are speaking of.

In my riding of Carleton—Charlotte we have gone through some difficulties as well. In the early 1980s we had some difficulties in the herring fishery. I am proud to say that we have the largest herring fishery in Canada. In fact, we have what used to be the largest herring processing in the world and I think is still close to being the largest in the world in Black's Harbour. When that fishery got in trouble a number of years ago, we pulled together as a community and a province and explored other ways to do things and other areas of the fishery that we could make a living in.

One of the things we did as a province, with help from the federal government, was look into the aquaculture industry. The aquaculture industry, and the raising of salmon in particular, is one of the largest single industries in my constituency, second to none in Canada or in the world. It is producing a fine product and that came about simply because the people cared and they decided they were going to do something themselves and the government was there to help them out.

It was positive thinking that accomplished this. I refer back to my opening comments about it being one week before Christmas and I think that is the frame of mind that we have to put ourselves in. We look for the good that can come from adversity. That rings true with some of these difficulties and the determination of some people you meet when travelling through a riding like mine. I was speaking to a ground fisherman in my riding who, for some unknown reason, was not able to go out and do the thing that he is good at doing, and that is fish.

I said that this was for some unknown reason but I guess if you dig deep enough, or perhaps not so deep, you will find the reason. Somehow some of these people have been caught up in the system. This gentleman whom I mentioned has a small boat and was taking part in a quota system that was gobbled up by some of the bigger boats. What does he do? He says, "What can I do? I am 60 years old. I cannot go out and look for another job. I have payments to make on my boat. I have payments to make on repairs that I put in."

What does he do? He is in an area in which options are not readily available to him as they are in other parts of the country. Those are the people whom governments have to help and governments should help. Those are the people who get caught up in this nightmare of fishing in Atlantic Canada in that ground fishery. Those are the people whom I believe this government wants to help.

The Prime Minister has committed resources of this government to help those very people who have been caught in that unfortunate situation. We have been promised the same kind of help that was given to western Canadians, in particular the wheat farmers after the severe droughts and devastation that they have experienced in the last number of years. We owe this to the fishermen as we do to all Canadians. I believe that all Canadians have to enjoy the standard of living that we have all come to expect in this country. When difficult times arrive, we all have to pitch together as we have never done before to help these people over the hurdle.

I would like to conclude by saying that we have a caring government, a government that wants to do something, a government that will do something. I am proud to be part of this government that is not afraid to recognize that there are problems in the industry. This government is prepared to assess these problems honestly and in a comprehensive manner. This government understands that these problems are best addressed by building on the sound practices that we have adopted for the management of this very vital resource.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Charles A. Langlois (Manicouagan): This evening, Mr. Speaker, in response to the motion introduced by the Hon. Member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso (Mr. LeBlanc), I intend to direct most of my remarks to the conservation angle. In the next few minutes I will attempt to argue in favour of taking measures aimed at promoting the conservation of fish species landed by Canada's east cost fishermen.

Mr. Speaker, there is one basic principle which cannot be ignored in fishing for and harvesting marine species, to wit: Mankind must not take more of a given fish species than the species is able to reproduce itself. To put it another way, we cannot guarantee the survival of fish species caught along and off the shores of our coasts unless we prevent people from taking more than specific species are able to replenish their own stocks through reproduction.

My immediate concern, Mr. Speaker, is that too many years have gone by without our realizing that fishing and harvesting activities along our coasts ignore that fundamental precept.

There have been major changes in the fishing industry over the past 25 years. During that time fishing boats have been equipped with sophisticated facilities, the fishing and harvesting techniques of fishermen looking for ever more numerous species have improved extremely rapidly, and the year and equipment used by fisherman have been highly refined.

These changes in the three fields I have mentioned have made it possible for fishermen to draw maximum resources from known fishing grounds. They also paved the way to new fishing sites and, finally, they enabled man to reach remode areas which until then had remained untapped.

As conditions evolved, new operators appeared in the commercial fishing industry, not to mention the fact that existing plants were modernized and fitted with the latest and ever more sophisticated processing facilities. Technology revolutionized processing methods and plants became much more efficient. At the same time, new larger and better equipped plants were built in all the eastern Canada provinces.

In only a few years eastern Canada's commercial fishing industry made the transition from the rudimentary conditions it had been in for three centuries to a modern and effective undertaking.

These radical changes in the fishing and processing industry put added pressure on traditionally harvested species and led to the discovery of new untapped resources in areas which until then had been beyond the reach of fishermen.

As fishing methods improved at an accelerated rate and processing plants became more efficient, the then government under the Liberal Party forgot something which was to have a catastrophic impact on the future of fisheries and the processing industry. Madam Speaker, they failed to evaluate the fish stocks that were being used and neglected to conduct scientific research on stocks of fish species that were not being used.

• (2340)

The government at the time lacked the vision to consider the medium and long-term consequences of additional pressures on fish stocks and increased fishing of new species. It saw the profound changes that were shaking up the fisheries and processing industries, but remained unconcerned about the condition of existing stocks and the negative impact that increased fishing would have on those stocks.

The government at the time should have had the foresight to increase its efforts in pure research on fish stocks and research directly related to the fishery.

Research on fish stocks would, at the time, have made it possible to establish the state of those stocks and determine allowable catch levels. The scientific data would have made it possible to guarantee the continued existence of the species being used and that of new species that were starting to be used by the fishery.

This oversight and lack of vision of the party in power during those years produced the situation that now prevails in the Atlantic fishery. This evening, the opposition is trying to make the present government take the blame for the situation. I may remind the Official Opposition that the government of the time must take the blame for the present situation and that the government of the time was formed by the Liberal Party.

I would like to quote the example of our Atlantic salmon. The main parties concerned about the fate of the Atlantic salmon have known for some like that this species cannot tolerate years and years of overfishing. However, it was not until the Atlantic salmon was nearing extinction that radical action was taken to ensure its survival.

People at all levels, the federal government, the provincial governments, sports fishermen, commercial fishermen, native peoples, owners of river property, fishing associations and outfitters realized that to ensure the continued existence if the Atlantic salmon, they had to establish a minimum number of spawners in a given river and let the fish come back to their river of birth to spawn and reproduce. This basic datum has to be known

before harvesting levels can be set, and only then can they be allotted among users on the basis of seasonal quotas. This sound management principle has stood the test of time, for the Atlantic salmon stock depletion seems to have stopped. We can therefore hope for a return to safer conditions for Atlantic salmon stocks. People have gone back to orderly and prudent harvesting of or stocks.

Eastern Canada producers and commercial fishermen must now acknowledge and accept this basic truth. I would suggest it is the only way to ensure the health of Atlantic fish species and the survival of the fishing and processing industries on the east coast of Canada.

Our government has already taken bold steps in that direction. Our guarantee of success now depends on supportive action on the part of the provincial governments of the fishermen and processors. Five years of good management by this government cannot undo all the harm done by the overfishing and incompetence which prevailed under the previous administration. We on this side of the House are quite prepared to continue to set up the research mechanisms which will enable us to widen our knowledge of Atlantic fish stocks and species. We need the co-operation of fishermen and producers, we need to combine the resources of the federal government with the ingeniosity and skills of fishermen and producers.

Such concerted efforts will make it easier to achieve a double objective: ensure the survival of fish stocks harvested along the eastern seashores of the country, and ensure the economic survival of communities and families whose bread and butter comes from the fishing industry. Let us look confidently to the future and make a joint effort, for I am convinced we will be able to reach these objectives.

[*English*]

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I rise in this House this evening to participate in this very serious debate about the state of Canada's Atlantic fishery.

We are faced with an emergency in Atlantic Canada. We in Parliament tonight have to turn more of our attention to this very serious issue of the future of this resource in Atlantic Canada, for Atlantic Canada and for the future of all of Canada. We have to turn our attention to the prolonged mismanagement of Canada's natural resources and our fish stocks, to the failed regional economic development policies and to the elimination of viable small communities and rural life in this country. These are the results of decades of Liberal mismanagement and now five years of Tory incompetence and neglect.

In 1982, the Kirby report to the Liberal government of the day warned and I quote: "A reliance on growth cannot be sustained indefinitely and in many stocks the biological limits of prudent harvesting have been reached". In 1987 and 1988 these warnings were again issued.

The previous Liberal government did not pay any attention to this and other warnings about the fate of the Atlantic fishery. The present Conservative government did not pay any attention either until, in 1989, they began to close down the fisheries and the communities in the Atlantic.

Even a few days ago, in the wake of massive lay-offs in the fishing industry, the Prime Minister's response was to blame everything on the previous administration, despite the fact that the studies were there for the government to see. This government has been in power for about half a decade now and it is time to start accepting a little responsibility. In fact, as I have said, this government has been repeatedly warned about the growing dangers to the Atlantic fisheries.

I said that in 1988 the government had been warned. In fact, the background paper for the Canada-Newfoundland Inshore Fisheries Agreement contained the following warning: "With few exceptions the fisheries resources of the Atlantic have reached their maximum utilization and in some cases there is an indication that over-exploitation is occurring."

Where was the planning when that information came? Where was the planning for more rural development and development in those communities? Why has the government waited until 1989 and caused this devastation in Atlantic Canada?

Let me briefly review, as people have been doing tonight, the emergency that is now gripping the Atlantic fishery. Last Monday, National Sea Products, one of the two largest fishing corporations in Canada, announced its series of plant closures and lay-offs. The St. John's facility will be closed with a loss of 492 direct jobs. The Canso, Nova Scotia, processing plant will close with a

cost of 742 direct jobs. In North Sydney 280 jobs will be lost due to plant changes.

These are statistics, but these are people. These are families. These are families who are going into 1990 without knowing what their future is going to be, without knowing whether there is even going to be a future in their community and in their region of the country.

According to the Fishermen, Food and Allied Workers Union, 1,300 more jobs may be lost in the coming weeks if Fishery Products International announces plans to close other operations in Newfoundland. The situation is that in the coming year Newfoundland could lose up to 6,000 fisheries-related jobs. A comparable figure in central Canada would be 115,000 jobs.

This is why we are pleased that this House has seen fit to debate this as an emergency. It is a serious emergency for our country and for that region because these job losses come on top of what is already happening to Atlantic Canada. Cutbacks on VIA Rail have taken jobs away from Atlantic Canada and have reduced options for the people who live there.

In the fisheries industry there are clearly too few fish and not enough jobs for people who fish and for workers in related industries. Today we learned about the number of small plants and small businesses in Nova Scotia which build boats and provide additional services to those in the fishing industry that are closing.

Successive governments have failed to manage the resource. The government must take responsibility for that failure, both in terms of the inability of the government departments to adequately assess the quantities through their own scientific research and in terms of dealing with the impending doom that has been clearly outlined for a number of years.

• (2350)

Past and present governments have set catch quotas, granted foreign fishing rights and allowed the introduction of new technologies without fully comprehending the sustainability of the fishery.

One issue in particular, the foreign overfishing of the Grand Banks, has been a longstanding problem. It is not something new, it is not something that just happened in December of 1989, two weeks before Christmas, but has been a longstanding problem.

The European community recently announced plans to take more than 50,000 tonnes of fish from the Grand Banks, more than three times the quota suggested by the North Atlantic Fisheries Organization. This announcement comes in the face of the Canadian government's promised commitment in the speech from the throne last April to work toward ending foreign overfishing on the Atlantic coast.

Yet between 1986 and 1989 the nations of the European Community overfished the Grand Banks by 600 per cent; not 2 per cent or 10 per cent or 100 per cent, but 600 per cent. The evidence could not be clearer. Surely it is time for the government to admit the mistakes that have been made and to help these people in the Atlantic to deal with these issues and to keep this industry alive.

Meanwhile, there has been inadequate Canadian funding and resources for the kind of research that might have added to the sustainability of this industry, as well as for planning and coastal patrol. Atlantic Canadians, of course, like everyone in Canada, face the other cuts; the VIA Rail cuts, the unemployment insurance cutbacks, and the possibility of being hit with this goods and services tax which is going to burden even more people already in a very difficult situation. On top of that there is the Conservative erosion of social programs as a consequence of the trade deal. There is no question that there is a serious crisis in Atlantic Canada in the fishery.

Tonight in this House and in the coming days and weeks we have to face the facts and seek real solutions to these problems. Newfoundland New Democrat leader Cle Newhook said today that Atlantic Canadians want to know if this government has the guts to avert the economic and social disaster that is going to take place in his province and in the maritimes. I and my party want to know that too.

We have some suggestions about the kinds of actions that this government should take and take now. Jobs must be saved and jobs must be created. People in the Atlantic do not want a welfare cheque, they want a pay cheque. We have to save the communities of the Atlantic. We in this party do not accept the age-old practice of monopoly corporations and companies that close down plants and whole towns on the basis of short-term

profitability. We believe in long-term commitment in Canadians and Canadian resources.

We do not believe in the short term of shutting down, whether it is a Schefferville, an Ocean Falls, a Canso, a Lockeport or the Grand Banks. Canadians, wherever they live, in large communities or small ones, on family farms or in fishing villages, deserve the security of knowing that their communities will survive, prosper and nurture and that their children will have a future. Canadians have a right to expect that our rural communities and our resource based economies can develop and can be protected by a government that does not plan just for the short term but plans for the future of our children. That right and those values must come before plant profits and the quick movement of capital.

We are suggesting that some companies should be encouraged to keep processing plants operating, at least seasonally, in order to continue to provide work in a community economic base. Surely people who are working for at least part of the year are in a better position to keep their communities going than if they have no means of employment.

The federal government should facilitate, help and, if necessary, underwrite the continued operation of presently threatened processing plants to be owned and managed by workers and producers through co-ops if the companies themselves refuse to continue to operate.

The government must undertake a full environment and fisheries resources study on the Atlantic coast to determine the fish stocks and the preservation of spawning grounds and to review how fish quotas and allocations are set.

As we in this party pointed out in our review of Canada's security policy in April of 1988, Canada must improve its own offshore surveillance and coastal patrol capacity, both in the air and on the sea. Canada has to get tough with our European neighbours. For most of this century Canadians have taken up responsibilities for European security and peace. We have every right to demand European recognition of our national resource, our environment and our economic interests in the Atlantic.

The government is obliged to make this clear and definite and to press an immediate European recognition of NAFO quotas for the Grand Banks. Canada, in the end, must make it clear that we are willing to unilaterally extend our economic jurisdiction to all of the Grand Banks if the Europeans fail to co-operate.

The government must take some necessary action at home. It must end its plans to gut the unemployment insurance system, because under these plans 45,000 Atlantic Canadians will lose their qualification to unemployment insurance. The government can help the desperate Atlantic economy and Atlantic fishery by ensuring that there is bread and butter on the tables of the thousands of families already wholly or partially reliant on some unemployment insurance benefits.

Finally, the Atlantic fishery situation is yet another reminder of the total failure of the trade deal. Thousands of jobs continue to be lost across Canada from coast to coast, whether it is in agriculture, in the industrial sector or in the fisheries on the west and the east coasts. Consumers, as we read again today, have gained nothing from the trade deal. So what have we gained from this? As I said the other day, what we gained is that many Canadians are getting the pink slip and it is time that this government gave the pink slip to the United States on this trade deal.

There is a new term, it is "economic restructuring". That is very nice if you do not happen to be one of those people who is affected or one of those communities that is affected by this term. We said a year ago that Canada's social programs are under attack by the government itself in response to demands from the American economy. The trade deal must go. The sooner this government wakes up to that fact the better for all Canadians and for the chances of survival in Atlantic Canada, in western Canada and in all of Canada.

I returned from the Yukon and British Columbia for this debate this evening because it is an important debate about the future of our country and the survival of the Atlantic. It is also a reminder that much of Canada is under a threat at the moment and, indeed, much of our way of life. Northerners face new environmental and economic threats. West coast fisheries face resource problems, foreign catch and territorial disputes, and serious threats from pollution. As leader of my party I

am committed to the survival of rural Canada and of our smaller communities and way of life.

In the north, in the east, and in the west we need policies and new commitments to build a country that is fair and prosperous for all Canadians no matter where they live or how they choose to work. I pledge my efforts and the energies of my colleagues to building that kind of Canada. I urge this government to take action now to save the fisheries in Atlantic Canada so that in the 1990s we can show that we are once again a strong nation that protects and invests in our resources and in Canadians in all parts of this country.

• (0000)

Mr. J.W. Bud (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, I also travelled tonight to get here from my riding, not as far as the hon. member for Yukon but certainly deliberately to participate in this debate. While my riding is not directly involved in the fishery, this is an issue with which I can and do identify, an issue with which I am deeply concerned and share the legitimate sense of crisis and perhaps even tragedy at this particular time of year for those families, those people and those communities who are suffering as a result of the closures which we are witnessing at this time.

It is always tempting to engage in political rhetoric, to pontificate and to cast blame at a time like this, but I think that the fisheries situation in Atlantic Canada is really much too serious for that. That is especially so when we contemplate that National Sea has closed or is about to close 1,200 jobs in Canso, close to 500 in St. John's and 300 in North Sydney. When we read today in the newspaper about receivership of a fisheries business in Prince Edward Island; when we read about more than 100 boatbuilders who are in difficulty throughout Nova Scotia, the impact of the Atlantic fisheries and the serious nature of this crisis hits us very strongly and very deeply.

I was disappointed to hear some of my hon. colleagues from the Official Opposition tonight, particularly the member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys when he read selectively half of an article that was in *The Globe and Mail* today about National Sea. He attempted to blame this government for all of the difficulties that are upon the fishery. He was even blaming us for the international diversification of that company.

He left out the first part of that article which pointed out that the Liberal government of his day invested $70 million in the pay-down of a loan, $10 million in preferred shares—$80 million in that company to end up with 20 per cent of the shares, which those who now own 80 per cent of the shares got for $20 million. It was a terrible piece of business. Of course, it has proven to be a terrible example of resource management and fisheries management.

As I have said, I really feel it is not the time for rhetoric. It is really a time for care and compassion, for response, for planning and long-term action. I would like to quote an article of last week from the Fredericton *Daily Gleaner*, our home-town paper, in which it quoted as a prelude to the editorial a statement by John F. Kennedy when he said—and I believe it pertains to this House tonight—"Our task now is not to fix the blame for the past but to fix the course for the future".

What we have on our hands in the Atlantic fishery is a serious case of unsustainable development, of fishing and processing capabilities and capacities which are now clearly beyond the tolerable yield of the ocean's fish resources. The causes are many. We have heard of scientific forecasting which has been in error and inadequate. We have seen excessive investments in boats, in plants and equipment. We see evidence of overfishing of quotas both domestically and by foreigners. There are no shortage of causes, but there are not many solutions, certainly no easy ones.

I think the first thing we must commit to do is to fix the resource itself. Our fish stocks are declining and must be rebuilt urgently. They must be built to sustainable levels so that we will not have them only for one time in a sustainable fashion, but we will have them for future generations in a sustainable fashion as well. This means that there will be dramatic cuts in quotas and there will be new disciplines in catches. It will mean fewer boats and fewer plants and fewer jobs. We may not be able to gain the levels of the past.

As I listen to my hon. colleagues from the fishing constituencies of Atlantic Canada, particularly those on the other side, criticizing the government and talking about how sinful it is to talk about training people for new kinds of work, to talk even about the horrible word of "relocation" to areas where jobs are plentiful, I cannot help but wonder if there is not just a political blind spot. They just refuse to accept the realities of the facts of the fishing industry, the fact that it is not sustainable, the fact that to make these communities and

these people slaves to an industry that is unsustainable is a crime in itself. I think that in these fishing communities the people equally with the resource are the compelling priority.

To his credit, when the hon. Elmer MacKay first addressed this crisis on behalf of the government last week his first words were clear and unequivocal. He said that the Government of Canada is fully committed to assisting individuals, families and the communities affected by the downturn in the fishery.

How is this commitment of support to be delivered? In many ways; through the industrial adjustment service for one, which I believe is a service that is going to have to be expanded and made more comprehensive in this day and age in Canada, not just with respect to the fishery. For example, it was designed, my understanding is, to support the free trade agreement in recognition that there would be dislocations, structural emergencies as a result of the transition to free trade.

We have the Summerside situation which I believe is the most compelling single area for care and compassion by this government, one that we must address through the industrial adjustment service and otherwise. I believe that we must address the fishery throughout Atlantic Canada in a very strong and profound way with this service.

As well of course we have the broad range of programs and services through the unemployment insurance administration, the Canadian Jobs Strategy, income support emergency response, job training, relocation assistance, community initiatives and special aid for older workers.

A special response for the longer term is also essential. I agree with what has been said by the hon. member for Yukon tonight. This is a long-term problem we are addressing in part, and we must have long-term answers. We must, as I said earlier, face the facts of the fisheries, that there are limits to the potential of the fisheries. We must accept those limits not just for the sustainable harvest in our time, as I have said earlier, but also to serve future generations.

What does this mean? It means establishing new ways of life for many people in many communities. It means finding new economic activities, new industries and new jobs.

I believe that the greatest single challenge facing Canada today is to confront the realities of unsustainable development, to take the action that is necessary, to be sure, but even more critically to address the need for viable alternatives and to create those alternatives, to replace jobs which have become unsustainable.

This challenge is probably greater in Atlantic Canada than in any other part of the country. We do not have to apologize for that either. We are founding shareholders in the Canadian confederation. The truth is abundantly clear. There is economic disparity in the Atlantic region which must be balanced with the more economically favoured parts of our country.

Regional development action is essential to provide long-term growth in Atlantic Canada that would otherwise not occur. That special kind of assistance must be more than just a sharing with the boom areas of Canada. It must provide an advantage to Atlantic Canada that will help rationalize our disadvantages of distance, of size of our markets and of scale. It must be a unique extra that will attract new industry to our region, that will spur development by our entrepreneurs and that will relieve our overdependence on sensitive natural resources such as the fishery.

For example, while interest rates are justifiably high defending against inflation right across Canada and an adjustable or variable interest rate policy is not possible, there is a special need for regional measures to ameliorate those rates in Atlantic Canada where, frankly, the economy cannot stand the impact of those rates to the extent that it can in the overheated areas of southern Ontario.

• (0010)

What can be done to address the crisis in the Atlantic fisheries and what can be done for Atlantic Canada?

I mentioned special measures to ameliorate things such as interest rate policies. There are other things that can be done, that are being done, that will be done.

In terms of regional development I have said several times in this House that regional development spending in Atlantic Canada will touch $.5 billion in 1989—by far the largest in the history of the Atlantic region. It will average $425 million for the balance of the five-year fiscal plan. Perhaps, in view of the fisheries crisis, that is not enough.

The ACOA fund of $1 billion has been a major and significant initiative for Atlantic Canada. In the context of the fishery, in the context of Summerside, in the context of the structural dislocations we face in Atlantic Canada, perhaps it is time to consider increasing the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Fund for the future.

The unemployment insurance fund has a wide array of assistance both for immediate response and for long-term alternatives. The Liberal-dominated Senate of this country must pass Bill C-21 or it will penalize these very fishermen commencing January 1 of whom we speak tonight.

With respect to the free trade agreement, I would hope that the wishes of the hon. member for Yukon would never be realized. I believe that all Atlantic Canadians would hope that because one of the really bright spots in the future of Atlantic Canada is the 50 million person market that exists less than 24 hours trucking distance from our major centres. That market represents the greatest single potential for the future of the Atlantic region of any other economic factor.

We will process in the Atlantic, and the free trade agreement permits us to process it in the Atlantic region. That will help us to realize the potential of that megalopolis of the northeastern United States. I trust that the hon. member for Yukon will change her tune and come to realize that if she ever hopes to get a seat in Atlantic Canada, which I would seriously doubt, it will not be by turning off the few bright potential spots that we have.

Going beyond that, I have mentioned the industrial adjustment services. My colleagues have mentioned the community future services. There are initiatives that are required. There are major undertakings for communities such as Canso and Summerside.

In closing, I would like to remind you that in the throne speech earlier this year the government did announce a strategy for Canada. It contained several pivotal factors. One was financial stability. We are moving in those directions.

Another was economic growth. We are moving in those directions.

Another was sustainable development. We are grappling now with sustainable development in the fishery. For the first time we are confronting, as the Minister from St. John's West said tonight, the reality of people enslaved to a fishery that is inadequate to be sustainable for them.

The last thing that the throne speech stated was that we are committed to a compassionate and caring society. I call on all members of this House tonight to address the Atlantic fishery and other problems in the Atlantic region with this sense of care and compassion, with this sense of constructive, co-operative debate that will lead to solutions and not merely rhetorical problems such as we hear so often in this House.

I would like to assure Atlantic Canadians that this government is a caring and compassionate government. I would like to assure them that the Atlantic fishery has my support. Coming as I do from an area that is not directly affected, I would want them to know that I and my colleagues support the concerns and the problems. They can count on us to see that they are resolved in the future.

Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Madam Speaker, it has been a long evening and an interesting one. I have sat and listened to most of it. I have learned something, but not from all of the speakers. I can recall the Minister for International Trade speaking for example. I could not help but think of the description of a previous speech a couple of hundred years ago, "full of sound and fury signifying nothing". Add his reassurances to the people of Newfoundland that he was going to look after them to the reassurances of the previous Minister for International Trade, Pat Carney, and to those of the present Minister of Fisheries who promised also to protect the traditional jobs in the fish-processing industry in B.C.—and we know what happened there. If you put all those reassurances together in one handful it would still take 80 cents to get a cup of coffee in the government cafeteria.

The Leader of the Opposition accused the government of mismanagement. Government members have accused the Liberals of mismanagement. Madam Speaker, they are both right. But none of those accusations, right or wrong, is going to add one pound to the biomass of cod out there waiting to spawn. There is no point now in saying who did something wrong or who did not do something right. That is not the argument. The question

is, what are we going to do from here on? What is the government doing right now?

I would say if either party is more to blame than the other, it would be the Conservatives because they have been in office for over five years and they have done nothing to improve the situation in those five years. In fact, it is getting worse. There is no question about that.

In 1988, the total allowable catch of northern cod was set at 266,000 tonnes. In 1989, the federal scientists urged that the total allowable catch be reduced to 125,000 tonnes, and the Minister for International Trade proudly boasted that he would not accept that figure from the scientists. He insisted that the total allowable catch would be 235,000 tonnes. He did that to protect the jobs of the fishermen and the people in the fish-processing industry in Newfoundland—short-term gain for long-term pain.

Harvesting more than twice as much as the best scientific evidence told us should be harvested was nothing short of a disaster for the industry. For the minister to say that he is a responsible minister in this government, it would be better to say that he is an irresponsible minister when he is treating the codfish stock in that manner.

The Harris report for northern cod, released in May of 1989, talked about the codfish stocks. Bearing in mind that in 1977 the best advice available was that there should be 1.4 million tonnes in the cod biomass for spawning, the Harris report said in 1989 that the figures at that time were 725,000 to 500,000 tonnes, an average less than half of what there should be to maintain the proper spawning population. If the figure is actually 725,000, the upper limit of what Harris said, we could rebuild the cod stocks gradually if we harvested 200,000 tonnes a year, if he was right with the 725,000 figure. If he was right at the 500,000 figure, harvesting 200,000 tonnes a year for five years would reduce the stock to the point where there would be no hope of it ever coming back. It is just that close. We have to be below the 200,000 to be able to achieve anything, to be able to guarantee the protection of that resource. Yet the Minister for International Trade proudly boasts that he insisted on it being 235,000—much higher than it should have been for any safety.

We like to blame the Europeans, and several have. Certainly, I was part of that group that went overseas. We listened and we talked. We blamed the Spanish and the Portuguese for overfishing of the nose and the tail of the Grand Banks. It was great fun. I think there is no doubt but that they are overfishing in those areas.

There is also some question as to what the Canadians are doing, and the Europeans kept throwing this at us. What about our own fishing? I talked already about us harvesting 235,000 when the scientists say it should be 125,000. Do you think they do not know that? Do you think they do not know that we are harvesting twice as many as we should be? Of course they know it. We are pointing a finger at them and they are pointing it right back at us.

Then they say: "What other scientific evidence is there to back up your claim that it is our overfishing in the nose and the tail that are being destructive and somebody else's overfishing is not?" What about other factors? What other factors are there?

For example, what about predators? The question was raised when I think one of the government members talked about the seals and what they are doing. As far as I know, the only reports I have heard is that they have not actually found cod in the seals that have been killed. If not, perhaps the seals are eating the food of the cod. Certainly, they must be having some effect when they are increasing in the numbers that they are. Should something be done about that? I do not know. It is one of the things that has to be considered. Certainly cutting back on the harvest is also something that has to be considered pretty seriously.

• (0020)

What about mismanagement? Yes. What about mismanagement by both parties? Yes. Let us forget about that and let us do something about the future. That is what we have to agree to do.

Being pushed around by the Americans has been mentioned. I think again it was the Leader of the Opposition who mentioned that. Of course that is true, no question about it. Look what happened on the west coast. I spoke earlier about the promises from government members to protect jobs in the processing industry and protect the fishermen. We know that has not been done. We can blame it on GATT, but there was a solution to that which we ignored. We can blame it on the free trade panel. What is happening there? The Canadian

government said: "Yes, we accept 20 per cent." The Americans said: "No way." They are not willing to accept that, and I have not heard what has happened since. This was supposed to be decided quite some time ago.

We gave up control of our resources when we became part of this free trade deal, not just of fish I am afraid, but other resources as well. We certainly said to the Americans: "You can have our fish." That is the way they are interpreting the agreement. They are threatening that if we do not interpret it the same way that they are going to take retaliatory action that will make us play ball the way they want us to play ball.

On the east coast there are similar problems. The same Minister for International Trade is quoted as saying as much as much as 80 million pounds of unprocessed fish could have left Nova Scotia in 1988. How many jobs is that? Those fish could have been processed in Canada, on the east coast where all these plants are shutting down. We could have kept some of those plants open had we insisted on processing all our fish in our processing plants with our workers. The Conservative member of Parliament for South Shore, Nova Scotia, said: "Nova Scotia alone is exporting 1,000 jobs a year." That would have kept some of the smaller plants open.

There has been some talk of the alternatives to cod fishing. The Minister of Fisheries, I believe, talked about some 350,000 tonnes of other species that are available for harvest. I do not think he really assigned blame, although I had the feeling when he was saying this that it was because the fishermen were not catching them, were not harvesting them. I see him shaking his head. I am glad to see that. It is not the fishermen. They would be delighted to harvest all these 350,000 tonnes of any species if there was a market for them, but we need the market. That is where the government has to come in.

I attended a meeting in Lockeport when that plant had been closed, a meeting that I think was originally organized by the United Auto Workers Union which brought together people from the community, from the council and from various organizations. They all agreed on a plan for something that might be done with Lockeport. The essence of it was: "Let's use Lockeport as a sort of research place to find some way of using these species that are not currently being used."

I have one small example in my constituency of Nanaimo where a small processor of fish tried for years to do something with dogfish. The problem was the ammonia. What do you do with the ammonia? How do you get rid of the ammonia? He eventually produced a very tasty product, smoked, canned dogfish. The ammonia was out of it. I asked him how he did it but of course he wasn't going to tell me that. As far as I know that product is still being produced.

Through research that one person on his own was able to do something with the dogfish that was and is such a nuisance on the west coast. What about these species on the Atlantic? It would seem to me that the proposal to use the Lockeport plant or any other place as a research facility to find some way of utilizing what the minister called the under-utilized species that are there in such large quantities is a good proposal. It cannot be the fishermen who do it. Industry will not do it. Industry will go out and buy more boats. I think NatSea spent some $16 million just buying another freezer-trawler after it closed several plants in the Atlantic provinces. It has money to buy these big trawlers that put fishermen out of work, but it does not have any money for research to find what should be done with these under-utilized species.

Apart from management that has to be cleaned up, apart from using the under-utilized species to provide more economic opportunities, we also have to sustain the workforce that is being cut back now because of the closures. We hope that with proper management there will be an increase in fish stocks and we would hope to be using others. The workers are there now. It is not their fault. As I say, government members have accused the Liberals. The Liberals have accused the government members. Nobody has accused the people working in the fishing industry, whether the fishermen or the workers, of having done anything wrong. It is not their fault that the resource was mismanaged. They are there ready, willing and able to work. Hopefully, there will be job opportunities for them. In the meantime they have to be sustained.

Unemployment insurance is being cut back seriously. The government has to have the responsibility of making sure that those people, even if they are not able to work, have a decent income to keep them going until these plants reopen. If they are not going to reopen, then there has to be a period when the government will help them and help them get re-established, but not in retraining them to take jobs on VIA Rail that is going out of business or to take jobs in the tourist industry at minimum wage. They need decent jobs that will enable them to contribute to the economy in their communities.

We have to manage the stock properly. Yes, Spain and Portugal are overfishing. But one of the messages I heard in Europe time after time was that if we clean up our act in Canada and do a better job of managing the resource here, then we will be in a much better position to recommend to them that they clean up their act and we might be listened to more carefully. Let us put our own house in order. They said it is not enough just to juggle the catch. We need to have scientific analysis to find out exactly what is going wrong. Why are we so short of fish? Maybe it is the catch. They want more work done on it than to simply count the number of fish that somebody is catching.

The minister in the press release he put out talked about penalties, enforcement powers, changing the system of quotas, better systems for 1990. That is all very well, but the immediate step has to be taken to cut back on the total allowable catch. These other things make a pretty small contribution toward building up the population. It is the catch that is doing it.

The predators I have mentioned. The Minister for International Trade blamed the scientists for having gone wrong. They gave wrong information. Well, even scientists can do that. Usually the latest information is the best information. Let us go for the best we can get.

Another thing that is in some of the material I have here is that if you cannot get the truth from scientists, go to the fishermen. It was in 1988 that the fishermen said the total allowable catch of 266,000 tonnes was too much for the fish. They could not stand it. They were right. I am missing a comment from across the way. The minister said, I think, that that was why he reduced it. Remember, the scientists said reduce it to 125,000 tonnes, and I do not hear the minister saying he is going that far. It takes drastic action. There is going to be unemployment in the meantime that the government has to look after. If we are going to build that up, we have to deal with it as a serious problem that requires drastic action. It is up to the government to accept its responsibility to save that stock.

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Madam Speaker, I rise tonight to participate in this emergency debate because it has profound effects on the economy of Atlantic Canada and in particular it has profound negative economic effects on communities such as Canso, North Sydney and parts of Newfoundland.

Fortunately, in my constituency we were spared a closure of a National Sea Products facility. However, Madam Speaker, I want to tell you and members of this House that residents of my constituency take no great pleasure in the anguish, the uncertainty that the people in Canso, North Sydney and parts of Newfoundland are confronted with at the present time.

Some weeks ago I participated in a major rally in Louisbourg, Nova Scotia. At that time, before 700 individuals, I made a number of observations with regard to the Atlantic fisheries, particularly with respect to the solutions which were necessary to be put in place in order to resolve a very serious situation.

• (0030)

While the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans is in the House, I would like to share with him for a moment or two the unanimous consent of those who attended that particular meeting on this cold wintry night and of individuals in communities who did not have a National Sea Products fishing plant. Nevertheless they were involved in the fisheries, whether it be the inshore or the offshore, whether it be plant workers in other plants. It was unanimous by each and every one that the first thing the Government of Canada must do and should do very quickly was ask the minister of fisheries to resign.

This minister has lost the confidence of those individuals who participate in the Atlantic fisheries. When you lose the confidence of those individuals you are supposed to represent at the cabinet table, I think it only appropriate and responsible for that individual who holds such high office as the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to exercise those responsibilities and resign forthwith as Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

That will not be the cure-all, but it will provide some segment of confidence in an industry and a region which have been bastardized by the present administration in Ottawa.

There are other solutions that could be made to address this very serious situation. The second thing that the government ought to do is to allow the Department of Fisheries and Oceans under the direction of a new minister to exercise paramount control when it comes to fisheries management of our stocks. No longer can the Secretary of State for External Affairs and the senior bureaucrats in the Prime Minister's office be giving directions to the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans. Fisheries and Oceans must be paramount with regard to External Affairs when it comes to fisheries related matters. No longer can we accept a secondary status.

That leads to an issue which I believe is fundamental. Even the parliamentary secretary has spoken eloquently tonight but was substantively wrong. He ought to know, not as a newcomer to the House of Commons but as an individual who has played around in the halls of power in Ottawa, that the foreign overfishing taking place on the offshore is crucial and devastating to our Canadian fishermen.

When are we as a nation going to exercise our own control? When are we as a nation going to say no to the foreign fleets whether they be Portuguese, Spanish or French, whether they be ships from the United States of America? Is it not high time that the Government of Canada stop kowtowing to foreign interests and stand up for Canadian interests first?

Recently we have seen the President of the United States confirm a law which was passed through the Congress of the United States that negatively affects lobster fishermen in Atlantic Canada. In the province of Nova Scotia it will mean a lessening of $30 million into our economy. What it means is that jobs will be lost and the domestic price for lobster will be substantially reduced not only for this fiscal year but for fiscal years in the future. What did we have? We had the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the Minister for International Trade and yes, the almighty one, the Prime Minister, sending notes to the President of the United States pleading with him not to pass this particular legislation.

Somehow those of us in Atlantic Canada are to be secure in the knowledge and in the fact that this matter now must go before a free trade panel. No one knows the sanction that it will impose. We know a bit about the time frame, but we do not know the sanction that will be imposed. Even if we knew the sanction there is no guarantee that the Americans will accept it.

I say to the parliamentary secretary who is the only one in the Government of Canada listening to the debate at this late hour that they should spend $30 million now readily available on those fishermen who are going to lose as a result of this regressive measure in the United States. If that were done, it would show a measure of good faith by the Government of Canada.

In the remaining time I want to say a few words to those people in Canso, Nova Scotia and in North Sydney in my province. I am embarrassed to stand here tonight with no federal representative from the Conservative Party of Canada in cabinet saying one word, not one sentence for those fishermen in Nova Scotia. I am sure there will be good reason for this lack of attendance tonight, but no one from cabinet has spoken out for the economic interest of Nova Scotians. We talk tonight not of statistics contained in the briefing book of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. We are talking about people, ordinary Canadians, who have mortgages, who have children, who have bills to pay and dreams yet unachieved.

Yet this government has said to those Canadians in Canso, Nova Scotia and in North Sydney: "We don't care. That is not our problem. That is National Sea's problem. Because it is their problem, we are not going to come to your assistance. We are not going to provide the kind of aid which is needed. We will dance with you for a little while, but when the song is over your future will not be in those communities; it will be elsewhere in this great country".

The situation is of a crisis nature. It requires leadership. It requires financial aid. It requires co-operation. It also requires political will by a government that has yet to show any interest or any substantive concern for those men and women in Atlantic Canada who depend so heavily on the fisheries.

I would hope that we would support both in substance and in spirit the emergency motion put forward by my colleague from Cape Breton Highlands—Canso, stated by my colleague from Cape Breton—The Sydneys and by other members from eastern Nova Scotia. We will try to resolve this particular problem, but it requires political

will by the Government of Canada which is not any being exhibited now nor has it been in the immediate past.

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough): Madam Speaker, I rise tonight in support of the motion of my hon. colleague from Cape Breton Highlands—Canso, specifically that the Liberal party condemns the government's mismanagement of the Atlantic fishery.

This motion is allowing members on this side of the House to explain the real situation in Atlantic Canada, not the situation as seen from the government's point of view or expressed by Conservative members opposite.

• (0040)

The Government's agenda has been questioned by all Atlantic Canadians at this point in time. In fact we have been questioning it for a long time. "What does the federal government have in store for Atlantic Canada", we ask? Not much.

It has closed Canadian forces bases. It has cut back Via Rail. It has proposed major changes to the unemployment insurance system and has mismanaged the Atlantic fishery to such an extent that it is rapidly declining, causing the closure of plants throughout the maritimes and in some cases shutting down small communities. The fishery is a vital resource to all Atlantic Canadians and its preservation is integral to the survival of the Atlantic region.

It is ironic it was the Canadian government that did so much to contribute to the management of the Canadian fishery by introducing fishing quotas, fishing seasons, and minimum size for fish. Now we are seeing the government destroy the fishery by closing down fish plants in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, allowing overfishing by foreign fleets and, moreover, in the wake of the agreement signed last week, virtual inaction from either the minister of fisheries or the Prime Minister. The plant that will close in Canso causing the loss of 742 jobs, the reduction in operations at the National Sea plant in North Sydney causing the loss of 280 jobs, and the closure of the National Sea plant in St. John's, Newfoundland will add to the deplorable state of the Atlantic economy.

The Canso plant which employs over 60 per cent of the community's population of 1,200 will be closed in April 1990. This is the only industry in this small community. The government has promised to provide funding for the introduction of new industries to the area, but what good will that do for a town that knows nothing but fish? The fishery was the backbone of Canso and now it is the cause of the destruction of Canso.

Nothing has been done by this government to remedy this terrible situation. It fails to understand just how vital the fishing industry is to Atlantic Canada. It is the economic backbone for thousands of Atlantic Canadians. Prince Edward Islanders are used to hearing the horror stories attributed to the shutdown of industries and businesses. We have only to look at CFB Summerside to understand how the people of Canso are feeling right now. Prince Edward Island is reeling from a multitude of economic disasters initiated by the federal government. As well, it is reeling from the recent decision made by the United States that our own government seems powerless to fight.

I need point no further than to the signature of the President of the United States on a bill limiting the sale of Canadian lobsters. This will have serious implications for the already downtrodden economy of Prince Edward Island.

The fishery is one of the three major industries on the island, along with agriculture and tourism. The fishing industry is responsible for 30 per cent of the island's exports and contributes approximately 13 per cent to the Gross Provincial Product. The lobster fishery accounts for 70 per cent of the total value of the island fishery, a value that has been declining given the low prices during the past season resulting from a high concentration of lobster on the international market.

The major market for island lobster is the United States. Some 70 per cent of the lobsters are exported to the U.S. With the passage of the aforementioned U.S. legislation, where will the island fishermen sell their lobster? Let us think of the damage this will do to our provincial economy, an economy already suffering from massive fiscal restraint programs brought on by the federal government.

I believe that the free trade agreement is the main problem here. The import limitations brought forward by the U.S. legislation last Tuesday are a direct result of the free trade deal. Senator George Mitchell, the man behind last Tuesday's bill, attempted to have these provisions included in the FTA and now he has what he wanted all along. What has the Prime Minister done in the wake of such punitive actions? Nothing. He seems to be more concerned with building a reputation as an international statesman. Obviously he hesitates to oppose his friend, the President of the United States.

The implications for the unemployment rate in Atlantic Canada are frightening. The Prime Minister has been citing statistics for years now. Just last week he boasted about lower unemployment rates in Atlantic Canada. I would like to inform the Prime Minister that the unemployment rate in my province of Prince Edward Island has not fallen. I am also telling him that the numbers will rise drastically when the full impact of this government's assault on Atlantic Canada is realized.

With respect to fish plants, Prince Edward Island has had its share of closures. The crab plants in Tignish and Murray Harbour have shut down. These closures put 200 people out of work. That has quite an impact on P.E.I., not only on the individual workers but also on their families and the communities that depend on the spending power of these families. Another example is the Summerside Sea Products that closed its doors earlier this year with a loss of some 120 jobs.

The future of the fishing industry in Atlantic Canada is bleak, as is the future of the Atlantic economy in general. Economists are predicting that Canada is on the verge of major recession due in great part to the government's policy on high interest rates. I say that Atlantic Canada is in one now and that it will only get worse if the government does not show a firm commitment to Atlantic Canadians.

There is a growing feeling back home that this government cares very little about the four provinces on the east coast because it has done nothing to prove otherwise. In Atlantic Canada alone there are more than 100,000 fishermen and fish processors. Historically they have depended on a stable Atlantic fishery for their livelihoods. These men and women are now looking at a bleak future square in the face. They are facing plant closures and lower imposed quotas as well as increases in quotas by the European community. EC nations continue to overfish the transboundary stocks. The European community refuses to respect and support quotas established by the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization.

Atlantic Canadians working in the fishing industry want to work, need to work, and expect nothing more or less than that, but that is not the reality they face. The reality is that more than 1,000 people lost their jobs in the crab and lobster industries in New Brunswick. The job loss in my province was 465. In Newfoundland more than 10,000 plant workers and fishermen have been affected, and in Nova Scotia at least 3,000 workers have been affected. These are ugly statistics, and the future looks even worse.

What we in Atlantic Canada face today is nothing less than a crisis, a crisis that this government could have prevented. The Prime Minister suggested today in the House that unemployment insurance was an answer to this crisis. He stated that if the UI bill were approved by the other place, it would assist fishermen who are victims of this crisis.

This is not much of a solution for fishermen facing long-term chronic unemployment. Atlantic Canadians need long-term solutions, not political rhetoric. I call on this government to put in place immediately an emergency program to financially assist these Canadians. The fishermen and plant workers of Atlantic Canada deserve nothing less.

To conclude, I support the motion put forward by my colleague and I urge this government to act immediately.

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Madam Speaker, I rise at 10 minutes to 1 in the morning in Ottawa, a bit later in my riding, with no one on the other side of the House to hear what is going on. However, a few of my colleagues are here, those who are interested, and there is a lot of back-up support in the lobby.

This is a difficult subject to speak on in some ways, and in other ways I welcome the opportunity to get up and try to show some indication of the pain people are experiencing in my riding. I have heard a lot of statistics here tonight. I have heard a lot of excuses. I have heard a lot

of non-partisanship and a lot of partisanship, but I have not seen much concern or compassion or imagination.

I would like to start with a definition of "crisis". I thought I had better look it up before I came here tonight. It is in the *Oxford Concise Dictionary,* page 225, Edition 1988. It states that a crisis is a turning point derived from the Greek work "krisis". It means turning point. In order to have a turning point somebody has to decide to do something.

I have not heard much from over there tonight to tell me what that something is going to be or what is going to be done. All I have heard are excuses. "It is not our fault". I do not see how somebody can tell me that they have been running the system for five years and that it is not their fault that we are in a crisis situation.

• (0050)

It happens to be a crisis situation in the offshore fishery that has been brought to the attention of everybody here and has us here at one o'clock in the morning, Ottawa time. There has been a crisis in the inshore fishery for the last five to six years. It is only now that this whole thing is coming to the forefront.

There are so many issues to attack and there are so many suggestions to offer up that it is hard to know where to start. Let us not talk about the scientific gross underestimation of the stocks. I am not blaming them. I am not pointing the finger. I do find it strange that it came shortly after an election, and I do find the range strange. When one estimates something at 50 per cent or overestimates it by 100 per cent, how scientific that is is beyond me. I wonder what they knew when the election was going on, but I am not going to suggest that there are things beyond our control that we can point the finger at.

The fishermen have been telling the scientists, the politicians, and anybody who would listen that there was a problem with the estimate of the 260,000 tonnes, and they would not listen. The fishermen are saying: "If you had listened to us you would not be in this condition today".

Let us lay that aside for the time being and let us look at overfishing. They do not seem to recognize on the other side of the House that overfishing is a pretty major part of this problem. If there had not been overfishing we may not be in this crisis.

In 1986 that crowd over there was managing this economy. It was managing the fisheries. What happened? Spain and Portugal joined the economic communities. That year 23,200 tonnes was allocated by NAFO. They took 140,000 tonnes. The next year they took 170,000 tonnes. Spain and Portugal were the ones that were really responsible.

This year the Secretary of State for External Affairs says: "It is going to be better. We are going to allocate them 13,000 tonnes, and they are only going to take 50,000". That is great. In 2J3KL, the area that we are concerned about in Newfoundland, NAFO is recommending zero and they are only going to take 27,000. That crowd over there thinks this is wonderful. I do not think that is wonderful. I think that is terrible, and my colleagues would say that that is terrible.

What are we going to do about that? We trade with Portugal and Spain. With Portugal we had around a $48 million deficit, so let us set them aside. With Spain we did almost $1 billion in trade last year, $945 million, and there was a favour to them for almost $500 million.

We are playing hard ball. Let us look at trade sanctions to Spain and Portugal. If the Europeans are to come over here and tell us when we can catch our seals, then at least we should be able to go and tell them when they cannot catch our fish.

What do we do about surveillance? We should know who is in our waters. Last year we had 165 trawlers—I am quoting the hon. member for Gander—Grand Falls—in our area and we had two patrol boats in the area. We had Tracker surveillance. The Tracker surveillance gives 50 per cent of the valuable, medium range time as quoted by the hon. member for Labrador this evening. What have we done with that? We have closed down Summerside and we have taken away the Trackers.

I have evidence that DFO claimed at a committee meeting last week that they were not consulted, and my ex-military colleagues say that they were not consulted. It was a decision that was made. Summerside was closed down. It was an ill-advised decision at a time when we need increased surveillance. The surveillance capability that we had was taken away.

Last year, in our economic zone we went to bat for in 1977, we had 200,000 tonnes taken inside our area by foreign ships. One thousand tonnes equals around 30 jobs a year. It does not take a Ph.D. in mathematics to work out that is around 6,000 jobs by giving away 200,000 tonnes. In the last four years the overfishing to which I referred a few moments ago was 400,000 tonnes. We are literally giving away the shop. We are giving it away. Don't worry about the scientific advice. Don't give away the stocks.

My hon. friend from Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte talked about 4,000 tonnes of fish being given to the French off his coast where the people are looking out and they cannot catch anything because of the allocation. What a way to run a country. What a way to run an economy. What a way to run a fishery.

I was surprised but it made sense when I thought about it. The first speaker up tonight was the hon. Secretary of State for External Affairs. The next minister to speak was the hon. Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. It is pretty obvious who is telling whom to do what. Domestic policy does not matter a darn here. We are more interested in kowtowing to the Europeans and making our mark in the international arena than we are concerned about protecting our fishermen at home in Newfoundland.

How interested are we in enforcing our laws? We send out a ship to patrol an American dragger that is transgressing against our laws. What do we do? We allow HMCS *Saguenay* to be rammed. I do not know what else happened. The dragger went off into American waters where the fine can be $10,000. In Canada, the same fine is around $750,000.

The Minister of National Defence asks: "What do you want us to do? Go and shoot them?" Our concern is for our people. You do not have to shoot them. There are all kinds of things you can do. I would remind the House that with a different minister of fisheries in 1985 HMCS *Athabascan* went out, followed, stopped, boarded, arrested Spanish vessels and brought them back to St. John's, Newfoundland where they were tried for overfishing, found guilty, and fined a lot of money. It would be interesting to watch the incidence of decreased Spanish fishing at that particular point in time.

I am going to make some recommendations the other side of the House might find interesting. We should rescind the Tracker decision. We need to be more aggressive and imaginative in the enforcement of our laws. We need to consider trade sanctions. Although I did not speak of it in the body of my presentation, we have seriously to consider looking at extending our jurisdiction over the nose and the tail of the bank. I think it is about time that we started to do that seriously.

Along the backdrop of Bill C-21, 26,000 people in Newfoundland are going to have their UI reduced by $2,500 and 9,000 will be cut off. We have this thrown at us, and we have GST staring us in the face. There is an awful lot of people out there tonight who are saying: "We don't mind politicians talking about this because it is going to be a rough Christmas for us".

To think that there is not a crisis, you would have to be figuratively deaf, metaphorically dumb and literally blind. We are here tonight to say that something can be done, something should be done and, by God, as long as there is an opposition on this side of the House something will be done.

Mr. Douglas Young (Gloucester): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak in this emergency debate with one major concern. I have a great deal of sympathy for my friends in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, but I do want to point out the tremendous crisis we have been going through for months now in New Brunswick in the fishery, particularly in the Acadian peninsula.

Before I get into those details, I want to say that I do not often take pleasure in pointing out individuals who have suffered some misfortune. However, I can't help but say that it must be some solace to the people of Canso and Newfoundland who are anticipating further reductions in the workforce in fish plants to see that Gordon Cummings is looking for work as well.

• (0100)

If anybody deserved to be turfed out and to know what it is like to be looking for a job, it is the former president of National Sea, who ran a company with public funds right into the sea, if I can put it that way. I make no apologies to the House for taking some pleasure in recognizing that a person who was significant in the fight for free trade, who took the money made available to him by the Government of Canada and spent it in the United States, made a mockery of the restructuring of the fisheries, that at least that individual now shares the

fate of many of his compatriots in Nova Scotia and in Newfoundland.

I listened to my friends on both sides of the House talking about the Spanish, Portuguese and the French, when they talked of overfishing. There has even been an admission in part to the effect that some Canadians overfish. One significant omission has been made, I think, and I have tried to listen to most of what has been said here tonight. That is the question of American overfishing.

I do not think we need to be delicate when we see the problems that are occurring in Atlantic Canada as a result of mismanagement, but also as a result of our not defending our sovereignty. The American overfishing is a serious problem, not just because of the incident that my colleague referred to just moments ago, with *HMCS Saguenay*. The people who know the fishery off the Atlantic coast recognize just how serious American overfishing is and that it must be addressed.

I think the Europeans need to be told that we are not a bunch of wimps who will sit around and scatter when someone talks about seals. I have had some experience in the fisheries as Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture for New Brunswick. One of the greatest threats to a new and burgeoning fishery in Atlantic Canada in my province of New Brunswick is seals. We have to defend our aquaculture industry and our salmon in cages from the attack of voracious seals. They attack the cages in the Bay of Fundy. They attack our fishery all over eastern Canada in the North Atlantic.

We worry about people who have their own problems, and this is not an opportune time to debate, but it is time we stood up and told people around the world what our fishery is about and what our communities are about.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, this emergency debate on the fisheries crisis in the Atlantic provinces is an extremely important one, and I simply want to point out certain elements that are creating an enormous amount of disquiet in my province, New Brunswick, and especially in the Acadian peninsula.

Just now people are focusing their discussion mainly on the situation in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. But I want to remind the House that what is happening in Shippigan, Caraquet, Le Goulet, Tracadie and Lamèque is also very serious. Plants have been closing there for the past few months. Madam Speaker, suppose I told you that in the past two years more than 5,000 jobs in Acadia have disappeared with the collapse of the crab-fishing industry. If we put that figure in the context of central Canada, either Quebec or Ontario, it would proportionate to the larger populations there, represent the loss of 100,000 jobs. Already this fall, 1,000 other jobs disappeared when three plants in the Acadian peninsula closed—Connors and L. Gauthier in Shippigan and Baie-Chaleurs Packers in Caraquet.

Other closures are anticipated. This truly is a crisis. With respect to the value of the Canadian dollar, Madam Speaker, people don't seem to understand how disastrous the 86-cent dollar is for exports. Obviously it hurts sales, but it also hurts all the traditional arrangements between processing plants and fishermen—the pressure on prices, the uncertainty in the industry because people know the dollar isn't about to fall.

Madam Speaker, as if it weren't enough that the resource is disappearing in certain cases, the recent decision by the President of the United States, Mr. Bush, to ban part of our lobster exports is going to cost us, in the Atlantic provinces, upwards of $30 million. In my province of New Brunswick the loss will be more than seven million dollars. The government of New Brunswick has estimated that the province stands to lose up to $130 million this year because of shrinking crab stocks and the low prices offered for lobster and herring roe.

Madam Speaker, I have listened very attentively to speeches giving the impression that no one has any alternatives to offer in this debate tonight. Well, Madam Speaker, I am going to take this opportunity to suggest that the federal government must give the same priority to the New Brunswick fishing industry as it seems prepared to give to Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, because as I have pointed out, the closures of the plants in Shippigan and Caraquet have the same impact as the closures in Canso and St. John's.

We must subsidize local fishermen who want to go after under-utilized species. We must provide financial and technical help to plants that want to diversify their production by processing under-utilized species. Madam Speaker, we must work with the industry to establish five-year development plans for each species of fish, and also to create, because this is very important, a seafood

marketing agency for each of the under-utilized species, such as mackerel and herring. As we know, the fishing industry did for a time profit chiefly from the price offered when crab was abundant, but we are going to have to encourage our plants to process value-added products, which they haven't traditionally done.

And because of the unpredictable character of seasonal industries like fishing, Mr. Speaker, the government must find a more flexible formula for access to unemployment insurance benefits, especially in light of the crisis that is currently shaking the fishing industry in all the Atlantic provinces.

[*English*]

I listened with interest to my friend, the member from Fredericton, who talked about some of the things that we need to do. He mentioned ACOA. Certainly if ACOA has done some work that has had significant positive results in Atlantic Canada, surely now the government has to look at enriching this program because when that program was put forward with its funding, no one could foresee the kind of difficulty that we would be faced within Atlantic Canada as a result of this crisis.

There are many things that must be done, but surely in these few remaining days before Christmas we do not want to hear too much more talk about relocation. Surely there is a capacity in this country to recognize that we do not want to go through "The Grapes of Wrath" in Canada. We did not do that in western Canada when we went through the drought and experienced the crisis in the agricultural community. We do not want to talk about moving people out of Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick or off Prince Edward Island because we have lacked the will to find ways to diversify our economic base.

It is not a question of being confrontational with the Spaniards or the Portuguese, or the French or the Americans. It is a question of putting forth our views and having people recognize our sovereignty and our commitment to our own people. It is a question of recognizing that this country cannot survive if everybody has to move to Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver.

If we are going to go back to a system as we had several hundred years ago when people came from Europe and fished the banks of Atlantic Canada and returned to Europe, or what if people come down from central Canada to make sure there is enough fish caught to take care of the Canadian market, we would then be dealing with a situation that no one could ever have envisioned. Surely that is not the kind of scenario that we want to paint for the people of Atlantic Canada.

I ask the government to look at some of the suggestions we have made. There has to be a way to deal with this crisis in a meaningful way to reassure people now that something will be done in the short term, not just by throwing money at the problem in the short term, but through a medium and long term plan recognizing the reduction in the resources. But what does the government have as a plan, other than simply to react and try to play it by ear, so to speak?

• (0110)

I hope that all members of this House will recognize that the crisis in Atlantic Canada in the fisheries is equal if not superior to anything that has happened anywhere else in this country. We talk about the Scheffervilles, we talk about the western farmers, and we talk about the closing of mines in one-industry towns in the north. We cannot allow this to happen in Atlantic Canada.

I would suggest that all members of this House will finally come to realize that it is going to take a concerted effort. I am sure that Canadians from coast to coast in this country are prepared to share with one another and to ensure that Atlantic Canadians can feel that not only are they a part of Canada, but that people want them to survive and to have some opportunity to thrive as well.

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to the travesty, the tragedy that is occurring in the Atlantic provinces today. This tragedy is not merely frightening, it is eerie. This government is acting as if it were on a lifeboat, choosing who may remain and who must go. In this case, the government is telling Atlantic Canadian fishermen to jump off the boat into the cruel sea so that Americans, Spaniards and Portuguese can stay on.

Something is fundamentally warped with a government that so blatantly turns its back on the people it is

supposed to represent. Then again representation is not one of this government's strong suits. Were we in a court of law and the government an independent player, charges could be levied for the premeditated, vicious butchering of the Atlantic fishery.

The devastation of the Atlantic fishery has not been the effect of nature, it has been the effect of government. For five years, mismanagement. For five years, ignoring what was going on. The fish did not decide one day to swim away. The government has simply done everything in its power to keep Canadian fishermen, to keep Canadian fishing boats, away from the fish. Keep up away, and let others have them. This is just another example of how the government will do virtually anything to get a smile and a pat on the back from the White House. Sellout after sellout, that is what this government has been doing to the Atlantic provinces.

In the last few weeks, the Prime Minister has been responding to questions, virtually every question in this area, with predictable nonsense about how terrible things were before he came into office. He has been five years in office. Five years of mismanagement of the fishery.

No matter how bad things were, previous governments never obliterated industries. Previous governments never penalized regions and previous governments never callously undermined jobs, livelihoods and incomes. Towns like Canso and Lockeport did not look forward to becoming ghost towns under previous governments.

Well, this government can now do what it does best. It can swill its own self-adulation—another community destroyed, another Canadian industry crushed and another prize for Uncle Sam.

The sellout started with the European fisheries, the Portuguese, the Spanish and the French, all permitted to make quotas which could not be met. They could not be met because they were too high. Then came the sellout to the Prime Minister's best friend, the icon of his existence, the United States.

First, the government sold out to the Americans on the fish-processing rules for salmon and herring, then on an export tax for fish, and now, with barely less than a whimper, which is so befitting, it is making a token gesture of opposition to American legislation banning Canadian lobster imports.

What happened to the promises of free trade? The Prime Minister and every single one of the Conservatives elected to office told Canadians from coast to coast that Canada would have unrestricted access to American markets. Free trade did not open up the American market, it shut it down. We have no access and that will translate into a loss of millions for Nova Scotia and for the Atlantic provinces. It will translate into the devastation and the end, again, of towns like Canso and Lockeport, one-industry towns where the fishery has been the mainstay of existence for over 100 years and more. But, nobody cares. Nobody cares on that side of the House.

Why has this government opted to pursue a policy which devastates the Atlantic fishery? Even without the American legislation, look at the record.

Look at the record of five years. Over the past five years this government has eliminated our fish processing rules and eliminated export tax on fish. It has issued licences to foreign countries and agreed with foreign allocations to catch squid and capelin, the food stock of codfish in the Atlantic. What has been the result? Plant closures. Where? Bas Caraquet, Tignish, Canso, North Sydney, Lockeport, Woods Harbour, Port Medway and Port Mouton. There are plants in receivership in Shippigan and Murray Harbour. How can these events help Canada? Plant closures, plants in receivership, the slaughtering of a national industry and the devastation of communities. They certainly will not help reduce the deficit.

Perhaps, tragically, this is the new economic plan of this government. Unemployment equals debt reduction. That is how ludicrous this government's actions are. It seems to equate decimation with good government and prosperity.

When will this insanity end? Right now there are thousands of Atlantic fishermen preparing to spend the bleakest Christmas that they can remember. There are fish plant workers in exactly the same situation. Men and women. Whole communities have no idea what awaits them or their children. It is the end of a way of life in small communities all over the four Atlantic provinces. It is the end of a particular lifestyle, a particular culture and one that is endemic and dear to the Canadian fabric.

While all this is happening, while the Prime Minister plans on having a Christmas dinner of lobster and salmon from where only George Bush can tell.

But it is not too late to correct this mistake. It is not too late to stop this heinous behaviour. The government is making a mistake but it could see the light. It could, but will it? The government must reserve fish for Canso so that the plant can stay open. The government must say no to the Europeans wishing to impose a quota three times as large as the quota suggested by NAFO. The government must implement programs to keep the plants open and help the communities that so desperately depend on the fishing industry while these programs are being established.

If there is to be any hope for the Atlantic fishing industry and the survival of these communities, the survival of a way of life, the government must impose restrictions on companies wishing to process fish elsewhere than the regions which most desperately need it. This is the knife of free trade to the heart of the Atlantic fishing industry.

In closing, I would like to say that all of us here feel we do have a special calling, that every one of us here in his or her heart knows and hopes that the work we do is in the best interests of the people we represent. Those of us who are so fortunate to be here have to take with our fortune a responsibility for those we represent and a responsibility to those Canadians nationwide, whether you are an Atlantic member, a western member, a northern member, an Ontario member. We have a responsibility to help those who are less fortunate and those who are suffering because of the economic policies of this government. Prior to this government being elected to office, the Atlantic fishery was surviving. Today, we have to help it survive and go on into the future.

Intervention may be a dirty word for the government, but as much as it dislikes it the time has come to intervene. Stand up. Show some backbone and represent Canadians for a change. Say no to George Bush. Say no to the French. Say no to the Spaniards. Say no to the Portuguese. They even respect you more. It is a damn sight surer that you will begin to get the respect you don't have in Atlantic Canada if you take a stand and stand up for the people in those small fishing communities in those four provinces clinging to the sea who have no where else but Ottawa to turn for help.

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of emotion that I sat here tonight before I stood in my place to enter into this debate. I think just about everything that should be said has been said. Unfortunately, it has to be said over and over and over again. I was going to give a speech tonight that dealt with the economy of Atlantic Canada. I was going to talk about the impact of the fisheries on places like Halifax and Dartmouth. Perhaps I will slip into that at some time through my 10-minute speech, but as the night went on and I spoke and listened to some of my colleagues, I became a bit overwhelmed with the crisis that is at hand. Yes, indeed, there are 100,000 people in Atlantic Canada who depend on the fisheries for a livelihood. That is 100,000 people out of some 2.5 million people in all of Atlantic Canada.

• (0120)

What we have witnessed in the last year is a mismanagement of the fisheries and my colleagues have said it more eloquently than perhaps I can at this late hour, but because of mismanagement, because of a government that does not understand eastern Canada, we have seen a collapse in the fishery.

The hon. member from Cape Breton—Highlands—Canso is a good friend of mine and he had a terrible task last week when he knew that his fish plant in Canso was going to close. Not only would it throw 600 or 700 people out of work, it was going to shut down 400 years of tradition in Nova Scotia. Canso will come to symbolize the death of the maritime culture. A fishing village of perhaps 1,000 or 1,200 souls does not seem like a lot. Four hundred years of tradition is a lot.

Canso is one of dozens or perhaps over 100 small communities through Atlantic Canada that rely on the fishery, that very basic natural resource. I will not give a history lesson because I think we know it, but when this great land of ours was populated from the east coast to the west, the gateway was the east and the road to that gate was fish.

The Norse came to Newfoundland because of the fish and they settled there. The first European settlement in

North America was in the great northern peninsula, at L'Anse aux Meadows, by the Norse. It was there because of the fish.

Those who are watching this debate may be wondering what all this talk is about the fish on the east coast, that it is just another industry. It is not just another industry, it is a way of life in Atlantic Canada. It is a special way of life in Atlantic Canada that is collapsing because of this government's negligence. It is collapsing because this government does not understand the special way of life of Atlantic Canadians.

I have had an opportunity over the last few years to travel in Atlantic Canada. This is a marvellous country that we live in. It is compassionate, it is diverse. But I guess my heart will always be in Atlantic Canada.

I grew up by the sea. I grew up in a small community called New Waterford on Cape Breton Island, a rugged community where people were drawn to its harbour because of the fish and settlers came because of the coal mines. They were tough men and women who settled there. In Louisbourg there are 300 or 400 years of history where people still fish today, even though with the mismanagement they do not know if they are going to be able to fish tomorrow. Go to New Brunswick, to Shediac, that very special community, or to St. Peter's, Prince Edward Island.

We are not just debating tonight some sterile debate about a few hundred or even a few thousand jobs. We are talking about the death of a culture.

I am sure some people said my colleague from Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte was exaggerating when he called it cultural genocide. It is economically based cultural genocide in Atlantic Canada. I come from a riding where we do not have a lot of fishermen but that does not mean the people who live in the riding of Dartmouth or my colleague's riding of Halifax do not have that affinity for the sea, and do not understand why the people have stayed there and why those communities in Atlantic Canada are great.

What we are witnessing, Mr. Speaker, and for all those who are still listening, is a sad, unfortunate, tragic decline, not just in the resource based industry—

An Hon. Member: Not by accident, by design.

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): My hon. friend says by design. What we are witnessing is the slow letting of the blood of people of Atlantic Canada by this government's callous approach to the problems in the Atlantic fishery.

I know that my time is limited, Mr. Speaker, but what we are seeing here is a government policy of resettlement, of taking those people from Atlantic Canada, that special and unique place with those special and unique people, and driving them into central Ontario, and into Toronto. We have seen the government try this before and it has not worked, but this time it is hell bent to make sure that this resettlement policy will be the last resettlement policy for the fishing villages on the east coast of Canada.

I started off by saying I did not want to get into a lot of the debate that we have already heard, but I know that there are probably thousands of fishermen who are still watching their televisions tonight and they are looking toward me and they are looking toward every other member in this House to give them a ray of hope. They do not want to hear more sterile debate and more talk about how members opposite are going to increase welfare payments or talk about the UIC payments that they are going to get for those men and women and for those families. What they want is real hope. They want, from the members of this place, is an understanding of what it is they are trying to say.

Fishing is a hard life. Fishermen do not make great money, although the minister of fisheries was overheard saying, "Well, you know, some of these men make over $100,000". How callous and how uncaring and how stupid can you get? Anybody who travels to the east coast of Canada, who goes into these fishing villages like Cow Head in Newfoundland and sees the difficult life that these men and women endure, the danger that they endure, would know that those statements have no place in the debate on the future of the Atlantic fisheries.

I would hope that the efforts of my colleagues, that the efforts from the members from Atlantic Canada will have some effect on the government members who like to sit down on their hands. I do not know how some of those members can ever go back to Atlantic Canada. I have listened to some of the debate tonight and most of them I am sure got up and talked the best game they could knowing that their colleagues on their side of the House were not just doing away with an industry. They

were doing away with a very special part of our Canadian culture.

I urge every Canadian who is watching tonight or who reads these debates not to allow this to be seen as just another piece of economic gibberish that goes on in this House, but that they understand it for what it is. This is an emergency debate on the very survival of our maritime culture.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing this debate to happen.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise here tonight and speak on this emergency motion put forward by my colleague for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso. I want to say that I believe the crisis that we are hearing about tonight and experiencing with the fishery in Atlantic Canada is just the tip of the iceberg.

I happen to believe this economic crisis that is happening in Atlantic Canada is about to go coast to coast and, I think, those of us in central Canada who think that we are immune are fooling ourselves because we are dealing with a government that has really passed on its responsibility to hold on to the fiscal levers of this country.

• (0130)

As I listened to the various speakers tonight, I reflected back to what we were doing at this time last year. We were debating the free trade bill. I pulled some notes together from the speeches of members of the government side who were trying to tell us that this free trade bill was going to be something great for the economy of this country. I pulled together some words from the various speakers on the government side and I tried to relate them to the fishery debate.

The bottom line, after going through some of the speeches, is that this government has really lost any ability to have the trust of the people of Canada. Government members told us last December that we were going to have secure access to the U.S. market. Last week, we heard about the directive from the president on lobster.

Last year in December they talked about new opportunities for Canadian exporters. For the first time in 13 years, we have month to month trade deficits. Benefits to Canadian consumers were mentioned. Right now every region in this country is feeling higher prices. This was the appropriate time for industry readjustment, they said. We are still waiting for the package for the fishery.

They said we would have effective adjustment policies to aid sectors needing assistance. Well, we know that did not happen. They said there was no threat to our relations with other trading partners. I have to believe that the reason we are allowing the Portuguese and the French to have unfettered access to this fish is because we are concerned about other penalties that we might receive from our trading partners.

They talked about prevention of the imposition of punitive U.S. trade laws. That is what the free trade was going to do for us. That has not happened.

There would be maintenance of the ability to establish public policy in the Canadian interest, one minister said. We have never acted so wimpish in years in our relationship with the United States as the way we are acting right now.

There would be protection of our social programs, they said, of our labour laws and our health and safety programs. The Minister of Employment and Immigration would shudder if she would go back and read *Hansard* from a year ago.

There would be the continuation of our political independence and policy freedom, another minister said, and the provision of stability and predictability in the investment climate environment. This economic environment we are in right now, symbolized by the suffering, symbolized by what is happening in the Atlantic fishery, is going to go coast to coast, because this government has given up its responsibility to take control.

They also said that there would be a high probability of net job creation. We know that is falling apart right before our very eyes. Yet it is an incredible thing that we were sitting here on the eve of Christmas. Last year, half the seats on the government side were full because they wanted to push their free trade bill through. Yet, here we are tonight while one of the regions of our nation is going through a rough time and there is one member of the government. I find it just incredible.

Another thing they said was that the free trade bill would give us a significant improvement in national income and standard of living. How could we sell that to the people of the Atlantic provinces?

I realize I have only a short time to speak tonight. Here we are one year later and all of those things that members on the opposite side said were going to happen because of this free trade deal have fallen apart.

This government cannot be trusted. I believe we are seeing further evidence of that right now, not just for the Atlantic but for every region of this country.

We have interest rates and a dollar that are so high right now that our economy is on the verge of a total flip. This crisis in the fishery is going to go coast to coast. Those of us from central Canada, or those of us who are from the west, had better wake up and think. We had better realize that we are not exempt, that we are going to go through the same suffering that is happening in Atlantic Canada. Unless we start rallying and getting behind the people of Atlantic Canada on this problem, it soon will be on our doorsteps. I believe it is time to press this government to come to its senses.

The Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister must give a directive to the Governor of the Bank of Canada to give us a break on interest rates so we can get this economy moving again. Madam Speaker, I see no alternative.

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Madam Speaker, I have sat here this evening and I have listened to some really interesting speeches. I have learned a great deal. I can hardly believe some of the speeches that I heard in this House from the other side. I could not believe the insensitivity and the lack of realization as to the intent and the import of the decision of this government in not recognizing a crisis, a crisis that has not just happened today or yesterday, but one which my colleagues have been talking about since 1985. How this government could have allowed the situation to reach this point is beyond my ken.

I would say of my colleagues on this side of the House that as they reviewed the situation, it reminded me of my having spoken to this issue in 1985–86, talking about fishermen and women, fisher people. Some of the people in central Canada and some of the journalists in my riding of Mount Royal wanted to know what I was doing talking about fisher people. What I was talking about was not as significant a crisis as the one I am talking about tonight.

When we listen to the concerned members of the Liberal party on this side of the House give the history and background of dramatic changes that have taken place in one of the most important basic and fundamental industries of this country, we realize that it is not something that just touches Atlantic Canada, Atlantic Canadians, it touches every Canadian.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs. Finestone: It is government's role to manage. This government has been absent from the field of management. I heard my colleagues talking about different kinds of fish and I do not pretend to know the industry, but they certainly talked about a variety of species that have not been caught, that are no being marketed, that are saleable in other parts of this world. Therefore, if they are saleable and edible in other parts of this world, they certainly can be marketed and sold here in Canada. Many people who live in Canada do not even know that we have these wonderful fish.

It is up to the government to have found the means to have marketed and the means to have taught or retrained fishermen if it meant fishing deeper, or using different kinds of equipment. That is what this government's role was. It was to manage. It was not to have me sit here and listen to the Minister for International Trade and the Secretary of State for External Affairs speak long before the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans spoke. Who is in charge and who is responsible? Who speaks out at the government table? It is absolutely unconscionable. He is put in third place if he is put in any place.

• (0140)

It really is a heartbreaking situation and I think that is what got to me the most. It is about men, women and children. There will be no Christmas for them this year, but what have we got for next year, and what have we got for the future? Some of them might even put out a Hanukkah bush if things would be different. But they can plan nothing for the future because what this government has done is literally close down cities and towns and villages.

I heard cultural genocide mentioned. That is a very harsh term, and we have seen what has happened in eastern Europe with real cultural genocide. But this is a genocide of a type. It is economic genocide, and it is cultural genocide when you have had a government that

has been so insensitive that it has not found the mechanism to enable families to stay in family homes.

Just remember what happened when there was a disaster in Baie Comeau when Iron Ore closed down. The then minister, Flora MacDonald, had a whole program to look after one little town, the Prime Minister's badly managed ex-company. When the wheat problems occurred out west, we rushed to their aid because our Deputy Prime Minister and many of our senior ministers come from the west.

What happens with the numbers which have been alluded to, and I do not pretend to have the numbers in front of me, but I heard mentioned over 10,000 jobs, and you look at the numbers of people who live in Atlantic Canada and do a percentage calculation, taking into account the fall-out that comes with that, and you know you are dealing with a serious crisis and a government which has not given a d-a-m-n! It is a sheer disgrace.

I would say, having heard my colleagues, just how much backbone this government has, whether it is going to talk to the Americans, shoot over the bow of the boat, whether it is talking to the Portuguese, to the Spanish, to the French. There has to be a way in the international market-place as well as in internal waters to find answers that will allow for a decent livelihood.

We cut VIA Rail so there is no way they can get out; we cut unemployment insurance so they cannot count on a decent way of life there. You cut out the possibility for welfare because the base of those municipalities is the fishing industry. What do you expect these people to do? Do we want everybody to come live in Montreal and Toronto? This is ridiculous. I should add Halifax to that.

Ms. Clancy: Yes.

Mrs. Finestone: This is no way to consider a serious crisis, and I would sincerely hope that the ministers opposite, while they are so busy patting themselves on their backs would reread the debates of tonight. There were some marvellous suggestions made, concrete suggestions, good ideas that can answer some of the serious concerns and, hopefully, people in Atlantic Canada will be able to perhaps put their heads down and go to sleep and know that there are caring people here and even the hard-hearted, insensitive government people will give a commitment to read, to think, and more important, to act and act constructively now, so that next Christmas will be a good Christmas and this Christmas they do not have to have a headache.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): Madam Speaker, it's true that it's late, it's true that just about everything there is to say on this subject has already been said in the course of the evening. I want to start by congratulating, with warm friendliness, our colleague for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso (Mr. LeBlanc) who put forward this matter for debate this evening.

[*English*]

When I came to this House 25 years ago or more, I came as a Canadian. I came as a Canadian with a notion that wherever you come from in this country, you care for those who come from another region. I come from Montreal, from the province of Quebec. But I believe that I have a sense of solidarity. We have to have a sense of solidarity with the people who, at the moment, suffer the most in one part of our country.

If we want to define what Canada is all about to the rest of the world, I think we could say it is a different kind of country, built by different kinds of people with different kinds of problems. One of our major responsibilities as Canadians is to immediately come to the rescue of some of our Canadian compatriots who are going through a very severe crisis.

I does not matter if you come from Montreal, it does not matter if you know nothing about fisheries, it does not matter if you know nothing about agriculture. You know that these two major industries must be viable. You know that these two major industries must continue to prosper, because if they do so, all of Canada will prosper. If they are in danger of disappearing, it is a great part of our country, it is a great part of our history, it is a great part of our past that may disappear.

This sense of solidarity we have to express from time to time. I have never seen a debate with so much passion, devotion as I have seen tonight. As Winston Churchill once said, when there is a real crisis, you feel it. You feel it in the nervousness and the sensitivity. I felt that tonight. That is why I did not mind waiting to say a few words even though it is very late. I wanted to show my solidarity and to tell the Secretary of State for External Affairs that it was very strange that a debate on fisheries

was addressed first by the right hon. Secretary of State for External Affairs.

I immediately caught when I saw him that he was probably ill at ease speaking before the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. That means he feels a sense of guilt for perhaps not having done more to help our compatriots in the Atlantic provinces.

It is not enough to say that I went to Europe and our trade is such that we must help them, we must not disturb our international trade, That is not the role of the Secretary of State for External Affairs. He should go time after time to Europe to explain that in the long run, it is even in their own interests that the fishing industry is viable in Canada. If there is none for us today, then there will be none at all for them eventually.

In that sense you have to explain and negotiate very tightly, very intelligently with our allies and friends in Europe to convince them that it is their goddamn best interests. I do not know if that word is regular, but I get as upset as my colleagues because I feel what is going on is tremendously sad. Young families breaking—

[*Translation*]

—the discouragement, the despair, of people who are contributing to the development of this country, who are happy to belong to one of Canada's beautiful regions. I know the Maritimes. I've been there.

How can anyone remain indifferent in the face of a tragedy like this one? Do we want Canada to consist, as my colleagues often say, of Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver? That's preposterous.

First of all we must show our solidarity with our colleagues from the Maritimes, with our fellow Canadians in the Atlantic provinces, because they are going through bitter days. It is the duty of everyone who is better off, of all luckier Canadians, to understand what is happening down there.

• (0150)

[*English*]

So, I have no hesitation in participating in the debate. I think the people from southern Ontario, when they lose their jobs, have multiple possibilities of finding other jobs immediately. This is not so with the people in the Atlantic provinces where whole families, villages and townships depend on this industry.

If it was an industry that should disappear, you would say, "Well, tough luck. Maybe it should disappear". But I do not believe it should disappear. I believe that if government takes its responsibility, if the government knows how to negotiate internationally first—that is the duty of the Secretary of State for External Affairs. After all, he asked for trouble, he spoke first tonight. He is taking part of the blame immediately by having offered to speak first.

I was expecting to learn more from the minister of fisheries. He does not need to tell us that we have obligations to our trading partners. I repeat, and will repeat and repeat again, his duty is to convince them that it is in their long-term interest that this industry remain viable in the Atlantic provinces.

[*Translation*]

Some Hon. Members: Hear, Hear!

Mr. Prud'homme: What happens in a village when the main industry disappears? These young people represent for me, and always have, Canada's living strength, because you know, if all Canadians were city-dwellers this country would not have the same vitality, the same strength, the same renewal you have when the regions are prosperous. And God knows these people are sacrificing themselves in the Atlantic. We can't understand what it means to go out into danger, day after day! We don't have that experience in Montreal, we don't have it in Toronto. In some cities people probably have no idea what it means to be a fishermen, what risks they have to run.

And here I want to express my sympathy. There was an outpouring of sympathy in Montreal when that appalling tragedy occurred at the Université de Montréal, but I also want to sympathize, and I think it is right and proper that during this debate we should spare a thought, as a number of my colleagues have done, for the fishermen who have had difficulties, because that too is a sign of solidarity.

I could have attacked the government myself. I listened to all my colleagues. I support what they said. I say it is the duty of the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) to negotiate with real feeling, because it's not enough just to say it once. Often the Europeans like to tell us how to behave here at home, on the question of seals, for example. We might also go and tell them, make them understand, invite them to come and see this tragedy. Let them come! The Secretary of

State for External Affairs has every opportunity in the world to display some imagination. Is he really so lacking in it? I wonder.

And to conclude, because you're signalling at me and you're quite right, I would like to make a special appeal to the Prime Minister of Canada. He has said to us in this House that when the people in the west experience difficulties the government knows how to shoulder its responsibilities. I recognize the importance of agriculture too. You can't talk to a Quebecker, a French Canadian, without finding, if you scratch, that he's from a farm family less than a generation or two ago, like me. I have cousins who are still farming today on the family land.

So I understand the agricultural system and I recognize its importance. And in this difficult world, we mustn't allow our agriculture to disappear, because then we would be at the mercy of others. And in international trade, we would have to pay whatever price those others felt like charging us. That's why we have to have viable agriculture in Canada, and the people in the big cities who don't understand that must be made to understand it.

But the same system applies in the case of the fisheries! If that industry disappears, we'll have to go elsewhere, when we have the fish right here. So in this holiday season I appeal directly to the Right Honourable Prime Minister, to do everything he said he would do, and more, because we cannot permit these tragedies, this despair we heard described this evening, this discouragement that must be seizing all those families. It is our duty, in the name of Canadian solidarity, to stand up, to use your patience a little, and to say that the government must intervene, and at once, not waiting for a day that may or may not dawn, but at once, as fast as it can.

[*English*]

Mrs. Coline Campbell (South West Nova): Madam Speaker, I have listened attentively tonight and I thank my last three colleagues who spoke who do not come from Atlantic Canada and who can understand probably better than the government what actually is the problem.

S.O. 52

My colleagues and I, to anybody who is just tuning in from the west, have been talking tonight on an emergency debate on the crisis that exists in the Atlantic fishery. I am sure anyone listening would see that there is a range of issues that relates to every one of us, every Atlantic MP who is touched by some part of the fishery. I know that the member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso was the one who was probably touched the hardest in the last week by the sudden announcement, and I will deal with that in a minute.

To the public, I will say that one has to remember that on the east coast, we have a divided fishery called the offshore and the inshore. Offshore is classified by vessels over 65 feet and inshore by vessels under 65 feet. It sounds oversimplistic to say, but this minister and the committee which are studying what to do with the problem were not even here tonight to hear the members from the Atlantic. I see the parliamentary secretary is restless over there, but there was no minister of employment. There was no Minister of Public Works.

Mr. Reid: Madam Speaker, I have sat here for six hours. I was the one who informed the House that we would go past 12 o'clock, and five times tonight I have sat here, in the interests of progress and in the interests of having this very important debate continued, without raising the point of order about who was not or who was in this House. I think at some point, a line has to be drawn. We are all tired, no more than me at two o'clock in the morning, but at some point, a line has to be drawn and that is my point of order.

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): On the same point of order, I, too, have sat here in the holy company of the member opposite. But I think I have a right to tell Canadians what ministers are in charge of a committee that is deciding the future of Atlantic Canadians without being lectured by the member opposite and without telling the people that I have done something wrong. I have not done anything wrong.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): It is quite late or very early in the morning for all of us. I can understand the hon. member's reaction and I can also feel for the parliamentary secretary who has been here all evening. This has been a long night. I think it has

been a very productive night. Maybe we should continue in the same mood that we have been in all evening.

Mr. Prud'homme: Madam Speaker, I would just like to refer to the point of order raised by the hon. parliamentary secretary. Maybe it is tough luck for him to be here alone for six hours. If he had some companionship from some minister, it would have been easier for him to listen to us all night because we have a hell of a lot more speakers. But that was not a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): It was not a point of order.

• (0200)

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): Madam Speaker, not only is there an offshore and an inshore problem, it is a problem for the many hundreds of communities across the Atlantic provinces and the people who have no work and no prospect of having work. It is a problem for the spinoffs in those communities; the boat builders, the other businesses, the grocery stores. All businesses in a given community are suffering the plight that the member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso has brought to the attention of this House tonight.

We have not had one new idea from the government. Three ministers spoke but I do not want to use my time discussing what they spoke about or, more important, what they did not speak about. They wanted to blame their officials. They do not say that they have been in power for five years and they are continuing in power but incorporate no new ideas in the fishery that should be growing instead of stagnant on the east coast.

We cannot even have any assistance for these plants because of the free trade agreement. The companies would say: "No assistance because our market in the U.S. would be threatened". This government has so tied the east coast into its free trade agreement on subsidies that our whole fishery will suffer over the long term in terms of money, jobs and the lack of confidence in the fishery on the east coast which the government continues to bring about with its policies.

Canso is one town, but Lockeport, Lunenburg and Louisbourg are three major centres of fishing in Nova Scotia. We are talking offshore. I will get to my own area where it is only fishing. Those were year round operations in 1977. What is this government going to do with its policy? What is the province of Nova Scotia going to do about allowing these towns to be totally cut off?

I know what happened in Lockeport. I have heard from the mayor and the people. I have followed it from the time it was closed. I advocated at that time that there be a community based allocation of fish, that the fish that had normally been landed there be left there and the community be allowed to handle the onshore plant and provide the work. If you do not give them fish, those communities have to die.

What do they get? What can the people in Canso and other areas where people have been laid off expect? They can expect a 10 week severance package and then unemployment. No other benefits. They are given three month's notice. It is inhuman that this government and the provincial government will allow anybody who has had a full, year-round job in those communities to be given three months' notice.

At least they have been given the notice. This Minister of Fisheries does not give three month's notice to the inshore communities that are cut off. He just tells them: "I am sorry, this week you have got your $25,000, then for the next six months there is nothing more". That is what happened at the end of June. That is what happened in all those communities in the Scotia—Fundy area south of Halifax.

The member for South Shore likes to say there are only draggers under 65 feet in South West Nova. There are some on the New Brunswick side, there are some on the South Shore. There are longliners over 45 feet and none of them have been working. They all appeared together, united, before the Haché committee to try to find a solution for the inshore. This minister tries to divide, tries to say there are only rich fishermen. He does not talk about the plant workers. He does not talk about the many people in the communities that are suffering. He just divides.

I said that there are solutions. They are pretty hard solutions perhaps, but this government has a chance to prove it. I think it should look at its groundfish management plan. In terms of the offshore, those boats that are no longer going to be fishing out of Canso and will be put aside should be allowed or encouraged to go for under-utilized species and have a by-catch. They should be given a community based enterprise allocation, as Na-

tional Sea has had for the last five years. They should be encouraged to go for the under-utilized.

• (0205)

It is ironic to be discussing it now, but in 1977 the Government of Canada offered a subsidy to boats to go for northern cod. Imagine, northern cod, and we are all in trouble today with northern cod. The government offered a subsidy. Why can we not do that with under-utilized species? We heard the minister say that there are 355,000 tonnes of under-utilized species but there is no market. Why do we not offer that same type of incentive? Why do we not allow those offshore boats that are not going to be able to fish and those onshore communities that have no hope from this government to be given some hope.

Give them some fish. That is all they need. That is all the communities in southern Nova Scotia need. They need a groundfish management plan that this minister cannot seem to adapt to the needs of the east coast.

What have we seen this government allow? We have seen it allow National Sea to put up a company in New Hampshire, to put up a company in France and to bring into its fleet two freezer factory ships that could keep two plants like Lockeport and Canso going. But no, we have to tell those communities that have been year-round communities that they cannot fish. They cannot work because there are no fish.

I think there is a solution and I just gave you one, Madam Speaker. Split the fleet from the National Sea and the offshore companies. Let the National Sea and those companies go to an exchange and let the fish be auctioned off. Allow them the incentive to bring in the under-utilized species when there are no more quotas. Unless you do that you are going to find that the inshore communities throughout the Atlantic coast are going to be shut down because of lack of incentives by this government.

We cannot compete with the foreigners unless we get out there and fish for the same thing that foreigners are fishing within our 200-mile limit and outside our 200-mile limit.

I do not know any people who do not want to work. They do not want three months' notice. They do not want 10 weeks' severance pay. They do not want one week after another and then to be shut down for six months. These are people, these are Canadians. We have a resource that is the envy of the world.

I can only say to you, Madam Speaker, that I have never seen the devastation that I have seen this year in South West Nova. This year there are 50 per cent more people claiming unemployment insurance because the groundfish management plan has not been able to accommodate, because his biologists do not have, in my view and in the view of many fishermen, reliable statistics. There are 20 per cent less people buying in the local grocery stores. If the local grocery stores are suffering like that, you can imagine what the other businesses are doing.

Yet this Minister of Fisheries can stand in the House and say that there is no hardship. The crisis is here. It has been here for a year. There are people who are suffering. It is not a very nice Christmas time. I know, Madam Speaker, that you are indicating that my time is up but I was interrupted by the member and I should have about another minute.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I have added that time on.

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): You have added the time. I will just close by saying it is a sad thing to leave here this week without knowing what the committee plans. We have not had the groundfish advisory committee before us. I think they will be here this week. January 1 comes and we do not know what the minister's plans are. He has not even told the House tonight what is plans are. As the member from the NDP said, if the minister shook his head harder we might hear it. This minister certainly has not had any consideration tonight for the hardships that are being caused.

• (0210)

Mr. George S. Baker (Gander—Grand Falls): Madam Speaker, first of all I want to congratulate the hon. member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso for moving this motion. As the last speaker here in the House tonight, I also want to congratulate my colleagues, the members for Burin—St. George's, Bonavista-Trinity—Conception, Labrador and Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte for the very fine presentations they have given tonight.

I knew that the member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte was about to get very flamboyant and angry when I saw him repeat what an inshore fisherman had told him. I knew then his thoughts were that there were going to be in 1990 foreign ships just off his coast while the fishermen on the inshore look out and see the boat, and the fish plant worker who has been put out of work looks out and sees that 400-foot boat, and the offshore trawlerman, put ashore, looks out and sees that

enormous factory freezer trawler from St. Malo, France, catching codfish along the shores of Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and the coast of Quebec in 1990. I knew, as every single fishermen knew who is watching the debate tonight, as every single fish plant worker knew who is watching the debate tonight, that they were very angry.

We have to draw a line here as to what fishing takes place. We were not even talking about foreign overfishing because in order to have overfishing you would have to be fishing over what you are licensed to fish. No, this member was talking tonight about ships that are licensed by the Government of Canada to fish within 12 miles of our coastline in Atlantic Canada.

You heard about the disaster of the longliner, 64 feet 11 inches I believe, from Shelburne County that tragically sank off the coast of Newfoundland just a couple of days ago. When you think about a boat that is 64 feet long coming from Shelburne, Nova Scotia, 100 miles, 200 miles, 300 miles, 500 miles, 600 miles to the coast of Newfoundland to fish, you realize that the fishermen in a 30-foot boat, the fishermen in a 50-foot boat, the fishermen in a 65-foot boat, and the fishermen in an 18-foot boat, all fish in the same zone 12 miles from our coast as does that factory freezer trawler from France that the hon. member was referring to.

It is not foreign overfishing, it is foreign fishing that we are talking about today, licensed by the Government of Canada. The minister said that these were under-utilized species. What are they? There is a quota of 16,000 tonnes of redfish. They might think that because it is called redfish it belongs to the Soviet Union. Well, it doesn't, it is what you would call ocean perch. We process it in our fish plants.

• (0215)

There are 27, 000 tonnes of Greenland halibut. Maybe the government believes that that belongs to Greenland. Well, it does not. It is what we call turbot.

There is American plaice. Now that is something. Maybe they think that belongs to the United States but then plaice really means a European flatfish, so are really confused about that one.

There are twenty-five thousand tonnes of cod. Just think about it. Just imagine if the fish plant workers in Canso, Nova Scotia, in St. John's, Newfoundland, if the inshore fishermen all along our coastline in eastern Canada who cannot get a codfish or a flatfish or a redfish because that is the fish we process. Any fish plant in eastern Canada, what do they process? They process 50 per cent cod, about 30 per cent flatfish and about 20 per cent of something else—redfish, pollock, whatever the case is. It is a mix. Add them up—16, 25 and 27. That is 68,000 tonnes. There is an average of 10,000 tonnes per fish plant average by National Sea per year. That is six fish plants. Six National Sea fish plants can be operated with just the quota given inside our 200-mile zone, licensed by the Government of Canada. That is why we are so angry.

We cannot seem to get it through their heads. They mention under-utilized species. The only under-utilized species there would perhaps be grenadier. That is a fish now that is about this long. It is a scrawny fish with a lot of needles on it. It has an enormous blown up head like some of those ministers over there.

Mr. Tobin: It should be called the Mulroneyfish.

Mr. Baker: Perhaps I should mention the poor beagle shark. That is fished by the Faro Islands in a factory freezer trawler, I am ashamed to say, called *The Bakker*.

When we talk about foreign quotas inside Canada's 200-mile zone, we are not talking about under-utilized species. The only under-utilized species off the east coast of Canada today are the fish plant workers and the fishermen of Atlantic Canada.

I will try to conclude. The government talks a lot about silver hake. Well, yes, the Soviet Union and Cuba at any moment in time during the summer, 80 miles east of Halifax, have about 50 factory freezer trawlers there catching silver hake. But they have a by-catch, a legal, licensed by-catch by Canada of 5 per cent cod. Well, 5 per cent of 100,000 tonnes is 5,000 tonnes of cod which

they can take legally. They have a 3 per cent by-catch of haddock. That is 3,000 tonnes. They have a 2 per cent by-catch of pollock. That is 2,000 tones.

The Soviet Union in its quota for silver hake off Nova Scotia has enough by-catch to keep Canso operating for an entire year. That is what we are talking about.

There is one thing about those foreign licences that really irks us. It is this. At this time when it is so bad, when our fish plants are closing, there is the problem of the inshore fishermen to consider. You have seen on television what is happening to the inshore fishery. The fellow in the boat goes out day after day and he gets one fish in an entire cod trap. He goes out jigging the next day and he gets one more fish. The stories are told all along the coastline. There are two rules in Canada today—one for the foreigners and the other for Canadian fishermen. The Soviet Union, Cuba, the Faro Islands, East Germany, Japan, Norway and Poland all get licences within our 200-mile zone this year for 1990. They can go out and have a by-catch of cod of 5,000 tonnes, and if they get 10,000 tonnes they can keep it. If they get 4,000 tonnes of pollock they can keep it.

• (0220)

When a Nova Scotian or a Newfoundlander catches one fish above his by-catch he is arrested and brought into court. In the foreigners' licence it says you can keep what you catch. The Government of Canada this year has embarked on a new program to allow our longliners, 65 feet long, to fish tuna. You can get $20,000 for an average bluefin tuna in the Japanese market. A fisherman can sometimes make $6,000 or $7,000 just selling a few bluefin tuna. It is a pretty valuable fish.

This year the Government of Canada told our fishermen that in the name of going into these areas that we are not into that it is going to give us a quota. It gave a quota to 12 boats for 175 tonnes of bluefin tuna, but it gave the Japanese fleet 180 tonnes by-catch of bluefin tuna in the same area. That is the Virgin Rocks. The Japanese get a higher quota than Canadians do on the bluefin tuna around the Virgin Rocks.

In 1990, this year, we are angry that the Government of Canada has agreed starting January 1 to increase the quotas to foreigners for what it calls the under-developed species of capelin and squid. If you were going to go out in the ocean and catch a codfish as the Shelburne County longliners do, they go out with hook and line. What do they put on the hook? They put squid, capelin, a piece of mackerel or a piece of herring on the hook. Squid or mackerel is the main fish of the codfish. Here we are, and the Government of Canada is wondering why. It has a study on its desk that shows that the size of a codfish has gone down over 50 per cent in Nova Scotia. It has gone down 40 per cent in Newfoundland. Yet the government says that there is no proof that by giving to the foreigners 150,000 tonnes of feedstock that it is affecting us.

I will tell you how it is affecting our fishery. A man, a fisherman, whether a man or a woman today, cannot get a capelin licence unless they have a certain size of boat. They are not allowed by law past this year to move outside their own bay, while the foreigners get 38,000 tonnes in 1990. They can go wherever they want along the coastline of Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, P.E.I., New Brunswick and Quebec. How much do we get? We get 800 tonnes of that 38,000 tonnes quota for capelin off the east coast of Canada.

That is why we are so angry today. We are saying to the Government of Canada that when Canadians look at all those big trawlers they say: "How come National Sea ties up their trawlers in Canso? Why don't they go outside the 200-mile zone where the Europeans are and catch all the fish they want like the Europeans do?" That is a logical question, isn't it, Madam Speaker? What is the answer to that question? The answer is that Canada has agreed not to go outside the 200-mile zone. They cannot go out there and catch what they want. They have to abide by quotas. The United States can catch what it wants because it does not belong to NAFO. The Europeans can catch what they want because they do not agree with NAFO's quotas. We have to tie up our offshore fleet. We are boxed in and we cannot move.

• (0225)

The government wonders why people are so angry. We licence the Soviet Union. Why cannot the National Sea trawlers go off the Soviet Union and fish? They are not allowed. We licensed this year 15 factory-freezer trawlers for Japan. Why can't National Sea trawlers go off Japan? They are not allowed. They would be blown out of the water by that country.

We are the only country in the world today that restricts our own fishermen and allows every foreign nation that wants to come in here and get a piece of the action. In this year 1989 300,000 tonnes of fish were caught by foreign nations. Three years ago the United States threw out the Soviet Union and the Cubans from the Alaska coast. That ended it off the U.S. coast.

The EEC has a little exchange program. You will see countries going off each other's coast. Off the African coasts if you are willing to spend a lot of money in Africa in a certain country you can go there. If you want to build an institute you can go there and fish for a year.

Canada says we will give what the minister announced tonight as our underdeveloped or excess species to foreign countries. He says it is because we have to.

The writing is on the wall for this government. It must do the logical thing. First and foremost, when our inshore fishermen have no fish, when our fish plants cannot operate, the government of Canada must do one thing and one thing alone first. That is to stand up for Canadians and kick out the foreigners.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Madam Speaker, I know anything I say will be a letdown after the great speakers who have spoken all evening. I watched the debate from my office. I heard every speaker from all three parties. I want to congratulate all the speakers who took part in tonight's debate.

We are not looking at just an Atlantic region problem. We are looking at a national crisis. That is why I am pleased that the hon. member moved this motion to draw the matter not only to the country's attention but also to the world's attention because this crisis is caused by countries around the world.

I will not take very much time because I know the parliamentary secretary was complaining earlier that he wants to go home. It is sad that he is not supported by any minister on his side. It is sad that one member is supporting the whole government side. It is even sadder that there is no spokesman here, no observer from the NDP, the so-called party of the disadvantaged.

In my riding and near my riding I have plants such as Stelco, Molson's, a chocolate factory, Inglis and I used to have General Electric. What I want to highlight is even if all of these factories closed tomorrow and laid off all the workers, it would not create the same crisis as the crisis which exists in the Atlantic fisheries because the workers from my riding in Toronto could drive one hour to Oshawa and be working at General Motors. They could be driving one hour in the other direction to Ford and be working there. They could drive another hour north and be working for de Havilland. Even though I could have six plant closings in one day, it would not hurt as much as this crisis is hurting the fishermen.

The reason I came here tonight is to show that two million people in Toronto are hurting today along with the fishermen in Canso by these plant closures. On behalf of my 92,000 constituents of Parkdale—High Park, we throw our support behind the people who are affected. We are hurting along with these people.

To close, I want to congratulate you, Madam Speaker, for being so patient and hearing all the speakers. I wish to thank the staff. Most of all I want to thank the mover of the motion and members of all three parties who spoke.

Mr. Tobin: Madam Speaker, with your indulgence I simply want to point out to the Chair that despite all the sincerely held strong views and legitimate concerns this side of the House appreciates that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans made provision for all of us to speak who wanted to speak by staying here beyond twelve o'clock.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Pursuant to Standing Order 52(12), I am satisfied that the debate has now been concluded. I therefore declare the motion carried.

[*Translation*]

The House stands adjourned until 11 o'clock this morning, pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 2.32 a.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, December 19, 1989

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

ORDER IN COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

TABLING OF APPOINTMENTS AND REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEES

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, a number of Order in Council appointments which were made by the government. Pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 110(1), these are deemed referred to the appropriate standing committees, a list of which is attached.

* * *

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government responses to several petitions.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

* * *

THE ECONOMY

STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF FINANCE

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to announce important changes to the goods and services tax that will be incorporated in the final legislation to be placed before Parliament.

The key change is that the 9 per cent tax rate, originally proposed in the technical paper, will be reduced to 7 per cent. The changes meet a number of objectives. They ensure that the economic benefits from the GST will be achieved quickly and smoothly. They maintain our commitment to protect lower and modest income Canadians. They address concerns that the GST is too complex and they achieve a reduction in the rate, in part by spending reductions that improve the efficiency of government.

Since the release of the technical paper the House of Commons finance committee has been most helpful in providing Canadians across the country with a forum for discussion and suggestions. At this time I would like to thank the members of the committee and its chairman, the hon. member for Mississauga South, for the very important work that they have done.

My colleagues in the government and I have listened carefully to the views of Canadians.

[*Translation*]

We have heard broad support for the need to replace the existent harmful manufacturers' sales tax and recognition that the GST, once implemented, will help to produce a more efficient, expanding Canadian economy. Canada is the only industrial country that still has a manufacturers' tax; 48 other countries have adopted sales taxes similar to the GST.

[*English*]

While there was broad agreement on the need for a change, a major concern about the GST was that the rate was too high and the initial impact on prices posed too great a risk of an ongoing inflationary response.

I have said all along that the rate could only be lowered with difficult trade-offs and that the careful balance of the GST package would have to be maintained. This we have done. The lower rate has been made possible by new spending restraint measures and tax changes.

By reducing the rate we are making it easier for the economy to adjust more smoothly to the introduction of the GST. I will come back to the rate reduction and other changes in a few moments.

The need to replace the existing manufacturers' sales tax with the GST is critical to the government's plan to build a stronger economy in an increasingly competitive world. We set out that plan in November of 1984. We have followed it since then and will continue to do so.

From the beginning our goal has been sustained economic growth, not for its own sake but as the best way of meeting the aspirations of this and future generations of Canadians in all regions of the country. The Canada we are building for the 1990s and the next century must be able to meet a modern society's demands for a higher standard of living and for better protection of the environment, advanced health care, adequate social security and enlightened education. Only if we have a strong and competitive economy will we be able to create the jobs, provide the services and offer the opportunities and freedoms that we have and want our children to have.

• (1110)

We are achieving the basic objectives of our plan by acting in two ways. First, by sustained action to eliminate the deficit and reverse the growth of the public debt.

[*Translation*]

And second, by putting in place coherent, fundamental changes to thè economy in order to free private initiative and to get the government out of doing things it does not do well. Initiatives such as the Canada–U.S Free Trade Agreement, privatization of Crown corporations, deregulation of the energy and transportation sectors, pension reform and reform of the income tax system and the new labour market development strategy are creating the basis for durable growth and productive jobs in the years ahead.

[*English*]

The GST is vital to both parts of this plan. It will provide the more stable and predictable source of revenues needed for sound fiscal planning and, through the growth it stimulates, will help reduce the deficit. It will remove the tax from our exports. It will put Canadian products on an equal footing with foreign competition, both at home and in world markets. In this way it will increase the competitiveness and efficiency of the economy. It will help create jobs.

I realize that implementing our economic plan has required adjustments, sometimes difficult adjustments, for many Canadians. Living through a period of far-reaching changes in the way the economy works is not always easy. Our efforts since 1984 to reduce the deficit have been necessary to make up for previous undisciplined spending, and that imposes an additional burden.

Because Canadians have been asked to do more in resolving this national problem they have every right to expect their government to manage with the greatest possible restraint. Indeed, the government bears a high responsibility to search out and eliminate wasteful spending, improve its efficiency and ensure the best value for the taxpayers' dollar. We have acted consistently to meet that responsibility.

For example, last Friday my colleague, the President of the Treasury Board, announced further restraint measures and initiatives to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of government. This is clear evidence of our ongoing commitment to good management and expenditure restraint.

While we all have been asked to make sacrifices, I am convinced the payoff is more than worth it. Our policies to encourage the private sector and reduce the deficit have already helped to produce one of the longest periods of growth in the post-war period. Over the past five years Canadians have benefited from economic growth second only to Japan among the leading industrial countries of the world. And this prosperity can and will continue as our economic initiatives take hold and pay larger dividends.

But today we are at an important juncture in our management of the economy. The overall slowing in economic activity that I forecast in the April budget is beginning to appear. This development is necessary to contain inflationary pressures and is normal for an economy that has been operating at close to capacity in recent years. Early in the new year I will bring down a budget which will provide a full economic and fiscal report.

There are a number of developments in the economy that we will be watching very closely and assessing carefully. In response to slower growth, there is some evidence that inflationary pressures may be abating, but product and labour markets remain tight. The future course of cost increases, and age settlements in particu-

lar, will be important in determining how quickly we make further progress against inflation.

Although interest rates have remained high through 1989, the current year's deficit is still on track at $30.5 billion. But inflationary pressures, and the high interest rates necessary to reduce them, are putting pressure on the deficit outlook for next year. This will require further expenditure reductions. Canadians understand how important it is that we get the deficit down. It is wrong to mortgage our children's future to subsidize our own standard of living.

Consistent with our medium-term plan, we have been pursuing two key fiscal objectives, to reduce government spending and to keep the deficit on a downward course and ultimately eliminate it.

Since coming to office we have reduced the deficit by almost $8 billion, from $38.3 billion to $30.5 billion this year. In 1984-85 our spending on all government programs and services was $16 billion more than revenues. This year, as a result of tight management of spending and increased revenues, government spending is $9 billion less than revenues.

The fiscal plan that I tabled in April shows that the deficit will be cut in half within four years. With that progress, 1993-94 will be the last year the government will have to borrow additional funds in financial markets. Thereafter, we will be able to begin buying back treasury bills and bonds.

We are committed to ongoing deficit reduction. To do so will require two things: continuing action to control expenditures and to eliminate waste and inefficiency;, and a stable and reliable tax system that is more supportive of economic growth.

Our record on spending is good. Since we took office in 1984-85 spending on all government programs through 1989-90 has grown by only 3.6 per cent per year, less than the rate of inflation. And relative to the size of the economy, expenditures on programs and services have declined from 19.5 per cent in 1984-85 to 16.1 per cent this year. If we had not restrained spending to this extent program expenditures would be $22 billion higher than they are.

[*Translation*]

The goods and services tax will put the government's deficit reduction strategy on a stronger foundation. It will replace a tax which has become an increasingly unreliable source of revenues and an impediment to sound fiscal planning.

The GST will lead to a stronger economy. It will put domestic products on a level playing field both at home and abroad. It will encourage investment. It will make our industries more competitive. It will lead to $9 billion more in economic output, equivalent to $350 a year for each and every Canadian. These gains will be shared by all regions of Canada.

[*English*]

The refundable GST credit, a payment which will be made by cheque four times a year, will improve the fairness of the tax system.

It is now three and a half years since we initiated an extensive and thorough process leading toward reform of the federal sales tax system, and two and a half years since we introduced the concept of the goods and services tax in a White Paper.

• (1120)

The GST proposal that we brought forward in the technical paper in August was a carefully balanced, fiscally responsible package of measures. In the discussion of this proposal many argued that the tax base should be broadened. Many also argued that they should be exempt. While there were different points of view of the tax base, a consensus did emerge that the rate should be lowered.

In response to this debate, and to the valuable report of the House finance committee, I am proposing a number of important changes that will ensure the GST provides the same economic benefits but with considerably less inflationary risk in the transition.

The key change is a reduction in the rate from 9 per cent to 7 per cent. We have done this in a way that will cut the one-time impact of the cost of living almost in half. Reducing this impact from 2.25 per cent to just under 1.25 per cent will greatly reduce the risk of an

ongoing inflationary response. This will help provide a better climate for low inflation, lower interest rates, lower deficits and stronger economic growth in the years ahead. In this way, sound economic, fiscal, taxation and monetary policies will work more effectively together for the benefit of all Canadians.

But at 7 per cent the GST will raise almost $6 billion less each year than it would at 9 per cent. I told Canadians that there would be no free ride to a lower rate. I said we would not reduce the rate at the expense of the deficit, and we will not. I also said we would not sacrifice the fundamental balance in equity among the various measures within the package, and specifically that we would honour the commitment to protect those with lower and modest incomes.

[*Translation*]

We have taken to heart the message that Canadians have given us about the importance of relying on spending restraint to reduce the deficit. And we have heard, loud and clear, the message that the operations of government itself should be the first priority for belt-tightening. The expenditure restraint actions announced last week by the President of the Treasury Board demonstrate our continuing commitment to greater efficiency in the management of government operations and services.

[*English*]

These measures, when fully implemented, will contribute $700 million annually to help support a lower rate.

I emphasized a moment ago that the overall balance of the GST package had been maintained. In an important respect, these expenditure measures improve the balance by ensuring that the government itself shares directly in the effort.

A number of changes have been made to the income tax elements of the package to reflect the lower GST rate. The lower rate will allow us to reduce the GST credit while maintaining our commitment to protect lower and modest-income Canadians. As before, families with incomes up to $30,000 will pay less tax under the GST than under the existing system. Some 8.7 million Canadian families and individuals will receive cheques. Three-quarters of families headed by seniors or single parents will have more after-tax income.

With the GST rate reduction and a lower sales tax burden on middle-income Canadians, the reduction of the 26 per cent tax rate is no longer required. Even without this reduction middle-income taxpayers will pay less than under the proposal in the technical paper.

Lowering the GST rate with no offsetting measures would have provided the greatest absolute benefit to high-income taxpayers. In order to help get the GST rate down and maintain the balance of the package, the existing high-income surtax will be extended to basic federal tax in excess of $12,500 and increased by 2 percentage points. These changes mean that high-income taxpayers will face about the same total tax burden under the 7 per cent rate as under the proposals of the technical paper.

Business will also contribute to a lower rate. The large corporations tax will be increased and the annual fee which would have been paid to small businesses for administering the GST will be eliminated. However, to help small business make the transition to the new regime, a one-time credit of up to $1,000 will be provided.

In light of the tough choices that had to be made in reducing the GST, it would not have been appropriate to sustain the loss of $700 million in federal tax revenues from sales and excise taxes on alcohol, tobacco and motive fuels that would otherwise have occurred. Adjustments will be made in the structure of these taxes to maintain revenues at current levels. As a result, prices of these products to consumers should not increase.

As proposed in the technical paper, the GST will apply only to new homes. The GST housing rebate, adjusted to reflect the lower rate, will continue to ensure that the government's commitment to housing affordability is met.

These measures, taken together, maintain the balance of the GST package. The tax base for the GST remains essentially the same as in the technical paper. Some modest changes to the base as well as other technical improvements in the operation of the tax are described in the technical notes in the paper that I am tabling today.

Before closing I want to touch briefly on two other closely related issues that have been the focus of much discussion. The small business community has expressed concerns that dealing with the GST would impose heavy compliance burdens. We provided streamlined accounting methods to help small business. We provided tax incentives to invest in cash register equipment to help

deal with the GST, including the announcement yesterday that the existing federal sales tax on such equipment is being removed.

The government will work with the small business community to explore further means of streamlining the operation of the tax.

[*Translation*]

We will also be working with the provinces on aspects of administration of our sales tax systems. In this regard, I am encouraged by the spirit of co-operation that emerged from my meeting this month with provincial finance ministers. In this work we will be mindful of the fact that Canadians have left no doubt that they want needless duplication in government eliminated, whether it be at the federal, provincial or municipal level.

In this and all other areas, the federal government will be continuing the effort to improve its efficiency and its stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

This commitment will be carried forward as a vital part of our broader plan of fiscal and economic action—action against the deficit and towards a dynamic, growing and job-creating economy.

• (1130)

[*English*]

None of this will be easy. It will require more tough choices of the kind that I have described today. But we must make those choices, as a government and as a nation, if we are to ensure the kind of future that we want for ourselves and for our children. That is why we intend to implement the GST as scheduled on January 1, 1991.

The bill incorporating the changes announced today will be introduced at the first opportunity in the new year.

Implementing the GST is the right thing to do. We have had two and a half years of discussion on the government's White Paper. We have had four months of debate on the technical proposal. We have listened carefully to this debate.

Today, we are responding with a balanced package that meets the major concerns that have been expressed. Now it's time to move ahead, so let's get on with the job.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, under this government, for the first time in 50 years we have people lined up at food banks at Christmas time. Does the Minister of Finance expect that these people will be grateful to him for his new tax?

Senior citizens pensions are under attack by this government. Does the Minister of Finance expect that the senior citizens of this country are going to be grateful for his new tax?

The Minister of Finance has imposed a new administrative fee on student loans. Does he expect students to be grateful for his new tax?

We are suffering one of the coldest Decembers in Canadian history and this government, for the first time in our history, is putting a tax on home heating fuel. Does the Minister of Finance expect families that can barely afford to pay their heating bills to be grateful to him for this tax?

We have more than a million small business people working hard all year and as a result of the government's economic policies they are having the worst Christmas sales in history. Does he expect small business in Canada to be grateful for this new tax?

We have people in Atlantic Canada reeling from the collapse of their fishery and they are going to be crushed by this proposal today. Does this minister expect people in the Atlantic and, indeed, in northern Canada to be grateful for this new tax?

The man who just spoke today looks like the Minister of Finance, sounds like the Minister of Finance, acts like the Minister of Finance, but can this be the same man who was Minister of Finance during the election campaign? Because that Minister of Finance swore up and down the country during the election that he would not bring in a goods and services tax unless he had provincial co-operation. That Minister of Finance swore up and down across the country during the election that any goods and services tax he brought in would be revenue neutral. That Minister of Finance swore up and down the country that any goods and services tax he brought in would not be inflationary. That Minister of Finance

swore up and down the country that the goods and services tax he brought in would not be invisible.

That same Minister of Finance promised Canadians that when he brought in a goods and services tax, he would remove the 3 per cent temporary surtax on their incomes. Not only was it not removed, there is another two points on it today. He promised middle-income Canadians that when he brought in a goods and services tax he would lower their basic income tax rate. That Minister of Finance promised business people that when he brought in a goods and services tax, it would be simple to understand, simple to administer. That Minister of Finance said that we were the only country in the world with a manufacturers' sales tax. He has now made us as Canadians the only country in the world with two separate sets of retail sales taxes, one at the federal and one at the provincial level.

None of the promises that minister made about this tax have been kept so that this performance, once again this morning is a disgrace. The minister is a disgrace, and the government he represents is a disgrace.

There are things that I would like to say to the Prime Minister. He was here for his minister, but he does not deign to listen to the Leader of the Opposition. Nor does he deign to listen to the leader of the New Democratic Party, because of his presidential style. We are talking about taxes and the Prime Minister is not here to listen to the response of the opposition.

This is the minister who presided over one budget leak. This is the minister who tried to cover up a second budget leak. This is the minister who called the manufacturers' sales tax a silent killer of jobs and yet raised that sales tax four times from 9 per cent to 10 per cent, to 11 per cent, to 12 per cent, to 13.5 per cent.

This is the Minister of Finance who told the people of Canada in 1984 that he would not raise taxes one single cent. Since he has become minister, he has raised taxes 31 separate times and this is number 32 this morning.

This Minister of Finance said during the election that while we were making election promises on this side of the House, his were not promises, they were commitments, and that he had the money in the bank to pay for every one of those commitments. Then he went ahead and broke those spending commitments; promise after promise broken right, centre, left, up and down.

This Minister of Finance has allowed the spread in Canadian and American interest rates to reach the highest spread in Canadian history.

This Minister of Finance now has the gall to stand up in this House of Commons and tell Canadians, "Trust me." I would not trust this Minister of Finance to tell me the time of day because this minister has been deceitful. This minister has been fraudulent in his treatment of the Canadian people, and now we know that he is not only deceitful, he is weak.

The minister had cloudy language drafted by his bureaucrats, suggesting that the economy was in the beginning of a slow-down. We are now on the verge of a recession. The minister virtually admitted that this morning. Yet this man is still proceeding with a goods and services tax on everything that moves, on virtually everything that is sold in this country. I do not know what kind of a world he is living in. What he should be saying and what he is really saying, when you really get down to it is: "Well, Canadians, if we are going to have a recession, let's have a real recession and I am going to introduce it to you right now this morning."

After months of hearing Canadians tell him that his new sales tax was a disaster, witnesses from across the country listening to the committee under the chairmanship of the member for Mississauga South telling him and Parliament that the tax would be inflationary, regressive, invisible, sneaky, unfair; that it would hurt the poor, particularly the more remote regions of Canada. This minister has now become the Rhett Butler of Canadian politics. His answer to all his so-called consultation is, "Quite frankly, I don't give a damn."

If the minister thinks that his 7 per cent solution will convince Canadians to accept his new tax he has another think coming. What we have just listened to is the latest act in the continuing charade. Nine per cent was supposed to be the absolute minimum, so said the minister. Now he has lowered the rate by 2 per cent. He should

have lowered this tax by 9 per cent, scrapped it, and began all over again.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, this is the same minister who increased the manufacturers' tax four times: from 9 to 10 per cent, from 10 to 11 per cent, from 11 to 12 per cent and finally to 13.5 per cent. Do you want Canadians to believe this minister who promised this morning to reduce the goods and services tax from 9 to 7 per cent? Eventually, it is quite clear that he will pursue the same policy and increase this tax later, to 9 per cent, 10 per cent, 11 per cent, 12 per cent and finally 13 per cent. It will be much easier to do because this tax will not be visible. Canadian consumers will not be able to figure out how much tax they are paying. Do you expect people to believe the minister and to trust him? Never, never, Mr. Speaker, because he has not acted in a way that deserves our trust!

• (1140)

Mr. Speaker, despite the juggling this morning, this tax is still invisible, the provinces are still not co-operating in it, it is still an administrative nightmare, it is still complicated, it is still regressive, it is still unfair, and the minister tried this morning to fool Canadians by pretending to give them a Christmas present.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, this is no Christmas present. It is not a present at all. Every Canadian is going to wake up on Christmas morning with a lump of coal in his stocking and on that lump is going to be 7 per cent.

After all these promises, this minister still has not told us whether food in grocery stores will be taxed or whether it will be exempt. In the speech, the minister tried to pretend that he was taking additional money from wealthy Canadians and large corporations. What is he really doing today? Let us look at the numbers, his numbers.

He takes $200 million from large corporations and multinationals, but he takes $600 million from Canadian small business. He takes $200 million from wealthy Canadians, but he takes $700 million from middle income Canadians, and he takes $1.2 billion from Canadians living in poverty. That is what he has done this morning.

He takes $1.1 billion from old age pensioners and families receiving family allowances. He takes $400 million from Canadians struggling to buy a house. He calls that fair. He calls that sound economic policy. I say it is a sham and Canadians are not going to be fooled.

The fraudulent aspect of this little exercise this morning is that he hopes the headlines will say that he reduced the tax from 9 per cent to 7 per cent. What happened is that all the revenue he sacrificed in that move he has restored by matched tax increases. In other words, on this morning's exercise, he is revenue neutral. There has been no reduction in tax. I want to say that to Canadians. It has been transferred to the middle class, to the poor regions, to the pensioners, and to the families with family allowances. It has been an absolutely fraudulent exercise.

The exercise this morning on the part of the minister is yet his latest confession that he has lost control of the economy, that his deficit is out of control despite all his rhetoric. This is the minister who has doubled the total public debt of this country, that is, the cumulative public debt since Confederation. He has doubled it in five years from $170 billion to $350 billion, despite the highest tax increases in the last four or five years in Canadian history—31 times. In constant dollars, the average Canadian family is now undergoing a burden of 30 per cent more tax from all sources than that family paid when this minister assumed office.

He is now at the stage, of course, where he faces a tax revolt. He did not have the courage to come out straight and tell Canadians he is going to tax them where they can see it, where they have to pay it on their income tax form. What he has done now is hope, by an invisible, sneaky tax which the storekeeper will not be able to calculate and put on his sales counter, that Canadians will not know what the score is. I am telling you, Mr. Speaker, that he will get away with this sneaky, hidden, clandestine tax.

If he had paid any attention to the universal testimony, to the almost unanimous testimony of Canadians across the country, he would have done the sensible thing this morning. He would have scrapped this tax; he would have started all over; and had the Prime Minister been sitting here this morning, I would have said scrap the minister as well.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, what the Minister of Finance has shown Canadians, if they did not know it before, is that Tory times are tough times and Tory times are taxing times.

Last year at this time we were debating the free trade deal and that was Canada's Christmas present. We have seen what has happened since we got that present, with the lay-offs on the east coast and on the west coast. This Christmas, the minister proposes to give us a real gift, he proposes to take a tax of 9 per cent on all the goods and services, the only country to have a tax on those kinds of services, that kind of consumption tax, and reduce it to 7 per cent.

Canadians will not be fooled. Canadians will not be fooled that this is a gift. The minister comes out and says: "It is tough times, but I have got to hit you with this 9 per cent tax". It is kind of like a two by four. Then he comes back, a week before Christmas and says: "It is okay, it is just going to be a 7 per cent tax". That is just a baseball bat. Canadians know that getting hit over the head with a baseball bat instead of a two by four sure is not going to be any better.

Canadians have to remember that the principle of this tax remains the same. It undermines the basic fairness of a tax system that is progressive and that takes from those people according to their incomes. This tax hits everyone on every purchase and every service. It is not a discretionary tax. You do not have a choice of buying food. You do not have a choice of buying your children clothes. You do not have a choice about many of the services. Whether you are a person on old age income, whether you are a family trying to simply get by, you do not have a choice about whether you buy those things. Therefore, the principle remains the same. The principle is, take the most from those who have the least because those are also the same people in our society who have the least resources to complain. These are the people who are struggling from day to day just to make a living, the middle income worker and the lower income worker.

What this government should be proposing is a system of fair taxation. I do not think that Canadians generally are opposed to paying taxes. They see that we have a medicare system that benefits everyone that is fair and just. Canadians accept that we have to pay taxes for that. What Canadians do object to is the unfair tax system.

While the minister will say in his proposal today that he is attempting to increase the corporation tax, catch a few of those large corporations, some 70,000 profit-making corporations that are not paying any tax. I am sure the minister is going to say: "Look at my proposal, we are going to catch some of those". Under the minister's proposal today they are going to reach 3,700 of those 70,000 corporations. That is not fair tax reform.

What this government should be doing is scrapping this tax and constructing a fair tax system and an equitable tax system.

Today the minister is trying to say to the Canadian people: "I am putting a little tinsel on the tree for you". But people who got the tinsel were those who might make, say, $100,000 on the stock market. They do not have to worry. They are not going to be taxed at source. People involved in borrowing money for mergers and take-overs do not have worry, they got the tinsel. They do not have to worry about this tax.

The people who have to worry are the people in Newfoundland whose communities are being shut down, the prairie farmers who are going broke every day, the Inglis plant worker, and the workers in all of those plants that are shutting down. There is almost a plant closing a week in Toronto.

Clearly, there are going to be more children in food bank line-ups and Canada will be a poorer and less equitable society with this tax.

The minister spoke about the inflation rate. We should all be very happy that the inflation rate is going to be half of what it would have been with a GST at 9 per cent. Let us look for a moment at the government's record on projections, because we want to see just how much we can trust what the government has told us will happen.

Canadians will remember that free trade was going to be very good for all of us, and we have had a year of that. We were going to get all those lower prices. Remember those lower prices that we were all going to get which were going to be of great benefit to consumers?

• (1150)

I remember during the election the Tory candidate in my riding saying that it will mean $300 a year, a free television for every Canadian. Canadians are not getting their free television out of free trade. Canadians are just getting their pink slips from this government.

This government proposes to assist small business. What has this government done for small business? First of all the high interest rates are killing small business, farmers, and fishers. Now they are going to be faced with the larger administrative task of having to collect this tax. Is the government going to help them out? Well, one time they say, but the small business administration fee? Gone! So much for help for small business.

The minister said this morning that because of the 7 per cent tax, the inflation increase may be cut from 2.25 per cent. First of all, that is based on the assumption that everyone agrees that in fact the inflationary effect would have been 2.25 per cent. Many economists projected it as much higher. That still leaves us with an increase in the inflation rate of 1.2 per cent, which I believe the minister said this morning would eventually lead to a healthy economy and reduced interest rates.

Surely Canadians are not going to buy this. We have been told that we have to keep the interest rate high because of inflation. Inflation is going up but the minister is saying the interest rate is going to go down. Well, the minister had better speak to Mr. Crow and tell him about his theory on the economy and the inflation rate. It certainly does not gibe with what is happening with Canadians.

This government told us that the manufacturers' sales tax was an unfair and silent killer of jobs. In the finance committee when I asked how many jobs this silent killer had destroyed, and how many jobs they projected would be lost with each increase of this unfair tax, it seems it was such a silent killer that we did not know how many jobs it might have cost.

I believe all parties agreed that the manufacturers' sales tax had certainly a very unfair element. What did the government do with this unfair tax, this silent killer of jobs? They took it from 9 per cent to 10 per cent, to 11 per cent, to 12 per cent, to 13.5 per cent. Canadians had better think about what is going to happen to this tax that the minister is presenting as fair and equitable if an unfair, unjust tax gets raised 5 per cent. What is going to happen to what the government sees as a fair tax is that in two years that tax is going to be 12 per cent.

My hon. colleague across the way said: "What about the alternatives?" Well, I would recommend to the hon. member that he read the New Democratic's minority report on alternatives to the goods and services tax. I would like to commend my colleagues for the work that they have done on this. We do provide real alternatives. Unlike our friends the Liberals who just say they do not like it, we have proposed some real alternatives. Not only have we proposed alternatives, we have costed out those alternatives and I will just mention a few.

Reform the personal income tax system to restore the objective of progressive taxation; broaden the base of corporate income tax; impose a green tax, an excise tax, to discourage production and use of environmentally hazardous goods; introduce a tax on transfers of wealth. Unlike the government that increases an unfair tax, we also recommend as one of our alternatives to roll back the manufacturers' sales tax to 9 per cent, at least until there has been real tax reform.

Canadians should also remember what has happened under this government's "tax reform". Middle and lower income people are paying some 60 per cent more tax than they paid in 1984. But fortunately for some groups in our society, wealthy families got the tinsel again. They pay 6.4 per cent less. Those are not my figures. They come from the National Council on Welfare. Since 1984, it has cost poor families 60 per cent more but wealthy families have paid 6.4 per cent less.

[*Translation*]

The proposed cuts to the tax credit for low-income families will only aggravate their already precarious situation.

The Canadian Council on Welfare study shows that the situation of poor families is worsening. In all provinces and territories, people working at the minimum wage live below the poverty line. Children of poor families are lining up at soup kitchens in every city in the land.

Just as with the trade agreement, people will not see the so-called benefits of this regressive tax. The trade agreement has been in effect for a year and people are still waiting for bargains in supermarkets and department stores. They will wait a lot longer for the savings from this tax!

[*English*]

What has happened in this last year? It is important to remind Canadians what has happened in the last year to make Canada a better and fairer place. We have had cuts to VIA Rail, cutbacks on regional development, disaster in the Atlantic with the fisheries, no forestry agreements signed to preserve our environment under the forestry. We have had, under the bilateral panel, decisions against fish processing in our own country.

If you go through the list what we see here is not the greening of Canada, but the beginning of the end of Canada. Prairie farms are in debt and we cannot process our fishing. This government has stated that it is concerned about the environment. What do they do? It cuts energy conservation offices across this country and the energy conservation budget.

This government says it is concerned with equity and fairness. What do we do? Workers want regional equity on their pay. It is fair that they get paid the same on the east coast and on the west coast. It is fair that hospital workers, some 80 per cent of them women, get paid the same as other workers in the hospital. We believe in pay equity. How does this government deal with that aspect of fairness? It sends them back to work, and does not settle on those issues.

That is what this year has brought under this government. Now we are promised that for 1991 we will be given yet another tax, a tax on all of the ordinary goods and services that we buy. That tax will affect the regions disproportionately to other parts of Canada. In the north, for example, there are higher transportation costs, higher heating costs, generally utilities costs are higher, and clothing costs are higher. In other rural regions of this country, they will equally be as effected.

The New Democratic Party is unequivocally opposed to this regressive, harmful, destructive tax that is going to hurt middle income Canadians, lower income Canadians, small business, farmers in this country, everyone from one end of this country to the other.

We call on the minister to implement real tax reform. We call on the minister not to spend some $9 million to try to convince Canadians that this tax is a good thing. Forget it! I have been in every province and territory across this country talking to people about this tax and they will not be convinced, even by a slick advertising campaign, that this is good for them.

This tax is not a Christmas present. This Minister of Finance is sure no Santa Claus. Canadians will not be fooled by a few changes, what appear to be a few measures to make us feel better. Canadians are hurting from this government's economic mismanagement. This is another example. Canadians know it. Canadians are going to be sure to tell Tories that, and so will the New Democratic Party.

* * *

• (1200)

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN GROUP OF THE INTERPARLIAMENTARY UNION

TABLING OF REPORT

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The report covers the inter-parliamentary symposium on women's participation in the decision-making process in political and parliamentary life.

I simply would like to comment, Mr. Speaker, that the question whether politics is still a man's world was generally answered in the affirmative: Yes, men have a monopoly on power. The response to that was: Politics is everybody's concern.

In my lifetime, I hope to see as many women as men here in this House, Madam Speaker.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

COMMITTEES

LABOUR, EMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRATION—TABLING OF SECOND REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Jonquière): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Labour, Employment and Immigration.

[*English*]

The report recommends 14 ways in which both efficiency and fairness can be improved within the existing refugee claimants' backlog clearance program established by the minister. Action must be taken immediately, however, to speed up the process. At the existing rate of progress, the committee estimates it will take over six years to finish all the hearings.

[*Translation*]

We have made several recommendations for fair and effective improvements in the existing program, in order to speed up clearance of the refugee claimants' backlog.

Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee also asks the government to respond within 120 days. However, considering the urgent aspect of these problems, the committee would ask that the government's response be given as soon as possible.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

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[*English*]

PETITIONS

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Madam Speaker, I have the duty and indeed the privilege pursuant to Standing Order 36 to present to this House 13 petitions, certified correct by the Clerk of Petitions. They contain the signatures of 1,276 Canadians who reside in the communities of Hamilton, Ancaster, Burlington, Stony Creek, Grimsby, Binbrook, Dunnville, Beamsville, Freelton, Brantford, Paris, Caledonia, Cambridge, Carlisle, Cayuga, Camden, Lynden, Puslinch, Oakville, Toronto, Willowdale, North York, Mount Hope, Kitchener, Guelph, Greensville, Milton, Waterford, Winona, Sudbury, Belleville, Trenton, Waterdown, and others. The petitions call upon this government to totally reject this cruel, hidden, inflationary 7 per cent solution, called the goods and services tax.

[*Translation*]

OPPOSITION TO TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS ON TAX BENEFITS FOR NORTHERN AND ISOLATED AREAS

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I wish to present three petitions which reject the recommendations of the Task Force on Tax Benefits for Northern and Isolated Areas.

Your petitioners, who are residents of the isolated community of Lebel-sur-Quévillon in Abitibi, are concerned about the recommendations in this as yet unfinished report.

Madam Speaker, the task force's final report does not contain a single reference to the James Bay and Northern Quebec Cree-Naskapi Agreement or to the final report published in October 1989 on regional disparities among isolated communities, carried out by the Government of Quebec.

[*English*]

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions to present today. The first one is signed by a large number of people from the Mont Nebo, Victoire, Canwood area of my riding. The petitioners are opposed to the goods and services tax of this government.

The petitioners call on the government to reform the tax system so that there is an effective minimum tax on wealthy individuals and corporations, to reject the current proposal for the goods and services tax, to ensure that if and when there is a broad public consensus on the sales tax measure to replace the manufacturers' sales tax, that this reform is not an opportunity for the government to impose a massive tax grab and cause the government to cease with the proposal which will shift the tax burden on to ordinary Canadians through a regressive consumption tax instead of through real tax reform.

I support the petition and I thank the people in Mont Nebo who collected the names.

I have a second petition which also opposes the goods and services tax at 9 or 7 per cent. It calls for the rejection of the tax and is signed by a number of people from the Ottawa area, here in the Nation's Capital.

EXTRADITION

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast): Madam Speaker, under Standing Order 36 I have the honour to present three petitions on three completely different subjects. All have been certified by the Clerk.

The first petition, signed by approximately 1,500 residents of southeast Edmonton, calls for the reform of Canada's extradition laws. It refers specifically to Charles Ng and other well known persons who have sought refuge in Canada to avoid prosecution and/or punishment in the United States. Those signing the petition want our laws changed so that such people could be returned from Canada at any time "after their apprehension in Canada".

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast): I have a petition signed by approximately 160 Canadian leaders from across Canada. Many of them have origin in Vietnam, and recite some of the many human rights abuses in Vietnam, including religious oppression, forced labour, lack of freedom of speech in the press and call on the Government of Canada to put real pressure on the Vietnamese government all the areas specified in the petition.

RCMP DRESS CODE

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast): Madam Speaker, I have a petition signed by approximately 45 Edmontonians relating to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police dress uniform. Those signing do not want the uniform to be changed, and I quote, "by any concessions to religious or ethnic minorities".

NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Madam Speaker, I rise under Standing Order 36 to deposit in the House these ongoing petitions that have been coming in in the interests of the National Arts Centre of Canada. They come from people across this land who are concerned that the centre fulfil its unique mandate as a showcase and an exhibition place for Canadian talent and for Canadian artists in the field of theatre, dance and opera. They hope that the problems around the National Arts Centre will be settled and that they get to work and promote the wonderful talent that we have here in Canada.

For your interest, Madam Speaker, these hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of petitions are added to those I have already tabled.

SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): I also have the honour to present in the name of the Golden Age Association members who had a coalition meeting of seniors who have serious concerns about the clawback which this government has put into the bill on new taxes that is before this House.

These petitioners state, among other things, that whereas this proposed tax to tax back old age security and family allowance benefits in part or in their entirety depends on a recipient's income, this tax would undermine the the principle of universality of Canadian social programs, and would not be indexed and therefore has no inflation protection. This tax discriminates against recipients of OAS and family allowance benefits by making them bear an unfair burden of tax, irrespective of geographic location or other factors.

They are very concerned that the threshold is not $50,000 of real income, for it may include thousands of dollars of imaginary income as the government requires the inclusion of 25 per cent of grossed up dividends on Canadian investment income to be included.

• (1210)

Madam Speaker, I speak on behalf of hundreds and hundreds of senior citizens who have the right to be heard in this House and whom I represent in the wonderful riding of Mount Royal.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I do realize what the hon. member is saying. The hon. member also knows that presenting a petition is not the time to enter into debate.

Mrs. Finestone: Madam Speaker, I did not think reading what they had written and what *One Voice* has indicated as a serious concern was debate and if so, I regret that. I will just table these hundreds of petitions in their interest.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Madam Speaker, I also have on hand serious concerns expressed by hundreds of petitioners who are very concerned about the goods and services tax. Madam Speaker, as you and I both know, the minister spoke to that tax this morning.

I will not add to what the petitioners have said except to speak in their name about their serious concern about higher inflation, higher interest rates, higher unemployment and the fact that they consider this, the thirty-second tax increase an unconscionable tax grab. Thank you very much on behalf of the petitioners of Mount Royal.

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Madam Speaker, I will make this short. I have in my hand the signatures of 5,600 people from Windsor who are already being hurt by this government's economic policies as they watch jobs and businesses cross the tunnel and cross the bridge to Detroit. They agree with my leader that this GST is the final blow that will mean more jobs lost and more business lost to small business people in Windsor. They want that tax stopped.

Mr. Alex Kindy (Calgary Northeast): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition that has been signed and certified. It contains 1,109 names of people in my riding, for a total of 9,117 from the riding of Calgary Northeast.

These petitioners are opposed to the goods and services tax. They believe that this tax is regressive. It is on the back of the consumer and it is inflationary. They pray and call upon the government to withdraw it. I support those petitioners.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Madam Speaker, as part of the same campaign to make the government aware of public opinion in this country and prevent a 700 per cent increase in a sales tax Canadians refuse to accept, I would like to table a dozen petitions from my riding, from Canadian men and women who are absolutely shocked by a government that lacks the integrity to govern this country as it should be governed and wants to impose a tax on Canadians that will be a hidden tax, a tax that will be regressive, that will increase inflation and unemployment to unacceptable levels. These people earnestly call on Parliament to abolish this tax outright and make the government stop pretending to Canadians that reducing the tax from 9 per cent to 7 per cent is a nice Christmas present. This is false!

[*English*]

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Madam Speaker, I have the honour and privilege to table petitions in the House today bearing the names of 292 residents primarily of northwestern Ontario, residents of Beardmore, Pickle Lake, Kakabeka Falls, the Thunder Bay area, as well as Milton, Richmond Hill, Midland, Hamilton and Scarborough, Dorion, Ontario, R and R Engine Rebuilding, Upsala, Ontario, Ram Realty, Dale's Service Centre, Galaxy Lanes, and the Upsala General Store.

These petitioners totally reject any regressive consumption tax whether it is 9, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2 or 1 per cent. They want zip.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur): Madam Speaker, I have a number of petitions that conform to Standing Order 36. The people in my riding are against the new tax the Conservative government wishes to introduce today.

[*English*]

A number of these petitioners come from my riding and are opposed to the goods and services tax that the government is planning on introducing. These people come from various parts of my riding, such as Dalhousie, Val-d'Amour, St. Castin, Kedgwick, Campbellton,and Charlo, which makes up practically the whole riding, as well as a number of places that I have not mentioned. I call upon the government to listen to these petitioners and withdraw this goods and services tax.

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Madam Speaker, it is my privilege to rise this morning pursuant to Standing Order 36 to present a petition on behalf of people who are opposed to the—well, politely—the GST.

Some hon. members: Go ahead and say it.

An hon. member: Canadians want to hear it.

Mr. Fisher: No, that is fine. We will leave it at that for this time.

They point out the government's lack of regard for bringing in a sales tax which is judged according to people's ability to pay. They point out that it has not addressed the unfair way the government has applied the present taxation system we have which at least is progressive, whereas the general sales tax is a very regressive tax.

They point out that if we are going to have a sales tax, let us have one that does address people's ability to pay. It does not make any difference to them whether it is 7 per cent, 9 per cent, 5 per cent or 11 per cent, they do not want to have anything to do with the GST.

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, the attached petition is certified correct as to form and content.

This petition is signed by 70 residents who state that the Minister of Finance's proposed goods and services tax is an unfair form of taxation because of its lack of regard for the taxpayers' ability to pay. They say that the government has not addressed the unfair taxation system currently in place which permits wealthy Canadians and corporations to pay little or no federal tax while forcing lower and middle income taxpayers to pay more of the national tax burden.

They are calling for the abolition of this tax proposal and that the government not proceed with the goods and services tax.

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to stand in the House today and present petitions with the names of over 3,000 individuals from my riding of Dartmouth and the communities of the city of Dartmouth and the communities of Cherry Brook, Preston and Eastern Passage, as well as surrounding communities who petition this House and this government to drop its regressive goods and services tax proposal which we have heard about today in the House.

The petitioners find it unpalatable that a government would, without consultation, have the thirty-second attack on their wallets. Even with the news here today about 7 per cent instead of 9 per cent, they equally are loud in crying out that this is an unfair tax and they humbly ask the government and this Parliament to drop these measures.

Mr. Jack Whittaker (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure today to rise pursuant to Standing Order 36. I think it is appropriate today that this petition be put before the House. It is from 624 residents of the riding of Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt.

It shows that the people in the larger communities such as Penticton as well as those in smaller communities such as Keremeos, Coste and Okanagan Falls and the medium sized communities in my riding of Osoyoos and Oliver are against and strictly opposed to a goods and services tax in any form.

They state in the petition that the government has not addressed the unfair taxation system currently in place which permits wealthy individuals and corporations to pay little or no federal tax while forcing lower and middle income taxpayers to bear more of the national tax burden.

They ask and call upon the government to cease with this proposal which will shift the tax burden onto ordinary Canadians through a regressive consumption tax instead of through real tax reform.

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Madam Speaker, I rise today to present petitions from 129 constituents of my riding of Willowdale.

All of these petitioners are deploring the government's goods and services tax. The government has stated that this tax is good medicine for Canadians. Not one of my constituents has come forward and said, "Peterson, support this tax because it is good for us". Just the contrary.

I am very pleased to present this petition to the House of Commons, along with the thousands of others already presented.

• (1220)

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Madam Speaker, I have the privilege to present pursuant to Section 36 a number of petitions. One petition has over 60 pages of signatures plus another 40 pages of signatures that became unattached from the petition and therefore are not properly filed. These are from people in my riding of Surrey North who say that the proposed goods and service tax is an unfair tax and should be withdrawn. They request that the Minister of Finance stop propos-

ing a shift in the tax burden to ordinary Canadians and come in with real tax reform.

I have a petition from residents of Surrey North requesting that the government abandon its plans to scrap VIA Rail and to provide additional financing for the upgrading of VIA Rail equipment sufficient to carry on a proper rail transportation service.

Madam Speaker, I have another final petition from the residents in my riding concerning their views on abortion.

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition on behalf of residents of the city of Toronto who, like so many hundreds of thousands of other Canadians, are objecting to the proposed goods and services tax. It is clear that their objection is not based only on the high level of the tax which was mitigated by the minister's announcement today, but by the fact that it is a hidden tax, by the fact that it bears unfairly on ordinary, low and middle-income Canadians, by the fact that it can make the economic conditions that Canada is facing now even worse. I am very pleased to put this petition forward on behalf of my constituents and others from the city.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Madam Speaker, I am proud to present a petition on behalf of what now is over 4,000 people from the Kamloops constituency. This petition comes from residents of Blue River, Avola, Vavenby, Birch Island, Middle Fork, Clearwater, Barrier, Heffley Creek, Pinantan Lake, Darfield, McClure, Chase, Monte Creek, Monte Lake, Pritchard, Westwold, Savona, Logan Lake, Vinsulla and Kamloops.

I present them all today as an indication of the outrage that people of the Kamloops constituency feel regarding the government's intention to proceed now with this goods and services tax. They were hoping that the government would not proceed and would tell the people at Christmas that it decided to listen to them and back off. They are asking the Parliament of Canada to do whatever we can as members of the opposition to bring the government to its senses, to back off on this tax which is brutal, cruel, regressive. They encourage the government to go back to the drawing board and introduce tax reform that is real tax reform where everyone actually pays their fair share.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Madam Speaker, what I have to present this morning is approximately 2,000 signatures from Essex—Windsor from the following communities: Windsor, Essex, Ruthven, La Salle, Woodslee, Maidstone, Belle River, Cottam, Stoney Point, Amherstburg, Tecumseh and a great many rural parts of the constituency.

This petition as with those of my colleagues suggests that this announcement this morning by the Minister of Finance is a snivelling attempt to retreat which is simply unacceptable. These petitions suggest that this goods and services tax, because of its unfairness, because of the way in which it will hurt our economy, has to be rejected and eliminated.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I am pleased to present a petition signed by a number of residents of Ottawa who are extremely displeased with the government's proposal to introduce a GST or a goods and services tax which should really be called the grief and suffering tax.

These Canadian citizens are objecting to this tax at 9 per cent, 7 per cent or any other per cent because it is higher that the present tax which is 0 per cent.

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Madam Speaker, as we had confirmed for us this morning—in the words of the famous breakfast cereal ad—"Mikey likes it". But the people of Canada do not.

I have here another 3,247 signatures of Canadians, each of whom petition the government to reject the proposal for a goods and services tax, to reform the taxation system so that there is an effective minimum tax on wealthy individuals and corporations, to ensure that if and when there is broad public consensus on a sales tax measure to replace the manufacturers' sales tax that this reform not be an opportunity for the government to impose a massive tax grab, and to cause the government to cease with the proposal which will shift the tax burden on to ordinary Canadians through a regressive consumption tax instead of real tax reform.

These Canadians, most of whom live in Edmonton, live as well in the Alberta communities of Spruce Grove, Tofield, Red Deer, Delburne, Innisfail, Lacombe, Sylvan Lake, Sherwood Park, Hinton—lots of them from Hinton—Grande Cache, Stony Plain, Vermilion, Rycroft, Sundry, Whitecourt, Calgary, Jasper, Drayton Valley, Warburg, Buck Lake, Okotoks, St. Albert, Barrhead,

Rocky Rapids, Evansburg, Lodgepole, Leduc, Redcliff, Wainwright, Winterburn, Morinville, Devon, Didsbury—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): A point of order, the hon. member for Essex—Windsor.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Madam Speaker, I hesitate to bring it to the attention of the Speaker, but I think that it is not only proper but required within the rules for somebody to indicate the places from which signatures have come.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I think the hon. member, who has been here for quite awhile, knows that when presenting a petition the hon. member should make a short summary of what the petition is about. I do not think we should go into a geography course with each and every petition.

On a point of order, the hon. member for Edmonton East.

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): Madam Speaker, it would have been possible for me to present each of these collections individually noting a short list in each instance and achieving the same end but, in fact, what I am attempting to do here is save the time of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The hon. member for Kitchener.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. John Reimer (Kitchener): Madam Speaker, I also have the honour of presenting a petition containing some 7,000 signatures from right across Canada. This, if added to a similar petition that I put earlier containing the signatures of some 195,000 Canadians from across Canada, brings to a total of 202,000 people who are calling upon Parliament to enact legislation that would truly and effectively protect the life of the unborn child from conception.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Madam Speaker, I am pleased today to rise under Standing Order 36 and present a petition signed by many concerned Canadians who object to the proposed goods and services tax.

They say that it will cause serious and unfair hardship to lower and middle income Canadians, that it will cause higher inflation, higher interest rates and higher unemployment.

They pray and call upon this Parliament to reject this goods and services tax.

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Madam Speaker, this certainly seems to be the day for petitions against the goods and services tax and I would certainly also like to submit my 160-odd petitions with almost 12,000 names. The problem is that I have already done so.

My second instalment is not yet ready. It seems that the Clerk of Petitions must be somewhat bogged down in the process.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Madam Speaker, I would like to present to the House today, on a slightly different topic, petitions signed by 240 residents from the communities of Enderby, Sicamous, Malakwa, Salmon Arm, Sorrento, Grindrod and Canoe in the constituency of Okanagan—Shuswap. These petitions have been signed with regard to the government's program or proposed cuts to the VIA Rail services. I might also add that these communities surround an area on the trackage of our national railway system. These petitions have been signed and are in regard to the government's proposed cuts to VIA Rail services.

• (1230)

I might also add that these communities surround an area of trackage on our national railway system at Craigellachie, which is the spot where the last spike was driven. They are particularly concerned about the loss of VIA Rail services in our communities as a result of the proposed cuts and are asking the government to reconsider the proposed cuts to VIA Rail.

FOREST RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENTS

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions I would like to table in the House today pursuant to Standing Order 36.

The first one is signed by residents, primarily of Prince George, B.C. and of Dawson Creek, B. C., who express

their concern and their support. They call upon Parliament to renew immediately the Forest Resource Development Agreement between the Government of Canada and the province of British Columbia.

I know they would join with me in urging the government to put as much effort into our forests as it does into taxing Canadians.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Madam Speaker, my second petition relates to the goods and services tax. It is signed by residents of the central interior of British Columbia.

They call upon Parliament to reject the current proposal for a goods and services tax and what the minister spoke about this morning and to reform the taxation system so that there is an effective minimum tax on wealthy individuals and corporations and we can be sure to turn off the clock on these Tory tax times.

Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk): Madam Speaker, I rise under Standing Order 36 to present a petition to this House signed by well over 3,000 of my constituents. They signed it at the Caledonia Fair and at the Norfolk County Fair.

They call on this government to reject outright the goods and services tax. These petitioners do not care if it is a 9 per cent tax or a 7 per cent tax. They want this House to reject this tax openly.

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Madam Speaker, I rise today like other members on both sides of the House to present once again a petition with respect to the GST.

Canadians are certainly outraged at the tax this government is forcing through. They call on the government to address the unfair tax system currently in place which permits wealthy individuals and corporations to pay little or no federal sales tax while it forces lower and middle income taxpayers to bear more than the national tax burden.

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Madam Speaker, I have a second petition with respect to the removal of oats from the Canadian Wheat Board.

Farmers in Saskatchewan are concerned about the future of orderly marketing in the country. They call upon the government to replace oats under the jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board and to give oats and barley the same protection that wheat presently enjoys under the Canadian Wheat Board Act.

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Madam Speaker, I rise pursuant to Standing Order 36 to present a petition from some friends in northern Ontario, in particular Thunder Bay, who join with many thousands of people from my riding in Sault Ste. Marie to say to the government: "Scrap the GST."

A recent informal poll in northern Ontario shows that 100 per cent of the people in northern Ontario are against this tax. The government is not listening on GST or anything.

We ask the government to scrap the tax immediately.

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Madam Speaker, I have here petitions from small business people, from workers in my riding, and from people who feel very strongly the outrage many people have spoken of today at the 9 per cent goods and services tax. I am sure it is something which they will feel when they find out that it has now been reduced to 7 per cent. It is still not serving the interests of our communities.

The petitions have been certified under Standing Order 36. I would table them for consideration.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Rocheleau (Hull—Aylmer): Madam Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 36, I wish to table two petitions signed by 740 residents of the riding of Hull—Aylmer who object to any kind of goods and services tax. This morning I thought the government had understood but I was wrong. So I still want to table these petitions, if you have no objection, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Della Noce: We understand! We are listening!

[*English*]

POINT OF ORDER

REJECTION OF PETITIONS

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, I rise briefly on a point of order concerning petitions. I had submitted a series of petitions to the Clerk of Petitions which have been rejected because, and I quote, "The prayer is making requests of the federal government, not of Parliament. The Royal Commission is a creature of the government, not of Parliament".

In reviewing the wording of the petition it starts with the normal prayer, "Wherefore the undersigned your petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to declare a moratorium in its announced service cuts to VIA Rail—", and it goes on from there.

I would request that you, Madam Speaker, undertake to review this particular petition and its wording in concert with the Clerk of Petitions to see whether in fact the intent of the rules are met by the wording of the petition, although there may be the odd word that is inappropriately used. I would ask for reconsideration on this matter .

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I can assure the hon. member that we will have a second look at the petition and come back to the hon. member as soon as possible.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Albert Cooper (Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Shall all questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Last week I brought to the attention of the parliamentary secretary that a question on the Order Paper under my name was already over 45 days old. At that time the parliamentary secretary had undertaken to verify it and to ensure that I would be receiving a prompt rely.

Perhaps he could now give his indication as to when this question will be replied to.

Mr. Cooper: Madam Speaker, I did check into the hon. member's question. We are working on it and we will do our very best to get it answered before the House rises for Christmas.

I must tell him, though, that because of the amount of information requested it is taking a fair amount of time to assemble it all. We will certainly do our best to get it here as quickly as we can.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

INCOME TAX ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed from Friday, December 15, consideration of Bill C–28, an Act to amend the Income Tax Act, the Federal–Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Federal Post–Secondary Education and Health Contributions Act, The Old Age Security Act, the Public Utilities Income Tax Transfer Act, the War Veterans Allowance Act and a related act, as reported (without amendment) from a legislative committee; and Motions Nos. 4, 6 and 7.

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Madam Speaker, yesterday when we were discussing the time allocation motion on Bill C–28 I tried to educate my friends opposite about the negative effects this bill would have on Canadians.

Yesterday I referred to what would happen with two senior citizens, one who spent all his life and the other who saved all his life. One had a fairly healthy retirement income because he scrounged and planned well. The other one had one heck of a time. I showed yesterday, and I hope the members opposite had time to reflect on what I said, how regressive and how poorly founded in fact this particular piece of legislation is.

Mr. Boudria: And they didn't understand.

Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth): Perhaps a few of them did. I hope a few of them got some phone calls yesterday

after my speech to say, "Hey, you had better review your position on that particular piece of legislation."

Since the government had its way yesterday, which it usually does when it has a majority, it pushed through some legislation under time allocation so that the Canadian public would not hear the true debate they want to take place in this House about this regressive act. I am back on my feet today to speak specifically on the report stage and on some amendments that have been put. I believe they are Motion Nos. 4, 6 and 7.

• (1240)

Motion No. 4 was put by one of my colleagues. That would be my colleague from Ottawa South who sits next to me and who has many times risen to his feet in this debate to stand up for the senior citizens of Canada who will be assaulted by this particular piece of legislation.

Yesterday, I started to tell my story about what would happen with two individuals who chose two different routes in life but started off with the same incomes. Today I want to expand upon that a little, because I am afraid that yesterday only those senior citizens who are going to be affected now are going to be concerned about this bill.

I mentioned that on May 9, I believe it was, the Leader of the Opposition got up. He had reviewed the government's leaked budget papers. He had seen something referred to as CPI minus 3. CPI minus 3 seems like an innocuous few letters and a number that does not quite mean very much. CPI minus 3 means an awful lot and should mean an awful lot to those working Canadians who are currently planning their retirement.

What CPI minus 3 means is that there will not be full indexing of the measures in Bill C-28. That is what it means. It means that it will be indexed to the inflation rate minus 3 per cent.

On May 9, the Leader of the Opposition asked the Minister of Finance: "What exactly does this mean? What does this mean to Canadians who are planning their retirement income now?"

I spoke about those senior citizens who will have clawed back and scratched back and gouged back some of their pension income that they expected to receive. Now I will talk about some of those other Canadians who are 35, 45, or 55 years of age and have to be concerned about this particular piece of legislation. They should be concerned because of the CPI minus 3.

I am going to go back and quote a question from the Leader of the Opposition to the Minister of Finance on May 9, as reported at page 1492 of *Hansard*. Referring to the Minister of Finance he asked:

> I want to use his formula which he cutely calls CPI minus 3. Using his formula, will the minister confirm that 55-year old Canadians whose incomes are currently $25,000 a year as a result of inflation will have their old age pensions taxed back at age 80?

That is a pretty serious flaw in this legislation. Nobody would ever expect that their government would be so cruel and callous to intentionally do that to them.

The answer from the Minister of Finance was all huff and puffery. He knew that the Leader of the Opposition had found out what he was trying to do. This provision, CPI minus 3, means that by the time people currently making $25,000 a year or is looking at a pension income of $25,000 a year at age 55 turns 80, they will have all of their old age security taxed back. The government plays a cute game. They use $50,000 like it is the end of the world, that if somebody makes $50,000 a year, they are wealthy, they are rich.

Yesterday, I and other members from this side blew apart that particular falsehood. If there is anybody out there still saying that $50,000 seems like a lot and is 55, then he should think about an income of $25,000. Anybody who looks at an actuarial table could tell us that Canadians are living longer. The average life span for males is something like 77 and for females it is 79, and it increases every year. We can reasonably expect, if one is 55 today, it is not far-fetched to talk about living well past the age of 80.

As a matter of fact, I read a recent article in a news magazine. It was an American article which talked about the growth of centenarians, those in our society who are over 100 years of age. This is the fastest growing age group in North America. By the year 2025, it was estimated in the article, there will be 1.6 million North Americans over the age of 100.

When people sit back and say "well, this bill is not going to affect me; I am 55 and 80 is a long way off", they should just think about trying to plan their retirement knowing that at age 80, when they are not capable of working or are in their retirement years by choice, the pension income they had come to expect has been taxed back because of the actions of this government in this Bill C-28 in December 1989. The negative effects of this

bill will ripple through the next 40 or 50 years, if the bill is not changed, is passed and any other Conservative government tries to keep the bill as law.

There was another thing the Leader of the Opposition asked that day. He put forth a second hypothetical scenario. Just so we know that we are not only dealing with 55-year-olds, 65-year-olds and 75-year olds, he asked the minister whether he would confirm that 45-year old Canadians whose incomes were $18,000 would as a result of the same formula have their old age pension taxed back at age 80. That is the fact. Taking into account the average rate of inflation over the last number of years, by the time somebody who makes $18,000 and is 45 years of age reaches 80 years of age, $18,000 will be the threshold.

I cannot think of another bill I have seen in this place that has had such a far-reaching impact on the future. The government does what it always does: It tries to hide the effects. It never comes forward and says: "Listen, we are going to end universality. We are going to try to get out of the old age pension system. We are going to tax everything back".

The government tries to put it in legalese language, to hide it with 57 or 58 other changes in the Income Tax Act and other related acts, and to hope that people on this side of the House will not do their homework and find out what is its true agenda. The people on this side of the House have done their homework. We know what is the government's true agenda. That is why we are vigorously opposing this particular piece of legislation.

Motions were put forward by my colleague from Ottawa South. The effect of Motion No. 4 would be to strike out in clause 48, lines 1 to 40, at page 46. In effect what this motion would do is destroy the clawback, the main intent of this bill and of this government's devious acts against those trying to plan their retirement income, not just those of today but those who will be retired in the future.

I am a realist. Unless my comments and the comments of the seniors and other concerned Canadians around the country have had an effect, I know the government will push forward with this piece of legislation to pull back what Canadians have a right to expect from their government. That is why I rise today to support Motion No. 4 on behalf of my colleagues, on behalf of seniors, on behalf of working people in my riding, and on behalf of all other Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Charles DeBlois (Montmorency—Orléans): Madam Speaker, I would like to contribute to this debate on the report of the parliamentary committee which is involved in clause-by-clause consideration of Bill C-28, to remind my colleagues and especially the people watching, that this clawback measure is basically a progressive one. I am astonished that our friends opposite are trying to protect the rich. Essentially, this measure is aimed at the people who are best able to bear it and at making them help us put the country's finances back on track, while leaving the principle of universality intact.

The Canadian Council on Social Development said last year that the advantage of the clawback was that it was possible to achieve a saving while enhancing the progressive aspect of social programs and leaving the controversial principle of universality untouched. Most proponents of universality feel that benefits should be distributed progressively. The higher your income, the less you should receive and vice versa. The clawback does not jeopardize universality. Seniors and parents will continue to get their old age pension cheques and family allowances whatever their income, but the clawback reduces the net value for high-income beneficiaries.

• (1250)

I think that is very important. In practice, for those listening to us, it means people whose gross income is over $70,000.

I recently had the opportunity to visit seniors in my riding. I talked to them and was not afraid—we are accused of not being open. I am not afraid to talk about this clawback. When I questioned people, no one I spoke to was affected by this measure.

So I say, Let us stop this witch hunt, let us stop frightening seniors again. We are asking the most fortunate in our society to help us reach our goal of restoring our public finances, which we are striving for courageously.

I wanted to make this clarification, Madam Speaker, to help those following this debate see both sides and realize that we are not attacking universality of social programs, but asking the rich, from high-income individuals, to do more for the good of the public treasury.

[*English*]

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Madam Speaker, I, too, rise to support the amendment brought forward by my colleague from Ottawa South.

Like so many other Canadians I am outraged that this government has unilaterally decided to send our tradition of universality of social programs down the slippery slope. I am speaking specifically of the clawback of which this Conservative government is so proud.

The arguments put forward for the clawback are superficially convincing. On the surface they appear to be rational, economically sound and even workable. However, much like the Communist system, the demise of which we have all been watching with great interest over the past month, in practice this theory, too, is unworkable because it is overlooks the element of the individual.

We are seeing today the demise of a system which appears on the surface to be grounded in principles of social equity and social justice. However, this system overlooks the human factor. Human beings are not complacent. They are ambitious and they have initiative. Totalitarianism overlooks these factors and subsequently is now beginning to collapse world-wide.

Thus we should learn from the examples around us and endeavour to make our own system more human, more open and more compassionate. Here in Canada the government uses similar non-human reasoning to justify the implementation of the clawback. They say the rich do not need it, why waste the money? Upper income pensioners and upper income parents should not receive social benefits, it is argued.

This is a strong persuasive argument on which the government bases its new policy. Let us analyse this argument to see how erroneous it actually is. The government claims that the clawback will only hit affluent families, but the truth of the matter is very different. The truth of the matter is that a family with two children and one income in excess of $50,000 will pay back all its family allowances as a result of this policy. Such a family can hardly be called affluent by the rational person, but by this government it would be.

To complicate this scenario, what if this particular family lives in Toronto or Vancouver where the cost of living is astronomical? This family would still have to repay all of its family allowance.

Clearly, the threshold set by the government is too low. Even if we were to accept the argument, what would be a fair threshold, $60,000, $70,000, $100,000? The answer is simply none. There is no fair threshold because each family's specific circumstance is different. This government has shown that it is incapable of understanding the unique circumstances of any Canadian family.

Certainly, there will be those families which do not need the added benefits but the number of such families is marginal at best. In trying to create one standard which binds all families in a certain income category this government is running the danger of catching hundreds, if not thousands of others, in the same net who are deserving and in need of the benefits.

We find ourselves in a dilemma. Should we eliminate universality, save a few dollars and deprive many families of their deserved and needed benefits? Or should we be realistic and allow some families who do not particularly need the benefits to collect those benefits and ensure that all those families who need the benefits will receive them? Should we just tax back those benefits in the normal way rather than clawing them back in a way which is contrary to all the traditions of Canada and Canadian social programs? The answer for any reasonable and compassionate person is that we do not support the clawback.

I do not understand why this government is obsessed with destruction and devastation. It seems that at every turn the government wants to dismantle viable national institutions, our history, our infrastructure, the kinds of things that have made us unique on the world stage as Canadians, the kinds of things that every member in this House in his or her secret soul is proud of, even our Minister of Finance, all in the name of deficit reduction. My colleague from Winnipeg St. James in a previous debate talked about canonizing the deficit reduction.

Well, it is canonized all right. It is canonized at the expense of individual Canadians.

The government is slashing social spending, dismantling VIA Rail, butchering UIC and now clawing back the benefits which families and seniors so desperately need.

What of old age pensions? Once again, members of the Conservative Party is going after our senior citizens. They tried it once before when they tried to deindex old age pensions and they were stopped in their tracks. The seniors of Canada would not have it then and they will not have it now. It is not bad enough that many seniors are unable to enjoy a decent standard of living as if that, in itself, was not one of the greatest black marks on the escutcheon of our country, this government is proposing to claw back old age pensions and run the danger of further impoverishing Canadian seniors.

Let us take the case of an elderly woman who lives off the interest from the proceeds of the sale of her family home. The interest may be enough to live comfortably. Yet because she is capital rich her old age pension will be clawed back, above and beyond the income tax she is paying on her interest income. We run the same danger with old age pensions as we run with family allowance benefits. That is, how can this government propose to create a scheme whereby only the few who truly do not need the benefits are exempt, again, without catching in the same net many others who need the benefits. It simply cannot be done.

Worse yet, worst of all is the abandonment of the traditional principles of universality which are based on the respect of the dignity of every individual Canadian. This abandonment will lead to a greater disparity between rich and poor. It will define lines of the needy and the not needy. It will ghettoize those families and seniors who receive the benefits particularly in the case of seniors, to the point where they will suffer even more because their pride will not allow them to seek such social programs as the guaranteed income supplement to help them get through. Why? Because if everyone does not get it, then as far as they are concerned it is a stigma to take it.

If we can do that to people who have spent their whole lives building this country, then we are not the heirs to the tradition of Canada that I hoped we were.

This brings me once again to the human factor of which I spoke earlier. Canadians are proud people, and rightly so. Canadians are also generous and tolerant. It is for this reason that we have believed in universal programs such as medicare.

We do not deny medical care benefits to someone who earns above a certain income. We do not deny these benefits because we believe that medical benefits should be available to everyone and there should not be a price placed upon an individual's health. The same principle applies uncategorically to family allowance and old age pension. There can be no price placed on the struggles of a family nor can there be any price placed on the dignity of our senior citizens, most of whom, if not all of whom, have contributed to this program.

• (1300)

In closing, universality is not, contrary to the opinion of this government, a dirty word. It is a proud word, it is a good word and, over and above all that, it is a Canadian word. Universality involves concepts of tolerance, fairness, equity and dignity. I have trouble understanding why this government finds such qualities so repugnant. I have trouble understanding why this government wants to tear down our values, our system and the things that we hold dear.

The time has come for this government to reassess its values. Canadians are tired of seeing the pillars of social equity being ripped down by a government obsessed with big business and international jet-setting.

I plead with the government to abandon its relentless attacks on seniors and families. If this government so enjoys crippling people, might I suggest it start directing its energy at foreign corporations and foreign fishing fleets and leave Canadian institutions, Canadian traditions and Canadian values alone.

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Madam Speaker, perhaps I should lead off with the consultation paper of the present government from January of 1985 on child and elderly benefits, but I will save that for tomorrow. I am sure that hon. members will be very interested in that.

I should also make mention of the 125 government amendments to Bill C–28. Might I also quickly add that all these amendments have been ruled out of order. I suggest that all of these amendments will be tabled.

One has to ask why have the amendments been set aside. Someone has to suggest that the bill must be significantly flawed and, obviously, that the amendments are also flawed. If you put one piece of flawed legislation with 125 flawed amendments, obviously what you are going to come up with is a flawed bill.

In questioning the Minister of Finance about the amendments, he suggests, "No problem. These amendments are primarily technical in nature. These are going to be handled through the technical bill that we are putting into the House some time in the new year. But there are a couple of elements that are more pressing than that and they will be introduced through new legislation at an earlier date". I suggest that there is something dreadfully wrong with this piece of legislation.

I guess our track record is better. We have introduced nine amendments, six of which were at least accepted as being debatable, and for that we are grateful and very pleased. As to the 125 government amendments, are they consequential or inconsequential, we are not sure. That remains to be seen. We are certainly taking a serious look at them.

On behalf of the New Democratic Party, we support the amendment of my hon. friend from Ottawa South which suggests that the entire clawback provision be removed. We, too, introduced that kind of amendment and therefore, we have no difficulty in supporting it.

Nevertheless, reality sets in and we know that this majority government will ram this legislation through as it has done through first reading, second reading, committee stage and now at report stage and probably tomorrow—well, we know for sure tomorrow it will be all over. So this is the way the Tories have conducted themselves and we have to accept reality even though we do not like it. We understand what they are up to.

For your heart of hearts, we are providing you some honourable, noteworthy options which will win you favour with families and senior citizens across this country. This is favour that this government so sorely needs, especially taking into consideration the legislation put forth this morning in the GST. The government needs to win some favour with Canadians, and particularly with seniors and families.

Amendment No. 6 would mitigate against the clawback provision. It would raise the threshold to $75,000 so fewer people would be affected now and even more important, fewer people would be affected in the future.

Amendment No. 7 is indexed to the Consumer Price Index. It is indexed to inflation. It is a splendid idea and not indexing seniors' pensions is what caused the government so many problems back in 1985. Surely it does not want to revisit that scene once again.

There is the sham of deficit reduction, the $300,000 or $500,000, whichever figure you want to believe. If you index it, you will still realize a certain amount of this figure. Yet you will indicate to all Canadians, not just seniors and young families, that you truly mean what you say, that for the most part universality will almost be preserved, is almost a sacred trust and at the very least please accept that.

In the budget papers of April 27, 1989, regarding the repayment of social transfers, the Minister of Finance said: "The level of threshold will be reviewed periodically and adjusted as appropriate." It begs the question: Is this going to be the same monitoring process that was in place for the free trade agreement? If so, we do not need that kind of monitoring process. Do away with it because there is none.

I understand the government now has hired an outside consultant to monitor the effects of the free trade agreement. We do not want to wait one year for the monitoring to start. Let us start monitoring immediately so we will save the government money, time, effort and the need to make further unpopular arbitrary decisions. Accept at least one of these amendments. It is the honourable option for the government to make its point yet realize some money while maintaining some semblance of credibility on this whole issue.

I see there are seven government members here. I would ask each of you to get out there and talk to 20–some of your fellow members and tell them of the good news, the good amendments that the New Democrats have brought forward. Tell them to support one of the amendments.

Government members told us in committee that we have to wrap this up before Christmas because it is a Christmas present. Here is a real opportunity to make seniors and families happy across this country. I urge the government to seize this opportunity.

We New Democrats have faith. We believe that one of our amendments will be accepted by the government, because it is the only honourable thing to do and we would be surprised and disappointed if the government did not support one of these amendments.

We all accept that it is very difficult for us to get the government to define what universality is. It keeps saying that if we give with one hand and take with the other, it is still universality. We reject that out of hand and we suggest that if it is affecting 4 per cent in 1991, it may affect 8 per cent in 2001 and 25 per cent in later years and so on.

When does universality cease to be universality? We say that universality is at an end today or tomorrow. It is at an end. It is a watershed of social policy that this country has become accustomed to and deserves. It is a right for all Canadians to enjoy.

If the government would save just a little bit of face at this Christmas time of the year and accept one of the amendments, you can buy the better of two worlds. Although not acceptable totally, at least it would buy you some credibility in your stated belief that universality and social programs are a sacred trust. We do not trust you and Canadians do not trust you. Here is a very small opportunity to save some face.

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak on the amendment to the clawback to the two great social programs that Canada has introduced. These two social programs, the family allowance and the old age security, are the envy of many nations of this world.

• (1310)

I would like to begin my remarks today by looking at the fiscal context in which these changes are being introduced. After all, the government has told Canadians that its primary problem is the deficit. Let us look at that.

The deficit in the five years this government has been in power has more than doubled. In spite of its Draconian cutting of programs and including cuts to these programs, the deficit this year is going to be even $1.6 billion higher than last year. This is on top of the most monumental tax increases that we have already seen which has amounted to 32 separate tax increases in five years. Now what have they meant to ordinary Canadians?

Five years ago, income taxes paid in Canada were about $29 billion. This year, they are $80 billion, up 72 per cent in five years. What does this mean to an ordinary family? Well, in 1984, a family with two wage earners and two children with a combined family income of about $45,000 paid a fair share, and some could argue too much, income tax. But in the five years since 1984, that family's tax burden has increased by fully $2,800. When you add on to it the tax that was introduced in this House this morning, the goods and services tax, the increase to a $45,000 per year two-child family will be about $3,300.

Now, let us look at families at the poverty line. In five years, the taxes paid by families at the poverty level in Canada have increased fully 60 per cent. At the same time, the taxes paid by the rich in Canada have gone up only 8 per cent. If the problem were simply getting revenue, where should the government have gone for that revenue, to low and middle income families or to poverty level families in Canada? They went to the people who could afford it.

This is why we see today that fully 25 per cent of all Canadian children are living below the poverty level. This is a national disgrace for a country that has such wealth, even though our relative standard of living is declining vis-a-vis all our major trading partners.

Let us also look at some of the other reasons that we must reject the concept embodied in this Tory bill. The threshold at which the Tories claw back pensions and family allowances is $50,000, but that is not indexed. If inflation remains at the same rate as today, in about 10 years' time, fully one million Canadian families will have their pensions and old age security clawed back from them.

This government is saying: "You are the ones who are going to suffer". Inflation is not the fault of these taxpayers. It is the fault of these government policies. So why should the Tories impose the burden on Canadians who do not have it within their means to control the inflation rate?

This is a discriminatory tax on one-income against two-income families. Under these provisions, if you have two wage earners in a family who are earning $49,000 each, there is no clawback. There is no clawback on an income of almost $100,000. However, if you are a single-income family earning $50,000, the clawback

starts and it is fully complete when your income hits the $70,000 to $75,000 level. Is that fairness?

This is not a government which is prepared to even recognize that because of its Draconian tax policies and its high interest rate policies Canadian families now have to have more than one wage earner in order to just survive.

The government told us in the 1987 budget that when the new sales tax is introduced, the personal and corporate income surtaxes will be removed. We have just been told today, oh, no, the 3 per cent surtax on all incomes will stay in place. Not only that, it has increased to 5 per cent. This is another broken promise by a government that is not prepared to honour its election commitments.

We know now that it was prepared to do anything it could, prior to the election, to get elected, including holding off the introduction of its dreaded goods and services tax. The government did not have the guts to introduce it before the election. It waited until afterwards. Now the government is clawing back pensions and family allowances. Did the government tell us it was going to do that before the election? Absolutely not.

Why do you think Canadians become cynical? They become cynical when they are lied to, when they are cajoled and when they are treated in such an unfair and an inequitable way.

Let me conclude my remarks by saying that this bill has to be defeated because it is, in effect, a discriminatory tax on seniors. The government is saying to you: "If you are a senior citizen, then we will treat you differently from all other taxpayers. We are going to tax back a portion of your income. We are going to tax all of it back, and the reason we are doing that is simply because you are a senior citizen".

What does this say to Canadians who are saving for their future? These senior citizens can say: "I could have spent all my money and enjoyed my life. I need not have put aside money in order to provide for my security in old age. I could have spent it. I could have lived the good life, rather than being frugal and providing for my retirement. But, because I was frugal, my savings are going to mean that I am subject to this complete clawback. I am being jeopardized and discriminated against, because I acted in a responsible way. I paid my taxes as I went along. I contributed to this pension".

These people never in their lives would have believed that they were going to be taxed back simply because they were senior citizens and simply because they no longer had the ability to go out and take an active part in the workforce.

Tories will tell you that they have increased the limit that you can contribute to pensions and to retirement savings plans. Bravo, but that only applies if you are an active member of the workforce, if you have the income and can go out and do it. Seniors cannot go back into the workforce to recoup the money that is being taxed back from them. This is why it is such an inequitable type of tax.

The Tories had alternatives in coping with the so-called deficit. They have chosen to do it on the backs of the impoverished, the low-income and the middle-income families. Canadians do not accept this, they never will. The government will find out at the next election how Canadians feel about these policies.

• (1320)

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Madam Speaker, I am happy to have the opportunity to speak on Bill C-28 which is clawing back seniors' pensions. In my riding, there are over 20,000 senior citizens, and when I was campaigning in the last election, many seniors still had a memory of the attempt by the government to deindex their pensions in the Minister of Finance's first budget of 1984.

There was a fear, and I must tell you that that fear was not prompted. They still had a lingering memory about that attempt to deindex pensions. One of the things that we forget about senior citizens is that it is not that they do not want to pay their fair share, it is not that they do not want to continue to contribute to the fabric of this nation, but they are at a time in their lives when they feel that they have made a great contribution and they feel that they should be given a sense of security. When the government comes along and starts clawing back when there was absolutely no mention of this intent before the last election, they become very suspicious. They become

nervous. Some actually become almost terrorized, their feeling is so intense.

One of the things we overlook in this House is that very few people actually understand our tax system today. I know when I talk to the senior citizens in my riding, they say that they do not understand it any more. We have a tax system in this country that is so complicated, laid out in a document that has close to 15,000 or 16,000 pages, that even the best tax lawyers in the country will admit they cannot figure it out any more. If the best tax lawyers in the country are having a difficult time with it, how does this give a sense of security or a sense of trust to seniors?

Then we come along with a new system and we put out a memo saying that the $50,000 threshold at which individuals begin paying back their FA and their OAS benefits is only partially indexed to increases in inflation above 3 per cent, and this deindexing of the $50,000 threshold means that within 10 years, close to one million families will start losing their family allowances and old age pensions.

We know what this is all about because we spend time going over it and figuring it out. But, quite frankly, even after that I still have a difficult time understanding it. I think it is about time that we in this Chamber start to realize that our system is so complicated that it is acting as a disincentive, it is acting almost like a morale buster. When the morale of our community breaks down, it has a ripple effect. That is the problem we have with this government. It is breaking down the morale, it is breaking down the will of the country.

Seniors are a very effective communications force in this nation. We remember in 1984, when the seniors heard that their pensions were being indexed, from out of nowhere they were able to change the legislation of this government.

If the morale of senior citizens is not good, it affects the sons and daughters and those sons and daughters are entrepreneurs. They are teachers who, in turn, communicate to others. The whole spirit of this country can be affected.

I for one know of that communications ability of seniors and the effect they can have in a community because in my community, quite frankly, they got me elected. Their good word and positive attitude can affect a lot of things. When the government targets seniors by clawing back pensions I think it is really being penny wise and pound foolish. The government is taking on the spirit of this country because senior citizens are the cornerstone of the spirit of this country.

We have heard many times in the last couple of weeks and months from the Minister of Finance saying: "Well, you are quick to criticize but what ideas do you have over there?" There are many of us who are working on ideas to try to come up with a more fair, more simple, more efficient and workable tax system and there is a group of us in my riding of Broadview—Greenwood. We have been working on this project called the single tax for many months. I stress that it is not our party policy at this time but it is an idea that we are discussing which will, hopefully, advance the debate in a constructive and a creative way.

I have talked to hundreds of seniors in my riding and they like this system because it is more simple, it is more fair. It is efficient. It will give the Government of Canada revenue neutrality. We do not need a goods and services tax with this system. We can phase out the manufacturers' sales tax over three and a half years. I can tell you that we used Statistics Canada models to run our numbers through on this. It will work.

I sent this package to the Minister of Finance. Of course, he has incredible resources. He has a Department of Finance with over 3,000 public servants who could take a look at this system, and I am prepared to accept his constructive criticism about the flaws in the position that I am putting forward. He should at least take a look at it and he should try to come back with what he thinks is wrong with it.

I have tested this in the market-place. We are getting good response. Many of my colleagues are finding the same thing. My point is that we have to start turning people on again in this country so that they are more enthusiastic about what they are doing. I am afraid that if we do not get excited about this country again in the next few months, we are going to slide into a recession. No one in this country wants that and we are not over here trying to criticize just for the sake of criticism, but it is our duty to criticize when a community like the senior citizens of Canada are being confronted by the Minister of Finance and his officials by a clawback system. These are people who have worked all their lives in anticipation

of their pensions. I mean, it is so small minded. I cannot understand it.

I am not saying that we should not pay attention to deficit or debt. We must. But there are better ways. It is incumbent upon all of us to take a look at the fact that we have been held captive by this 15,000 or 16,000 pages of "bureaucratese" for the last 20 years, and I think it is time that the people of Canada get a better deal. I can think of no better constituency than the senior citizens of Canada to begin the process of going back to basic comprehensive tax reform.

• (1330)

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to participate in this debate on Bill C-28, legislation that has been very ably led on our side of the House by my colleague, the member for Sault Ste. Marie. Frankly, he has done a better job than the government.

As you know, at least a couple of his amendments were accepted by Your Honour, whereas 125 or 128 amendments proposed to this legislation at this particular stage were actually ruled out of order. I think a good deal of credit goes to my colleague for Sault Ste. Marie for the very competent work he has done and shame on the government for its incompetence in handling this legislation.

What is Bill C-28? Bill C-28 is an omnibus bill dealing with a number of matters. Today we are dealing with legislation on the clawback, as it has been referred to, but this legislation also does a number of other things. It has amendments to the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act respecting education and health. We have made comments on that. It deals with the Old Age Security Act, public utilities income tax transfer and the Income Tax Act as well as a host of others.

Our discussion at this stage of the bill, the report stage, where amendments are being presented by members in the House, is an important stage of debate. It is made more so because the closure party, the Conservative party, through a number of time allocation and closure measures that we spoke about yesterday gives rise to the headlines in the paper. Our very capable House leader, the member for Kamloops, talked about jackboot tactics. That is the way seniors are being treated in this country under Bill C-28.

I think it is a credit to the member for Sault Ste. Marie and our House leader that they have drawn the attention of Canadians to this legislation. It has been a bill run through the House by this government amidst grief and suffering taxes and a host of other items in the hope that it can get by with what is being called—and something that I can support—a wholesale and fundamental shift in the way that we will be dealing in the future with the questions of universality and social services.

I want to comment briefly on the question of universality. It is easy for the Prime Minister to get out and talk about how the opposition wants to help out the bank managers and wealthy Canadians, and to ask why we do not support his proposal on clawing back pensions from seniors.

Why? Why the defence of universality? The defence of universality goes around the reason why in this country we have built the kind of society that we have—hopefully, a sharing society and one where the benefits of all are not challenged by a few. What I mean by that is the reverse of universality is that the few, then, are not eligible. What does that mean? It goes back to the old days—before my time in this House, certainly—of means tests and other methods.

If we are trying to help all Canadians in society through broad tax measures and transfers of income, what we are talking about is having people line up for social assistance, for a means test or for any other kind of benefit. We are all going to be members of the United Way from now on because seniors are going to have to go to the United Way to get any kind of help, despite the time that they have spent building this country and getting us to the point where we have the resources and we have rights in this House, even though they are trampled on occasionally and, indeed, all too often now by the government. I would like to quote from a brief that was submitted to the legislative committee on Bill C-28 regarding the question of universality and the clawback as it has been referred to. I think it is an excellent summary of the debate that members on this side have been presenting to the government. It is my hope that in doing this some of the government members, in particular those members who I am sure have seniors in their riding, will pay attention and will vote on our side for some of the amendments that we are dealing with now.

Let me quote from the organization called *One Voice*, the Canadian seniors network. It was to the legislative committee on Bill C–28. The group was unable to appear because the government, of course, restricted the number of witnesses that could attend in order to try and get the bill through. I quote:

> At a threshold of $50,000 the clawback has been put forward as a tax on the wealthy.
>
> This has been accepted by most people because it has always been a pillar of Canadian taxation, that wealthy people should pay proportionately more in our progressive system. Fair enough. However, the threshold of $50,000 is only partially indexed. Over the years, that threshold will diminish until most average–income Canadians will be losing their benefits. Estimates show that partial indexation will reduce the threshold to $30,000 in less than 20 years. It is also possible to foresee, once we have accepted the principle of the clawback, that a future federal budget, perhaps in March or April of next year, might arbitrarily lower the threshold to $40,000 or $30,000. At $30,000 the clawback is not a tax on the wealthy but a tax on all those in the middle and upper income categories. In fact, the government could have introduced the clawback at $30,000 at any level. But it chose not to. Why?

I think this is the answer to the debate about universality. The brief continues:

> Because the clawback would then be seen not as a tax on the wealthy,–

This argument was presented by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance and a legion. There is not a legion of Tories here today, that is for sure. They do not want to hear the truth. The brief goes on:

> –but for what it really is–recovery of benefits from part of the population.
>
> This is an attack on the universality of Canada's social programs.

I would challenge the Conservative members of this House to put that description in their householder in the new year. I challenge them to run that description of this legislation. If the Conservative members ask their constituents and seniors in their riding to use the mailbacks to comment on Bill C–28 and the amendments that we have presented, you know very well what those constituents and those seniors will be doing to those Conservatives when the next election comes around. When is the jackboot going to hit the mark from the Conservatives, the jackboot that the Tories are laying on the seniors of this country.

This is to go into effect for tax year 1990. When Canadians are filing their tax returns in 1991—is that not a familiar sounding year—they will find other things happening. GST, grief and suffering tax, gouge and screw tax, whatever you call it, seniors are going to be hit with this legislation which is an attack on the universality of social programs in Canada and an attack on average Canadians who are prepared to pay their fair share. I call on the government members to join with the opposition, support these amendments and defeat this regressive bill.

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Madam Speaker, I regret very much the measure that is before the House now. Of course, I am rising with all members of the opposition to urge the government to think again about a change in our tax laws which hit so much at the fundamentals of what we understand Canada to be about. I am glad that the debate is taking place at a time when we are starting to see other news, news that I want to talk about in a moment. I hope this news is giving government members something to think about, whether the direction in which the Conservatives are leading Canada is really a direction in which they want to support the government. There are a number of government supporters in the House and I am glad to see them here. I hope that they will be considering these things as Christmas approaches, as news comes out more and more about the developing inequalities in Canadian society and about the power that we have in this House of Commons, as individual members representing the ridings and the regions of Canada, to stand up and do something about it.

• (1340)

When I was first elected, and in the two or three elections that followed, one of the most common questions that constituents would ask during election campaigns is no longer being asked. But in 1968, 1972, 1974 and 1978 one of the most common questions that you always got as you went around campaigning was, "What is the difference really between the Liberal and the Conservative parties anyway? What is the difference between what the two parties stand for in terms of leadership of the country?" That is not a question that Canadians ask at election time any more. They now have seen whatever it was that the Conservatives said in 1984 in order to get elected, whatever kind of make–believe Liberals—as one of our Senators put it in describing them—they appeared to be and seen the government demonstrate since coming to office a very different way of looking at Canada and of looking at how this country should be led.

The Conservatives believe in the trickle-down theory of economic benefit. They believe, and the Minister of Finance once said as much, "We need more rich people in Canada". The theory was that if we, as a society, could use the powers of government, use the taxation system to make the rich richer, to assist them in achieving their economic goals in society, that that would trickle down and it would eventually be good for the rest of Canadian society.

Liberals do not look at the country that way. We are happy to see people who are rich getting richer. We are happy to see ordinary Canadians achieving success and becoming better off because it means that they are making a contribution to the economy. But we, on this side of the House, recognize that just watching rich people get richer does nothing in itself to assure that ordinary Canadians, that poorer Canadians are going to become better off as a result.

When we look at some other countries in the world where there are very rich people, the theory that making the rich get richer is going to assure a trickle-down benefit to ordinary people in the society, we have a demonstration that that is not true. More and more we see in our country as we look around that although the rich may be getting richer, and more and more fortunes are being acquired and accumulated in Canada by economic effort that is beneficial to the economy and even creates jobs to a certain point, it is not a substitute for programs that look at the ordinary Canadian; that look at the poor; that look at regions of this country—which are becoming more and more desperate in spite of over-all national statistics to which the government points with pride—and that show that there is a missing ingredient, something missing in this government's planning that is moving us in a direction in which I think Canadians do not want to be led and in which I do not think Canadians will want to follow this government.

We have one illustration before us in the example of the clawback. I want to take some time to develop why we find the clawback so objectionable. But I cannot let this time of year pass without talking about the plight of children in Canadian society. We learned last week that there are more food banks in the city of Toronto now than there are McDonald's hamburger restaurants across our fair city. This is an appalling piece of information for Canadians to absorb, for Torontonians to absorb: the idea that as we have seen our society becoming more prosperous as more businesses are becoming successful, even as there are more people in the city of Toronto working every month than there were in the last month, that because of the approach of this government which is being accompanied month by month by month with a greater and greater situation of poverty in the city of Toronto and in the country of Canada.

We have a social contract in this country that is being violated by this government. It is a social contract that better off Canadians understand very well. The contract is that we contribute, we work, we pay our taxes, we enjoy whatever benefits we earn in the Canadian society. We do so in the full belief, which is no longer true, but which has been true and which should be true that we as a society are caring for each other. When I take out my kids to celebrate a birthday and take all of our friends along to enjoy ourselves, the system which we have supported in the past is looking after the less fortunate in the society. It is hard for us to be responsible for the welfare of people in other countries far away from ours where we see so much suffering. It is not hard for us to be responsible for the welfare of our fellow Canadians. Far from setting an example in Canada of a caring society, we are being led by this government, with prosperity all around us, further and further away from that essential element of being Canadian which has made it such a wonderful country to live in, where we could enjoy our successes and our prosperity in those parts of society where we have earned it and where we have it, knowing that no one will be suffering, no Canadian children will be going to bed hungry at night when my own children are at birthday parties.

This is a very serious violation of the fundamental element of Canadianism. I urge members of the government party to consider this when they are voting on this cruel clawback measure to which I now want to turn my attention in the remaining few minutes that I have.

When I first started paying income tax, there was a little line on the form that said, "3 per cent old age security tax". I and millions of Canadians paid it. We understood by paying it that we when we became senior citizens—and I am a long way from it yet, but it is significant—we would receive an old age pension. The

most fraudulent feature of the presentation the government has made is its insistence that that commitment is being honoured even under the amendment that is being proposed today. Government members stand there with straight faces and tell Canadians, who contributed for years and years to their own old age security pension, that they have nothing to complain about and that they are still going to get it.

I hope there is no one in the country who believes this because Canadians will not be getting that pension. As we who are still far from retirement get closer and closer to it, the proportion of the old age pension to which we have contributed and which was part of that fundamental, social contract of Canada, is being clawed back by a tax system which is probably unconstitutional and which, although it does not violate a specific contract that we had when we paid that 3 per cent, does violate the spirit of universality, which is one of the essential components of being Canadian.

For those whose income is between $25,000 and $50,000, a greater and greater proportion of the money received every year as the old age pension will be clawed back at double tax rates so that when you reach $50,000, the whole of that old age pension that the government says you are still getting is going to be completely reimbursable to the Government of Canada.

A $50,000 a year retiree is certainly not a pauper, neither is a $25,000 a year retiree, but that is not the point. The point is that this payment was part of the commitment made to working Canadians while they were contributing to the tax. I used to work in the field of pension taxation and pension law. I know that there are hundreds of pension plans across this country which are specifically reduced by the amount of the old age pension that the retiree is going to receive.

• (1350)

Under most of these plans, unless they are revised, and I do not think they will be, this insidious clawback provision will not alter the amount payable to the retiree so that, for purposes of the private plan to which you contributed, your pension will be reduced as if you were getting an old age pension, but when you make out your tax return every year and when you send it in you will find that you are getting less than you agreed to receive when you contracted your particular retirement plan as one of the negotiated conditions of your employment.

It is a fraud to tell Canadians that they are getting the old age pension and to have their plans set up on that basis when they are clawed back eventually to the level of zero.

I see that the 10 minutes I have has expired, but I want to add one other idea. With inflation, which is almost guaranteed even at very low levels year after year after year, that $25,000 cut-in and that $50,000 threshold get closer and closer and closer to the poverty level of an individual. What this means is that while this year you can look at a $25,000 a year retiree or a $50,000 a year retiree as being better off, that will not be the case when people my age are ready to retire and when all the other people who have sent us here to Parliament on their behalf will retire.

I urge government members to think about what we are doing in the opposition to resist this insidious, un-Canadian amendment to the Income Tax Act.

Mr. Boudria: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I know we are scheduled to adjourn at 1.53 this afternoon. Given that that only leaves approximately a minute or two perhaps we could, by unanimous consent, see the clock at 1.53 p.m. so that the next speaker could deliver her full remarks in one shot as opposed to having her speech interrupted after a minute or two.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I think this would be a very helpful suggestion. I do now leave the chair until two o'clock this day.

At 1.53 p.m. the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*Translation*]

FREE TRADE

Mrs. Gabrielle Bertrand (Brome—Missisquoi): Mr. Speaker, the Free Trade Agreement with the United States enables Canadian industry to compete with the Americans. The gradual elimination of customs tariffs on Canadian goods exported to the United States has

made it possible for one business in my riding to break into the U.S. market and thus become established on the international market.

Henri Fontaine Limitée in Magog, a well-known family business, has just signed a major contract worth $1.5 million with California to manufacture 200 wall-mounted valves made of stainless steel, to be used in waste water treatment.

Its competitors, Mr. Speaker, were major U.S. companies well known in the field. This is indeed a feather in the cap of Fontaine Limitée which is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year.

For these two reasons I offer my sincere congratulations to the firm's president and its employees.

* * *

[*English*]

EXPOSITION CENTRE

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, as part of the cruel and unusual punishment inflicted upon the residents of the national capital area the government has announced the closure of the production facility of the Canadian Government Exposition Centre. This decision will result in the layoff of some 50 workers just a few days before Christmas.

Perhaps even more serious, if anything could be more serious and more devastating than learning that you are losing your job just a few days before Christmas, this decision made by the government does not make any sense using the government's own criteria.

At a time when we are incurring a trade deficit in this country, the Canadian Government Exposition Centre is very much needed. This kind of facility prepares exhibits and displays for the Government of Canada when travelling throughout this country and the whole world. Indeed, if we did not have a Canadian Government Exposition Centre this would probably be the most opportune time to create one in order to increase trade opportunities for our country.

Shame on the government.

S. O. 31

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance this morning said that the government is responding to small business concerns over the GST. How wrong he is. Small business had been offered a $600-a-year fee to collect the GST. That has been taken away. Small business had been promised that it would be consulted to find further ways of streamlining the tax. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business has called the streamlining "easily the most complex part of the GST proposals".

Small business exemptions on new cash register equipment will total only 20 per cent of the cost. In my own riding of Surrey North I am receiving letters from small businesses protesting the added expense of the GST.

In addition, they point out that the required paperwork will also reveal to everyone both the costs and profits of any small business. No wonder small business has completely rejected the GST. No wonder John Bulloch of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business calls the GST "a triumph of greed and politics over reason and sound tax planning".

* * *

SALVATION ARMY

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to volunteer agencies which serve the less fortunate in our country at this time of year. There are church groups, service clubs, scouts, girl guides and many other organizations that attempt to bring the spirit of Christmas to those in need.

I pay special tribute to the Salvation Army which will be providing shelter, clothing, food hampers and Christmas dinners for over 80,000 people across Canada alone. As a physician I note the tremendous efforts of the Salvation Army and its officers to fight chemical dependency involving not only hard drugs but also alcohol and tobacco which are causing severe health and social problems today. Emotional, material and spiritual support provided to the poor is doing much to combat problems of child poverty.

I appeal to all Canadians to share our abundance with the army and to reach out to someone in need at this time of year when poverty is darker, hunger is deeper and loneliness is greater. Let us do our part to assist in bringing the true spirit of love, joy, peace and goodwill to our fellow men at this special Christmas season.

* * *

FORESTRY

Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy—Royal): Mr. Speaker, last Friday the Government of Canada and the province of New Brunswick signed a five year $91 million co-operation agreement on forestry development. The federal government will be contributing $50 million, the provincial government $41 million.

This agreement has been eagerly anticipated by New Brunswick's forestry sector and will make a significant contribution to the economy of the province as well as ensuring that the resource is wisely managed and protected for future generations.

I commend the federal and provincial governments for concluding an agreement that is so vital to the well-being of New Brunswick.

* * *

CORRECTIONAL SERVICES OF CANADA

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg St. James): Mr. Speaker, Canada risks losing the services of the John Howard Society. The John Howard Society is concerned about new security conditions imposed on it by the Correctional Services of Canada. Correctional Services has imposed additional security conditions on voluntary organizations which provide prison visitation programs, operate halfway houses and conduct community assessment, parole supervision and other corrections programs.

The autonomy of private agencies is threatened and the privacy of individual employees is endangered. The new rules remove the right of independent agencies to determine whether employees are trustworthy and reliable in maintaining the confidentiality of information. The John Howard Society says that these new provisions are unnecessary in light of the organization's past success in ensuring security and confidentiality.

As a result of the changes, the society will become nothing more than an underpaid arm of government, void of local accountability and autonomy. After more than 30 years of providing parole supervision, Canada risks losing the services of the John Howard Society. I ask that the government rethink this policy in light of the contribution made by this organization to all of the country.

* * *

CBC NEWSWORLD

Mr. Denis Pronovost (St. Maurice): Mr. Speaker, at last TV viewers in some parts of the province of Quebec will receive the signal of CBC Newsworld. This is great news for national unity. In these difficult times for our country, I urge every member of Parliament to support my proposal to open CBC Newsworld to all regions of Quebec. In my view it is unacceptable that my constituents be blacked out by TV cable companies from a national service.

Yesterday, a French-speaking TV critic, Daniel Rioux, from *le Journal de Montréal* stated that CBC Newsworld will help Quebecers to better understand the reality of other Canadians.

I also want to remind this House that the CRTC rejects such a national service in French. It is about time that members of Parliament express themselves on this very important topic.

* * *

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, today's announcement of a 7 per cent goods and services tax by the Minister of Finance will have a devastating effect on the more than 100,000 Canadians employed directly and indirectly in the horsebreeding and racing industry. These jobs will be decimated when the goods and services tax is implemented.

According to the chairman of the Ontario Racing Commission, higher costs and lower profits resulting from the GST would drive what remained of Canada's lucrative horse racing business to the United States.

In my riding of Hillsborough, the Charlottetown Driving Park paid approximately $813,000 in provincial taxes last year. If the GST is levied on the horse breeding and racing industry, whether at 7 per cent or 9 per cent, the

industry will not be able to absorb this additional cost. The loss of jobs and eventually the demise of the industry will be the result.

The government has not listened to the industry officials. Today the minister tried yet another smokescreen, the elimination of the existing .8 per cent federal agricultural levy on pari mutuel betting. Removing this levy while still implementing the GST will in no way lessen the damage suffered by the industry.

I strongly urge this government to withdraw the GST and go back to the drawing board.

* * *

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

Mr. Ken James (Sarnia—Lambton): Mr. Speaker, on November 6, some 43 days ago, the duly elected members of this House passed the unemployment insurance bill, Bill C-21, a bill which would strengthen the ability of the UI program to act as an effective economic safety net, allow for more skills training and help Canadian workers better adjust to change.

Since that time, however, a group of non-elected Liberal senators have once again got caught up in another attempt to thwart the efforts of this government, look for loopholes in the rules and intentionally delay the legislation and demonstrate their political muscle.

Yet, where do the interests of the unemployed in Canada's poorer regions fit in? A distant second, it would seem. For these individuals the extra four week requirement could prove to be devastating, especially in light of the combination of other problems which they face.

• (1410)

I call upon all Liberal members opposite to urge their Senate colleagues to get on with it, to pass this much needed legislation and start putting the needs of Canadians in our poorer regions before this unnecessary self-interest and political showmanship.

* * *

POVERTY

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I would have liked to have put a cheerful face on my statement in keeping with this joyful season. But, as members of Parliament head home to feast, I ask them to consider images of starving children in the Third World and developing countries lining up to receive life-saving food that Canada has sent. And we feel satisfied with our generosity.

Consider that close to one million Canadian children live in poverty. In this season of giving Canadians give to the hundreds of food banks across Canada to help these kids have a decent meal during the holidays. And we feel satisfied with our generosity.

I ask hon. members in this House to consider the other 364 days a year that these one million Canadian kids go to school and play while hungry. We cannot be satisfied with our generosity while one child is hungry and living in poverty. Consider this Christmas, as we give thanks for our good fortune, ways in which we can work together in this House toward eradicating poverty in 1990.

* * *

[*Translation*]

BILL C-21—UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister of Canada asked in the House that the Senate pass Bill C-21 on unemployment insurance reform as quickly as possible, and he condemned the obstructionist tactics of the Liberal senators who have a majority in the other place.

This bill will make it possible to allocate $800 million to manpower training programs. It increases the number of weeks of employment required to be eligible for benefits and also reduces the number of benefit weeks. The CNTU approves provisions that increase maternity benefits and benefits for workers aged 65 and over.

Mr. Speaker, once again, the uncalled for obstruction by certain Liberal senators in the other place is totally unacceptable.

* * *

[*English*]

ROMANIA

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, daily we hear of dramatic changes in central and east European countries which bring new freedom, hope for justice and peace to the region. However, Romania remains intransigent in its Fascist repression of its people under the leadership of the dictator, President Ceausescu. We are all alarmed at the present news of the violence in Timisoara, Romania, reminiscent, in fact, of

the Tiananmen Square massacre in China earlier this year.

In Canada we have watched the increased persecution of the two million Hungarian minority in Romania and its protestant leader, the Reverend Laszlo Tokes. We wrote letters. We have watched Romanian masses being subjected to cold, hunger and misery, only to reward a dictator's blind, inhumane obsessions to pay off foreign debt.

Despite this, we have continued to trade with Romania. In recognition of Romania as a country where there is no freedom of expression, religion, association, and assembly, where the government massacres its own people, where we know there is no human rights commitment, Canada must act. Canada must press Gorbachev to intervene with compassion in the situation in Romania. We must reassess our trade with Romania. We must guarantee that Romania abides by the non-proliferation provisions of our Candu reactor trade contract. We must commit to bold action, not just the use of words.

* * *

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, last October, after six months of thorough debate and coast-to-coast public hearings, this House passed Bill C-21 which will inaugurate significant improvements to Canada's UI system.

Atlantic Canadians need the additional access to employment and training opportunities which Bill C-21 will bring into effect. Atlantic Canadians approve of tightening up the system so there are less abuses of it. Atlantic Canadians need the benefit of variable entrance requirements.

I am really appalled at the utter contempt which the Liberal party, through its use of the other place, shows for democracy in this country. I say to the Leader of the Opposition, end the hypocrisy that purports to show an interest in unemployed Canadians while in fact doing them in. Let democracy prevail. End the MacEachen blackmail.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of the House the issue of the MX Rail Garrison Program.

On November 29 the American air force announced its finalized plans for modernization of its nuclear missile force in North Dakota. Four trains, each armed with two MX missiles, will be stationed in Grand Forks. Each MX missile has 10 accurate, independently targeted and extremely powerful warheads.

The trains allow for mobility of the MX in times of crisis, making them less targetable than standard ICBMs and creating uncertainty for the so-called enemy. They have a destabilizing effect and represent a serious escalation in the arms race.

The stationing of MX-equipped rail cars so close to the Canadian border, not only in North Dakota but at several other American bases, should be protested by the Canadian government. It represents an unwelcome addition to the already considerable nuclear arsenal. There are presently 1,500 warheads in North Dakota alone, only miles from Canadian territory.

I urge the government to speak out against this inappropriate escalation of the arms race and, failing removal of the MX rail cars, to seek a guarantee that these trains will never move in the direction of Canada.

* * *

CAPE BRETON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my disappointment with the behaviour and activities of the minister responsible for the Cape Breton Development Corporation. Union representatives and management personnel are in the midst of negotiating a collective agreement.

The minister has intervened by placing on the table the possible closure of the Lingan colliery which employs 1,200 persons. He has threatened that if a collective agreement is not signed for a duration of four years this

particular mine will close, affecting that community not only in the short term but, indeed, in the long term.

I would have hoped that the minister responsible would have wanted to facilitate the collective bargaining process. In that regard I ask him to call upon the Minister of Labour to appoint Bill Kelly, former Deputy Minister of Labour, as the mediator in this particular settlement in order to have this matter resolved before we break for Christmas. I urge the minister to do this forthwith.

QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

PROPOSED GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance confirmed to us today that the goods and services tax he is preparing for us is in flagrant contradiction with all the election promises made by the Conservatives during the last election campaign. We know today that all the Conservatives' election promises were completely false.

The Minister said during the election campaign that the tax would be revenue-neutral, that it would be brought in with the co-operation of the provinces, that it would be visible and the amount would appear on sales slips, that it would be easy to administer, that it would not be inflationary, that income tax rates for individuals would go down regardless of the rate set for the GST. Finally, Mr. Speaker, he said that the surtax on middle incomes would be abolished.

If the Minister really wants to reduce the deficit, if the Minister of Finance really wants to control the deficit, why does he not apply the GST to all the lies the Conservatives told in the last election campaign? Then our deficit would disappear overnight.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*English*]

Mr. Mulroney: There's no question there. Put a question. What a farce.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I did not hear a question from the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Mulroney: Just insults.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): I did hear a lot of needless abuse. If we are going to have a debate on something like the GST, let's have a debate. We do not need this needless abuse.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Ms. Clancy: That's our line.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): I heard the Leader of the Opposition talk about visibility. He wants a visible tax. But the only alternative that I hear from the Liberal Party is to go back to the manufacturers' sales tax which is an absolutely invisible tax. No one in the country knows what it is, what it is on or how much it is.

Some hon. members: Shame, shame.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): So much for the Liberal alternatives to this tax.

The second thing he talks about is revenue neutrality. What is his option there? Revenue neutrality I think in his terms would mean scrapping the goods and services tax—

• (1420)

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): —credit for low-income Canadians. I hear that the Liberal party wants to scrap the goods and services tax—

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): —credit for low-income Canadians. This is a very interesting revelation. We have been waiting for four months now to get the alternatives of the Liberal Party. Now they want to hit the low income Canadians. Well this government is not going to do that. This government is going to bring in the goods and services tax with a generous goods and services tax credit.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance says he does not have to take this abuse. I say to him that the Canadian taxpayer does not want to take this abuse either.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister was counselling his minister not to reply.

I am not surprised. The Prime Minister finds democracy in Parliament a big nuisance and he did not listen—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am sure the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition would want to put his question.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, small businesses in this country have opposed this sales tax right from the outset. For daring to stand up to the Minister of Finance the small business community received another kick in the teeth this morning. In order to teach the small business community a lesson, the minister gave them a $600 million kick in the teeth by taking away the fee that they were supposed to receive for administering his tax.

The minister told hardworking, decent, independent Canadian business people that they would receive an administrative fee for administering the nightmare that this tax is going to bring. Today he broke that promise.

What explanation is he going to give to the million small business people in this country for having once again broken his word, or does he think that the changes he announced this morning will relieve small business of that administrative nightmare?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, first of all let me make it quite clear that if the Leader of the Opposition had spent some time trying to understand this tax he would know that it is not an administrative nightmare. There have been a number of proposals that have been specifically brought in to the GST proposal, including two forms of streamlined accounting. If others are brought to our attention that are workable, we will allow those to be used as well.

We have also provided the small business community a relief from sales tax on the purchase of new equipment that they might need for compliance with the sales tax, that is point of sale equipment as well as inventory control equipment. That will drop the cost of that by about 20 per cent, which is not insignificant.

The final point I have to make is that the small business community, particularly led by the Chamber of Commerce, has been one of the loudest proponents of a lower sales tax rate. That is what we have brought in as a result of my proposal this morning. The drop from 9 per cent to 7 per cent is a major step forward in meeting the concerns of the small business community.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, a few months ago the Minister of Finance recognized the administrative difficulty that small business would have by allowing them a fee to administer the tax. Every small business representative who appeared before the committee chaired by the member for Mississauga South told the committee, and through the committee told Parliament, that the tax would be an administrative nightmare: two sets of taxes, one federal, one provincial, two sets of books. Absolutely impossible for the average small business person to administer.

This morning the minister admitted for the first time that there was a slowdown in the economy. He said that the economy was slowing down. Yet at this dangerous time the minister insists on proceeding with this inflationary tax. At a dangerous time for the economy he is imposing a new goods and services tax upon Canadians.

How can the minister justify proceeding with this tax at this time at the of the Canadian economy? Does he not believe that his responsibility to the people of Canada is to prevent a recession and not to create a recession?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): First, Mr. Speaker, let me correct something, as I usually have to do in response to the hon. member's questions. People do not have to keep two sets of books. They can calculate the goods and services tax off the same sets of books off of which they are calculating their income tax today. So there are no new sets of books.

I see that the hon. Leader of the Opposition is now nodding his head in agreement.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): I am not. I am not.

Mr. Duhamel: You're having hallucinations.

Mr. Douglas Young (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, today we saw the finance minister swallow himself whole. Canadians are not going to swallow this GST at 7 per cent any more than they were going to swallow it at 9 per cent.

My question is for the Minister of Finance. Why in the world would Canadians believe this Minister of Finance

that this tax is going to stay at 7 per cent any longer than it stayed at 9 per cent where he swore it was going stay?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, this is really an astounding statement. We are seeing more and more of the policy of the Liberal opposition coming out.

First they want to take away the goods and services tax credit from low income people. Now the hon. member is criticizing me for bringing the rate down from 9 per cent to 7 per cent. Can we have more of this Liberal fiscal policy proposal? I would love to hear it.

Some hon. members: More, more.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Young: Mr. Speaker, for months we have heard the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance tell us that the GST rate would be 9 per cent, that there would be no change or alteration. Now my question is very simple, Mr. Speaker: Why should Canadians take the Prime Minister's word? I ask the Prime Minister that. The Minister of Finance refused today to guarantee that the rate would stay at 7 per cent as long as his government was in power. The question is simple: Is the Prime Minister prepared to promise that the GST rate will stay at 7 per cent as long as he is in power in Canada?

[*English*]

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, we are being criticised now for listening to Canadians. Would the hon. member tell me what the purpose of consultations are?

I have said right from the start that if we are going to see a lower rate than 9 per cent there would have to be some trade-offs, difficult trade-offs. I have asked Canadians for their views on what those trade-offs should be. I have actually gone to meetings and probed people, pushed them, saying: "Tell me where you think the trade-offs should come". It is based on that consultation that we have come up with this particular proposal.

Now the hon. member is saying: "Will you give me a guarantee?" I cannot give the hon. member a guarantee because there might be a day that a Liberal party might be in government and then there would be absolutely no control on that rate because, with their free-spending habits that we have seen year after year after year in the past, tax rates are bound to go up.

The best assurance that Canadians can have that this rate will stay down is a government that controls spending. We have controlled spending. We have kept spending at a rate of 3.6 per cent on average for the last five years and we are committed to doing that in the future.

In response to the babbling of the Leader of the Opposition, when he was in his last year as Minister of Finance, government spending rose 29 per cent.

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. This morning the Minister of Finance continued his strategy of tax trickery. We are supposed to believe that 7 per cent is better than 9 per cent, although we were assured not long ago that 9 per cent could not be changed no matter what.

After a catalogue of phrases and excuses about the GST, the end result is the same. Nothing has changed; not from two weeks ago, not from two years ago. This government is still going to tax food. This government is still going to tax children's clothing. It is still going to tax the services of all Canadians. Middle and lower income Canadians who get hit the hardest by this are still going to be hurt the most.

• (1430)

Nothing has changed despite the good phrases. Canadians will not be fooled. The principle remains the same. This is a regressive tax, a tax that takes the most from those who have the least.

The Prime Minister and Minister of Finance have said that they are going to listen to Canadians. Canadians want the tax dropped, not the rate. When is this Prime Minister really going to listen to Canadians, throw out the tax, throw out this Minister of Finance and get a new minister who is willing to bring in real tax reforms?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, there were a lot of things the hon. member has said which were quite wrong. I just want to identify one which I think is very important that she not mislead Canadians on, and that is the fact that this tax is a regressive tax. This is not a regressive tax.

When we came into office, low income Canadians were paying two or three percentage points more of their income in sales tax. Then we brought in the refundable sales tax credit to offset the impact of sales tax. We have increased that three times, ending with the goods and services tax credit proposal. The combination of the

goods and services tax plus the credit, which is an integral part of that tax, means that low income Canadians will now be spending two or three percentage points less of their income than people in upper income brackets. Therefore, from a regressive tax we have made this into a progressive tax, and that should not be forgotten by the leader of the NDP.

Ms. McLaughlin: Mr. Speaker, that certainly restores our faith and belief in Santa Claus.

Canadians are not going to be fooled. The National Council on Welfare recently stated that since 1984 poorer people are paying 60 per cent more taxes since this government came into power, but Santa Claus did visit the rich because they are paying 6.7 per cent less tax than when this government came into power.

This tax continues to punish those people who are raising their families, buying clothing, but it does let stock market wheeler-dealers get away with their profits tax-free.

Will the Prime Minister admit that this tax is grossly unfair to Canada's poor and that they are paying 1.5 times more tax today than they were when this government was first elected? Cutting the tax credit and not indexing it certainly is simply going to mean that the poor are going to be poorer.

Will the Prime Minister admit that they are really worse off today than they were in 1984?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the member's attention to pages 33, 34 and 35 of the book that I put out this morning with my statement. In most income brackets it demonstrates that Canadians will be better off after the GST combined with the goods and services tax credit relative to the 9 per cent rate. That clearly states that the hon. member is wrong in the statements that she makes about the regressive nature of a sales tax.

The other point that I want to draw the hon. member's attention to is when she talks about the shifting burden of taxation. We in this government have removed more loopholes which have been of benefit to upper income Canadians than any government has done in years and years and years. We have removed all those loopholes that were brought in by the Liberal party over their time in government.

The result is that the combination of the removal of the loopholes plus the changes in the income tax system that we brought about in 1987-88 has resulted in a shift so that people in upper income tax brackets are paying more income tax as a per cent of the whole than they were before income tax reform.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE ECONOMY

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I will change the subject, since it is hard to get an answer from the minister.

Small businesses are being crushed under the burden of high interest rates. Retail sales are down. All economic indicators point towards a recession. This government is attacking small businesses, the most vulnerable sector of our economy, a sector that is now suffering under the negative impact of the free trade agreement.

Considering the precarious state of our economy today, how does the government expect small businesses to survive when the GST is introduced?

[*English*]

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, this is the first time that I can recall in my ten years in the House that the NDP has said anything positive about the small business community.

Members of the NDP have continually gone after the small business community. They have continually rejected the proposals that we have brought in to help the small business community. They have continually rejected things such as the $500,000 capital gains proposal that we brought in to support the small business community. Now we have a change of tune for some short-term political reasons.

What I want to say to the hon. member is that there is no disagreement among all the people who have reviewed the goods and services tax proposal that the long-term benefits for the economy are positive for the small business community, the medium sized business community, and the large business community.

The question that had been raised was what was going to happen in the transition from the existing sales tax to

the new tax. By dropping the rate from 9 per cent to 7 per cent, we have addressed those concerns about transition and addressed them in a very forthright way.

* * *

ATLANTIC FISHERY

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Last night during our emergency debate on the fishery, the member for St. John's West promised that he would resign if no help was forthcoming for the Atlantic fishery.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tobin: It is a great idea. With the devastating news this morning that European community fisheries ministers have set a 60,000 metric tonne cod quota for themselves off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador, a quota four times higher than that recommended by Canada, I would expect that the member for St. John's West should start packing his desk right now.

Will the Prime Minister now finally admit that his policy of appeasement in the face of confrontation over our fishery has failed utterly? Will he agree to extend unilaterally our fisheries jurisdiction to the nose and tail of the Grand Banks and to use whatever means are necessary to enforce that jurisdiction and to put an end to the piracy of the fishery off Canada's east coast?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. members: Resign, resign!

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. members: Goodbye, John.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker, news of my resignation is indeed premature.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crosbie: The government has introduced programs described yesterday in connection with the fishery and will be introducing others.

With reference to the hon. member's main question, which is a very serious one, we can only say with respect to the European community's decision of yesterday that we are extremely disappointed. The decision they made was a considerable improvement over their decisions in previous years.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Crosbie: I remind the House that they assigned themselves quotas of 132,290 tonnes of fish in 1989, whereas they are at least reducing that to 56,250 tonnes this year.

Mr. Tobin: It is 60,000 tonnes.

Mr. Crosbie: Nevertheless, that is in excess of the 15,377 tonnes they were assigned by NAFO, by three times. It is regrettable, but we never indicated in the House that we would have complete success this year. We intend to continue with our campaign because we believe that with time and with pressure the European community, led by Commissioner Marin who is trying to make an improvement here, will come to see that it must observe the NAFO quotas and do it in short order.

• (1440)

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, just so the House understands the absolute anger and frustration that anybody who knows anything about the east coast fishery is feeling upon hearing that answer, the European community has set a quota for itself of 60,000 metric tons when it was assigned by Canada and by NAFO only 15,000 metric tons.

It has done so in the face of Canada reducing its own quota over the last two years by 100,000 tonnes, and it has done so at a time when the European community has reduced quotas along its own coastal waters for conservation efforts but has come to Canada to pillage our resource.

My question is for the Prime Minister. I want to tell the Prime Minister that the reason we are consistently abused is this government and that this Prime Minister is regarded as an international wimp in the world community.

Some hon. members: Sit down, sit down!

Mr. Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Tobin: I have not finished the question.

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker, needless to say, the intemperateness of the question indicates that the hon. gentle-

man is not seriously concerned about the problem. He is only concerned about trying to score political points.

Mr. Tobin: I am dammed concerned. I am fed up.

Mr. Speaker: It is not very often the Speaker would make a comment on an exchange, but the debate last night showed very clearly that members on both sides of this House are very deeply concerned about it. I do not think we are advancing Question Period by getting into that debate. The hon. member.

Mr. George S. Baker (Gander—Grand Falls): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

The EEC announced today that it is going to take tens of thousands of tonnes of northern cod when NAFO allocated them a zero quota.

Amid all of the misery of plants closing in eastern Canada, along comes this incredible example of the mixed up priorities of this government in dealing with the EEC.

I want to ask a question of the minister of fisheries. Will cabinet now cancel a remission order registered three weeks ago giving France back $500,000 for its fishing vessel licence fees in 1987? Is this how the government is going to get rid of foreigners overfishing—kill them with kindness?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member who called my office knows the answer to that question.

The answer is that this government eliminated the French Metropolitan fleet from fishing in the Gulf of St. Lawrence in 1987 and this government saved 17,000 metric tonnes of codfish for our own fishermen. Therefore, we sent a reduced invoice to France because we could not charge them fishing licence fees for fish it never caught because they were caught by Canadians.

Mr. Baker: Mr. Speaker, you know that in 1987 France overfished its quota on the east coast of Canada by five times. This government is behaving like a bunch of masochists, paying France a half a million dollars to kick us in the *derrière*.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker: I would ask the Hon. Member to put his question, please.

[*English*]

Mr. Baker: Mr. Speaker, when France has now announced that it is going to take northern cod outside the 200-mile zone, why is this country giving to France inside our 200-mile zone a quota of northern cod for 1990 to keep the fish plants going in St. Malo, France? Why candy for the EEC and a lump of coal for Canada? *Pourquoi, le Père Noel, envers La France, et "Miser" Grinch au Canada?*

Mr. Mulroney: That's a ten.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I certainly cannot match the hon. member in bilingual talent.

I want to tell the House, however, that in connection with this problem and the way in which the European community is approaching it, Ambassador Beesley on our behalf called in today the chargé d'affaires of the European community to express the objections of the government to these decisions by the European community.

The Prime Minister is in the process of sending a telegram to President Mitterrand of France who is the chairman of the European community at the present time. The Prime Minister will be continuing his active involvement in this issue by taking the matter up with President Delors at the top of the agenda when President Delors of the European community visits Canada this year.

The government deplores this action taken by the European community which although some improvement over last year with respect to the northern cod is adding salt to our wounds and adding insult to injury with respect to the need for conservation of the northern cod.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

Last night when he, the Minister for International Trade and the Secretary of State for External Affairs got up and talked about their success in negotiating and discussing with the European Common Market, they knew that that same community had already decided to have a quota four times what Canada was asking. Why did they deliberately mislead the people of Atlantic Canada?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I beg to differ but we did not know what the EC commission and council adopted and announced today.

I must say I find it unacceptable, in fact offensive, that the elected members of the European council would endorse quotas of northern cod just outside our 200-mile limit in the amount of 32,000 metric tonnes when we are having difficulty finding enough fish to go around for our Canadian fish plant workers and fishermen.

This contradicts all principles of international stewardship toward the resources of our oceans, and Canada will register its offence at this action in the strongest possible way.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, the minister claims that he was unaware of the European decision. I spoke before him and I spoke before the Minister for International Trade and I mentioned that in the House. If he is not aware of what is happening in Europe, how can he pretend to represent the people of Atlantic Canada?

Mr. Siddon: Mr. Speaker, we were aware of a report by the EC scientific council to the council of the European community which suggested a significant lowering of European quotas, in fact compliance with six quotas in the NAFO managed stocks.

• (1450)

In fact the council overruled those recommendations and increased the unilateral quotas totally contrary to long-standing agreements reached at the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization that quotas, for example, of northern cod should be zero; not one codfish, not one pound of fish more than zero.

I repeat that we find the 32,000 metric tonne quota far in excess of anything that is practically justifiable. It is offensive.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

One year after the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement accelerated tariff reductions on furniture production items from the United States, an 86-cent dollar, and high interest rates are causing large furniture manufacturers to wind down operations and to move south. Several large manufacturing firms have already set up plants in the southern United States.

This Friday, Goldcrest Furniture in my riding of Eglington—Lawrence is closing its doors and putting 120 skilled labourers, production employees, out of work and sealing the fate of a further 120 others.

Where does the minister suggest that these and other workers seek employment as the Canadian furniture industry is slowly but surely killed by her government's policies?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out to the House that my riding is right next to the hon. member's. The people on this side of the House are always concerned when there are lay-offs, as there are from time to time in any economy, and particularly in a booming economy where there are new jobs coming along every day.

I would point out to him that in his riding as well as in mine there is full employment.

Mr. Volpe: Mr. Speaker, since we are talking about geography, my riding is the one that has middle class and working class as well as an industrial base. It is not Forest Hill like hers.

It is the government's policy that is killing jobs. There are 26,000 employers from the furniture industry that are already operating at a dollar level that is eight cents above its competitive level. Government policies are responsible for a 29 per cent increase in U.S. furniture exports to Canada over this year, resulting in a 54.5 per cent decrease in trade surplus in U.S. furniture items.

How can this minister stand idly by when her government's policies are destroying employment opportunities in Canada and transferring them down south?

Mrs. McDougall: Mr. Speaker, clearly the hon. member does not know his own riding any better than he knows mine. Let me point out to him that in the city from which we come, as in other parts of Canada, there are individuals who are experiencing temporary economic difficulties.

My department and this government are there to help them. I would point out to him that the people in his riding, in my riding, and in our city are one heck of a lot better off today than they were in 1983.

* * *

[*Translation*]

SHIPYARDS

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology. Quebec shipyard workers heard yesterday that in addition to the Conservative government's new tax on goods and services, they are going to lose their jobs, because according to our information and what was said yesterday in the Quebec National Assembly, in 1992 there will be no more shipyards in Quebec.

Will the Minister respond to an appeal by Quebecers to guarantee the future of our shipyards, and will he from now on award a substantial number of contracts to Quebec?

[*English*]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, the federal government is well aware of the situation at MIL. Indeed, I have met with Minister Tremblay, the Minister of Industry and Commerce, as well as Robert Tessier, the president of MIL.

MIL has work in its yards until 1992. There is an overcapacity of shipbuilding in Canada against the kinds of order that we see coming down. We have a policy in place that the Government of Canada will co-operate with any industrial led efforts at consolidation. We have closed yards in Ontario and Quebec under that policy.

We are ready to co-operate with the Government of Quebec which is the owner of this yard in terms of meeting the challenges that lie ahead.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, will the minister give Quebecers the assurance today that after 1992, there will still be shipyards in Quebec so that these workers can at least cherish that hope during the Christmas holidays?

[*English*]

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, certainly I can assure the hon. member, as I assured Minister Tremblay and assured Mr. Tessier, that the Government of Canada is ready to co-operate with the owners of MIL, the Government of Quebec and the management of the yard to manage this situation.

There is nothing that I can do immediately or within a short-term agenda to change the situation. There is an overcapacity of shipbuilding capability in this country, but we were certainly committed to working with the Government of Quebec to ensure the workers and of MIL have their interests attended to.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Stan Wilbee (Delta): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of the Environment, my question is for his parliamentary secretary.

It has come to my attention that there had been another oil spill on the west coast south of Vancouver near Cherry Point. This oil is moving up toward Boundary Bay which is in my riding. It is home to 100,000 migratory birds at this time of year, as well as extensive shell fishing and herring fishing in that area.

How is this being monitored? What is it that the Canadian government is doing to protect the wildlife in Canadian waters if it does indeed enter into the Canadian waters?

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, yesterday afternoon two or perhaps at some times three oil slicks of essentially a relatively small size were detected near Cherry Point and Birch Point.

As a result both Canadian Coast Guard and American Coast Guard officials went into operation to monitor the source of the slicks and to follow their passage.

The joint Canadian-American action plan was put in place as a result of a request from Environment Canada. Canadian Wildlife Services helicopters monitored the slick's shift in the afternoon and this morning.

I was advised as of an hour and a half ago and as a result of recent overflights that the oil slicks are no

longer detectable. Nevertheless Canadian and American officials are monitoring and patrolling the beaches as a precautionary measure.

* * *

ROMANIA

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Right Hon. Secretary of State for External Affairs.

I am sure all members of the House share a concern about events in Romania yesterday. I wonder if the right hon. Secretary of State for External Affairs is prepared to tell the House what message was communicated to the Romanian Ambassador yesterday and what message might be subsequently communicated to the Government of Romania today, given the additional information that we have, and just what the government intends to do over the long run with respect to the deteriorating situation of Romania.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, all members of the House are very deeply concerned about the reports coming out of Romania, both those specifically with regard to Reverend Laszlo Tokes and also with the evident repression of the citizens of Romania by their authorities. I have issued today a statement condemning that action by the authorities in Romania.

One of the difficulties of course is that it is hard for us to get details out of that closed country which has become even more closed, including to the extent that when Canadian diplomats were sent to register our approval the foreign ministry officials in Romania refused to receive them.

That is an unacceptable breach of diplomatic practice as the repression of the people of Romania by their government is unacceptable. I think it raises questions as to how we can maintain constructive relations with a country that acts in such utter disregard of diplomatic practice and of the rights of its own people.

Mr. Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I am sure that when the minister said "register our approval" he meant "disapproval".

I wonder: what is the situation in the Canadian Embassy and what is the situation of Canadians in Romania? Are we adequately staffed there? What does the government intend to do over the next few days to make sure that we get the kind of information that we need and that the government is able to take the steps it ought to take in this case?

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for correcting the record.

I believe we are adequately staffed in Romania, although we keep that under constant review. I have asked for a report on the situation and safety of Canadians there.

• (1500)

I do not yet have that. We are seeking information about the extent and nature of the repression in that country, not only from authorities and our own officers in Romania, but also from those in neighbouring countries and other organizations which might be able to break through the curtain of repression that seems to have become even stronger in that country. Naturally, as events develop, I will keep the House advised, if it is in session, or otherwise will communicate with the foreign policy spokesmen of the other parties in the House.

* * *

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, in order to introduce its goods and services tax, last week the government announced a series of cuts affecting the Public Service, the national museums, libraries, research and development and the tourism industry in the national capital region. To add insult to injury, the Prime Minister called Canada's capital, "Fat City". The Prime Minister should come with me to see Ottawa's food banks, Ottawa's homeless and Ottawa's poor.

Will the Prime Minister stand up in this House and apologize?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I will not stand up and apologize, but I will stand up and correct the record that my hon. friend has just given to the House.

On December 9, 1989, I was asked the following question by a journalist: "Would you agree with the thesis that it is much easier to sell Canadians if they see Fat City, Ottawa, sort of belt-tightening a little bit?" The statement came from a journalist and not from me.

In my answer I acknowledged his use of the word. But I also acknowledged in the course of that dialogue that I thought that all parts of the country could and should do more.

I did not utter a pejorative word about Ottawa or about the National Capital Region. I think that it is clearly a very prosperous and very innovative part of our nation. This government has had to take some initiatives, here and across the country, that have impacted negatively on certain aspects of institutions in the region, and I regret it deeply.

I wish that we had more money to do more things, but I think the people in the National Capital Region, who are principally responsible for the efficient functioning of the federal government I think they realize, perhaps more than most, the extent to which it is important to bring about sanity in the finances of Canada. They have made a contribution to that, as we all have, which I readily acknowledge, and I can assure my hon. friend that the statement made by the journalist is not one that I or any member of my government shares.

* * *

ACID RAIN

Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy—Royal): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of the Environment, my question is for the parliamentary secretary. Recently, there have been discouraging signs from Washington that the Bush administration is wavering on its commitment made earlier this year to reducing acid rain. Can the parliamentary secretary indicate what steps the department's officials are taking to impress upon the American government that the environmental problems associated with acid rain are only too real?

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, first, I would indicate on behalf of the Government of Canada that we firmly believe that there is ample evidence of the trans-boundary effect of acid rain, which is the case before the U.S. Court of Appeal. Of course, the government of Ontario is one of the petitioners in that case.

Nevertheless, the position which the United States government is taking in this particular court case certainly demonstrates a need for acid rain legislation being passed by the U.S. Congress. Furthermore, it reaffirms a need for a bilateral accord between Canada and the United States. With regard to the latter, Canadian officials have already met twice with their American counterparts in preparation for setting the basis for the talks, which will hopefully lead to the development of a bilateral accord. There is a third meeting planned for the month of January.

In closing, I would note that Ambassador Burney, in a recent issue of *The Globe and Mail*, stated, referring to the year 1990, "I am hopeful this is the year we will conclude an acid rain accord with the United States". We share that hope, Mr. Speaker.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Mr. Speaker: On Friday, November 3, the hon. member from York Centre sought to obtain the unanimous consent of the House in order to raise a question of privilege at the outset of the sitting without having submitted written notice.

[*Translation*]

The substance of the question had to do with what the hon. member for York Centre characterized as the deliberate interference by an official of the Federal Business Development Bank with the delivery of documents which the Bank had agreed to provide. He indicated that he wanted these documents in order to turn them over to the RCMP. In anticipation of their receipt, he had arranged a meeting with RCMP people in his office on the Thursday afternoon. As it happened, the documents were not turned over to the hon. member for this meeting.

[*English*]

The hon. member from Glengarry—Prescott-Russell supported the question of privilege and explained that the material requested from the bank was in the public domaine, as these documents had already been given to *The Montreal Gazette*. He went on to state that the failure of the bank to deliver the documents in the time previously arranged prevented the hon. member from York Centre from turning them over to the RCMP. Both members asserted that the decision to withhold the documents by an Ottawa official of the bank interfered

with the rights and obligations of that member to fulfil his responsibilities as a member of Parliament.

[*Translation*]

At the same time, however, the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell explained that the Federal Business Development Bank subsequently agreed to release the documents.

It would therefore appear that the question of privilege relates to a delay in the delivery of documents to the hon. member for York Centre which prevented him from keeping his appointment with the RCMP as originally planned. While the member may have been inconvenienced, it is difficult for the Chair to be convinced that this constitutes a question of privilege.

[*English*]

While there was a delay, it does not seem to be clear that the hon. member was hindered in the performance of his duties. Inconvenienced perhaps, but not interfered with.

I might also add that even though it was claimed that the documents were in the public domaine, it appears to me that, in fact, these documents remained the property of the bank. If by virtue of an internal decision or mix-up, and I do not want to suggest motives, the documents were not delivered when the member from York Centre had expected them, it seems to me that it is a matter to be resolved between the member and the bank.

As it happens, the bank has agreed to release the documents and that agreement was evidently made before this question of privilege was raised here. The matter, therefore, would appear to be resolved.

I thank the hon. member for bringing the matter to the attention of the House.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

INCOME TAX ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of report stage of Bill C-28, an Act to amend the Income Tax Act, the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Federal

Post-Secondary Education and Health Contributions Act, the Old Age Security Act, the Public Utilities Income Tax Transfer Act, the War Veterans Allowance Act and a related Act, as reported (without amendment) from a Legislative Committee; and on Motions Nos. 4, 6 and 7.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Resuming debate. The hon. member for Mount Royal.

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak to Motion No. 4 and Motion No. 7, on Bill C-28, but do sincerely regret that we are under a time allocation threat in this House. It is one that is used constantly and I think shows disrespect for the democratic process that would reflect our ability to speak to this issue in the name of all of our constituents.

This debate really symbolizes the Conservative party's true agenda. The issues we are discussing include the clawbacks of seniors pensions and family allowance. They are fundamentally an erosion of the universality principle that has always guided the social programs in this country.

The Conservative agenda appears aimed at cutting and reducing that caring aspect of government while saying that it is "in the national interest".

• (1510)

Well, I do not think that we agree. This is where we part company because we believe in a far more balanced approach and a much more fiscally responsible approach, always respecting a more compassionate tradition upon which our country was founded.

Throughout Canada's history, with all the change that has been wrought over its 120 years, there has always remained this one deeply held fundamental principle. That conviction has been a cornerstone of our national life and has not changed for many decades. It is our tradition of universal access to social programs, whether they be our medicare programs, our unemployment insurance programs, family allowance, Old Age Security and where needed, guaranteed income supplements, veterans allowances, et cetera. It was Canada's way of being fair and tolerant as a society.

Yet in 1984 that tradition had begun to unravel. It is this unravelling that I would like to talk about today. Since coming into office the Conservatives have time after time, year after year, continued a slow and very deceptive but always real plan to dismantle the safety net

of social programs that most of us believe were part of the fabric of this country.

It used to be everyone's right as a Canadian to have equal access to social programs. That is no longer true. That contract has been broken. Universality is such a simple idea, really. It is so easy to understand. It is the expression of a belief that over a lifetime every Canadian contributes to the building and flourishing of this society in their own way, and to the best of their ability, and that no one should be shut out from the benefits of the country that they have helped to build. That is universality.

In most instances its benefits are taxable in the hands of the receiver based on income levels. That is a fair and universal approach. The member thinks that is what they have done but it is not so.

We must remember that universality survived governments of both political parties, survived recessions and, indeed, grew out of the depression. Yet this spirit and tradition of a government looking out for the health and welfare of every Canadian, no matter where they live, no matter what their means, has come to a sudden end with this government since 1984.

Universality has become little more than words on a paper, words offered to Canadians on the one hand, then quickly erased with the other. How familiar we are with the Prime Minister standing before a crowd and declaring to all the country that our social programs were a sacred trust. Yes, there were days when this government's smooth rhetoric tricked Canadians into believing it shared this caring approach to social programs.

But it seems to have been a mask behind which has lain the real truth. Time after time this government has used fast talk and colourful packaging to hide from Canadians the true facts of the slow and determined dismantling of universal access to social programs and, in particular, the old age security for which these people have already paid. They started paying in 1952 and to this day they have been paying. But this government does not care to acknowledge this.

If it was a private sector pension plan, this government would not have allowed this kind of action for one second, but because it is the public sector it feels it can just go about doing this without consulting the public and to the detriment of everyone in this country.

In five long years of opposition we have been devoting endless energy trying to stop this government's slow piece by piece erosion of social benefits.

It was early in their mandate that the unravelling really took place. I go back to December 21, 1984, just weeks after the Conservatives took office, when the finance minister first proposed the de-indexing of old age pensions. We know what happened. We know what Madam Solange Denis said and we knew that Pinocchio's nose was getting longer and longer.

Liberals began to battle with this government because they could not seem to understand why we were so committed to universality. It is because Canadians believed in fairness and in equality.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Belsher: Be nice.

Mrs. Finestone: I am sorry. If the shoe fits, you have to wear it even if it is uncomfortable. Canadians believe in fairness and equality. Canadians believe that all individuals, no matter what their social status, deserve equitable treatment. I want members opposite to listen because when you segregate services only to the very needy then those services meant only for the poor become very poor services. If you do not have a vested interest then you do not take care. That is the great concern we have.

I would like to talk about the clawback from our pensioners of Old Age Security benefits from certain income groups and family allowance benefits from families, both where their incomes are over $50,000 a year. On top of choosing this arbitrary figure as a cut-off, the government will not allow this figure to grow with inflation. It is allowing for only partial inflation protection of 3 per cent.

Once again we see the two faces of this government with the introduction of the clawback at a time when the spectre of the elections have hardly faded so dimly that we cannot recall the Prime Minister with his arm lovingly placed around his mother and saying, "Dear Mom" in Summerside, P.E.I., "as long as I am Prime Minister of Canada social benefits, especially those for the elderly, will be improved not diminished by our government". You wondered why I said Pinocchio before. It is another

reminder of when we had the attempt to deindex old age security, that sacred trust to which I just referred.

The reality is that the 1989 budget did cut the Old Age Security benefits through this clawback and cut family allowances and cut health care funding. Today, the practical implications are that anyone receiving $50,000 a year in net retirement income will have their pension benefits clawed back into the government's treasury. It is the same for family allowances.

There is an additional piece of trickery for 70 per cent of seniors whose net income is based not only on pensions and interest but dividends as well. For if you collect dividends the amount of these dividends are grossed up by 25 per cent.

Len Shiffrin said it far better perhaps than I am going to when he pointed out in *The Ottawa Citizen* of May 4,—I think we have to focus part of the fight in this area—that the moneys received from your Canadian investment income is grossed up by 25 per cent in calculating net income. Then this is offset by the dividend tax credit in the final tax calculation. The clawback, however, is based on the inflated net income figure. Therefore, the threshold is not based on real income, it could include thousands of dollars imaginary income grossed up by 25 per cent on Canadian investment income.

What about tomorrow? Within 10 years nearly one million more Canadian families will lose all or part of their family allowances and old age pensions because of this government's action. The threshold will change. It will only rise in future years if the annual inflation exceeds 3 per cent. That means eight years from now the taxed back threshold will have fallen to equivalent of $40,000 today.

It is true that $50,000 income threshold for the beginning of its clawback affects relatively few seniors and sounds like an awful lot of money but it is about 13 per cent of old age security recipients who file income tax forms with only 3.5 per cent of those paying back all of the pension.

At first glance it seems reasonable. Indeed, it might seem like easy street to many people—according to Hugh Winsor— approximately a half a million seniors who live below the poverty line. I would say to them, do not think that it is such an easy street.

It is true the $76,000 where the clawback tops out is beyond the expectations of most Canadians, but the sneakiness and the potential unfairness enters in the way that the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance have chosen to treat that over time. It is very sneaky, it is inflationary. We can see that most people who are young and in their early forties today will be losing their pension, their Old Age Security, and so the whole principle of universality is being thrown out the back door. We use bureaucrats to send out the cheques. We say: "We will give it to you," and then we use bureaucrats to see that we collect it back. It makes absolutely no sense. If the government wanted to cut universality it should have said so.

• (1520)

Mr. René Soetens (Ontario): Madam Speaker, I rise today to join in this debate on the issue of Old Age Security tax back and family allowance. I am surprised that we would be debating this particular issue considering that the members to the left in this House have generally been concerned about the fact that higher income Canadians are not paying their share.

We are trying to come up with a proposal to make it possible for Canadians to pay their share in a very appropriate fashion. Yes, it will be universal. It will be universal in that every Old Age Security recipient who receives the cheque who is of high income will pay it back in one form or another. So, it is very universal and very appropriate.

What are we talking about? During the free trade debate many months ago the opposition and others instilled fear in Canadians about how they were going to lose all their benefits because of free trade. The most vulnerable people in our society were attacked by those in opposition. Now we see another very similar attack. I have received calls from constituents in my riding, from people who are receiving old age security who would not be affected by this particular measure for quite some period of time.

I thought I would follow through on some of the misrepresentations that some of my constituents have received on this issue by people opposed to this Old Age Security tax back. Basically, if you take the average Canadian who only receives Old Age Security and Canada Pension—I would point out that there are many seniors in my riding who only receive those two particular items—it means that they have an income of $11,000 a year. That is a very low income and certainly not one

that many can get by on. I should know because I have family who basically functions on that kind of an income. They addressed the concern with me about the tax back of Old Age Security because they had been led to believe, wrongfully, that they were going to be immediately affected. So, I worked out for them, based on a 3 per cent inflation factor which seems to be the concern that some of the opposition members have, how they would be affected.

After ten years they would be making only $14,790. That means they are still a long way short of $50,000. In fact, my mother who is 71 would have to live another 52 years in order to be caught by this tax based on a 3 per cent inflation factor. I truly hope she lives that long. I truly hope that at age 123 she is there to see that she has finally arrived at that $50,000 threshold.

The Minister of Finance has clearly said that we would review these programs on a regular basis and adjust them appropriately. The problem that is going to bother her is when she gets to be 123 and discovers that she has hit that $50,000 threshold that the threshold has been moved upwards. It is interesting that none of the opposition members bother to mention that in their particular representation.

I thought, if my mother has to live another 52 years to be 123 maybe I ought to look at somebody who has a pension, someone who has more than just the Old Age Security. So I took the average salary in my riding. I am fortunate to have a riding that has a good average income and very buoyant economic times. I say a lot of that is a very direct result of good government policy. But the average income in my riding is about $39,000. So I took the attitude of many of the left wing opposition members down the way here that they should have a pension. The average pension that a $39,000 wage earner in my riding could expect from the average employer in my riding would be about $17,000 a year.

Here they are at age 65. They retire, having earned $39,000 a year, with a $17,000 pension. On top of that, of course, they make $11,000 in Canada Pension and Old Age Security. There they have it.

How long does it take for them to hit the $50,000 threshold? I thought you would like to know that that 65-year old would only have to live to be 102 in order to hit the threshold. Of course at age 102 when they discover they finally make $50,000, lo and behold, the finance minister as he had promised, has reviewed the program, has amended the thresholds upward. And they still do not get caught by this terrible tax back that this group down the way are talking about. It is terrible.

Let us make the assumption that that poorer individual who retired on a $17,000 pension had an indexed pension because, of course, not many do. I thought maybe we would make the assumption that they have been successful in getting themselves an indexed pension. It would still take 19 years before they got to that $50,000 threshold. Again, they would discover that the good old Minister of Finance of the day, still being a Conservative, would have naturally made the adjustments in the threshold level and they would not have been affected at all. The fear that the opposition members are putting in senior citizens is very unacceptable.

Let us make the assumption that that poor individual finally makes $50,000. The member who spoke previously talked about this poor senior who has grossed up dividend income. I presume that person probably lives in Rockcliffe or Forest Hill in Toronto. I mean $40,000 in dividend income. The stocks that I have—and I am not a very good investor—only yield me about 2 per cent dividend income. So that $40,000 dividend income that she is speaking of means I have to have $800,000 sitting someplace in investments. Poor little old Canadian me. I really need a lot of help.

Let us give her the benefit of the doubt. Let's presume that I do it a little better. I am just one of these poor investors. I know all about preferred dividends. A really good sharp investor. The average Canadian senior knows all about preferred dividends. I am going to be able to invest my money at 8 or 9 per cent. I still have over $400,000 in equity sitting somewhere. Poor Canadian! This is who the NDP and the Liberals say ought to be taxed.

I am one of these poor Canadians with all this equity sitting around in a bank some place and I make $51,000. This terrible tragedy that they foisted on me because I

was $1,000 over that threshold. Do you know how much tax that cost me, Madam Speaker? It cost $150 because I have over $400,000 in stocks or $800,000 in stocks. I cannot believe that my friends to the left are really telling me that low-income Canadians need this help.

You ought to carry that on a little further because I have talked about the poor Canadian who makes $51,000. Let us talk about the poor Canadian who makes $61,000. He makes $11,000 more than the threshold. There are a lot of seniors out there who are really poor and who have an awful time spending $61,000 a year. Yet here is someone making $61,000. In the third year of the program, not the first year and not the second year but in the third year he has to pay $1,650 out of the $4,000 that the government is sending him.

I know that the opposition does not like that idea but I have some great difficulty in believing that my friends here on the left are concerned about Canadians making $60,000 or $70,000. In fact a Canadian who has to pay back the entire old age security would have to make $77,000 a year. I appreciate the concern that the members to the left have on high-income Canadians. I have great difficulty in believing that they are at all serious in the belief that seniors who make $77,000 a year should get government assistance of any kind, let alone the Old Age Security.

Let us not talk about the senior because there is the portion of people who make $50,000 or more who have families. They get family allowance cheques all the time. There is another group that really needs help. I am impressed as all get out by the opposition members here. The people to the left are really quite concerned that they help low income Canadians with families.

• (1530)

These low income Canadians with families, just how much money do they make? It is really a very tremendous amount of money. Family allowance is about $32 a month per child.

I see that you are indicating that I have only one minute left, Madam Speaker. I could go on about how these people are trying to help these poor low-earning members of Parliament such as myself who has three children, and I should be eligible for family allowance. I appreciate that they think that I ought to get family allowance. But, you know, I do not mind at all if you tax it back from me. I am serious. I can say that I have had similar representations from every senior who qualifies for old age security in the high income bracket. I have not had one objection to the tax back of old age security, if they make more than $50,000 and if they live in my riding. Not one senior in my riding has complained about that. You people ought to get with it.

Mr. Jack Whittaker (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand today and debate the amendments, Motions Nos. 4, 6 and 7 on Bill C-28, which is an act to amend the Income Tax Act.

I woke up this morning and I was humming this little song, a little Christmas ditty, "Christmas is coming, the goose is getting fat". It occurred to me whose goose it was that was getting fat. Obviously, it was the goose of the members across the aisle because Tory times are taxing times and the goose on this side is not getting fat, it is getting more slender as we get more and more of this Tory legislation.

We have the UI bill. We have free trade. We have the GST. This morning, what happened? We had the Minister of Finance dropping the GST from 9 per cent to 7 per cent. Wow! What a Christmas present!

But we do not want to lose sight of what is in fact happening. We do not want to lose sight of the dastardly deeds of this government. Bill C-28, for instance, is one of these slippery, sneaky methods that this government uses to hit those least able to fight back—families and seniors. Shame, shame on the members of the government.

We have just seen an example in the last speech before the House and in some of the answers during Question Period by the Minister of Finance of the arrogance and contempt with which members of this government treat the people of Canada. They say they are listening, but they are not hearing. They have not heard a word that the people of Canada have said about the goods and services tax. They have not heard a word that the people have said about the unemployment insurance amendments. They have not heard a word that the people of Canada, particularly families and seniors, have said about these amendments to the Income Tax Act.

It is undoubted as we look at this, in spite of what the members across the way have said, that this is a direct attack on universality. It is not simply a little method of getting some money back through taxation of the rich. Universality, after all, is the means by which we can pay out to people without having them submit to a means test. We in this party want to continue to ensure that all Canadians, regardless of income, have available to them

all programs such as old age security, Canada pension, unemployment insurance and medicare.

I think it is very interesting to look at the comments of the chairman of the finance committee. It is interesting because it is not the first time that this member has spoken up and laid before us through one of his foot-in-mouth comments what the true agenda of this government is. He has told us in a letter to a person from Alberta that this is simply the start of the dismantling of the universality of our social programs. We know that that is correct.

We can look at some of the others, but do not take my word for it. Let me just refer to a few others. A person from my riding in Penticton says that one of the things that a person counts on when planning for retirement is that no one will move the pension goal post, so to speak, at the time when that person has reached retirement age and is no longer able to revise his or her provisions for retirement. Universality of the OAP is one of those goal posts.

We can look to other organized groups such as the National Pensioners and Senior Citizens Federation. They tell us that the Minister of Finance claims that the clawback proposal is not a breach of universality of the OAS program. He bases the claim on the continuance of monthly pension cheques to all qualified recipients, using a very narrow school boy logic type of approach. A few people might buy this claim, seniors do not. The fact of making payments under one act and then recovering them under a different act of Parliament does not change the basic truth. We see it as a transparent move to abandon universality by a circuitous route. There is no doubt about it. That in fact is what is happening.

The Federal Superannuates National Association states as follows, "In the case of pension plan arrangements particular to past and present employees of the Public Service of Canada, the Canadian Armed Forces and Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the present arrangements in regard to integration of Canadian Pension Plan and Public Service plans were only agreed to by employees' representatives in light of an assurance by government that Old Age Security would be paid universally, without restriction. If there had been any indication that OAS would, under particular financial circumstances, be abated or denied, the integration of CPP benefits would, for certain, have been vastly different from the present arrangements. There is no doubt in our mind that government is under a moral obligation to maintain the *status quo*".

I had a telex, Madam Speaker, from the South Okanagan branch of the Federal Superannuates National Association in Penticton, British Columbia. They state, "Federal superannuates and their dependants object strongly to the budget proposal to introduce special tax on Old Age Security benefits. To target this particular source of income for extra taxation can only be seen as a flagrant repudiation of the doctrine of universality of these benefits". This is another group that has shown us that this is an attack on universality.

As the chairman of the finance committee well knows, the government is going to dismantle what all of us have fought for.

Let me go on, Madam Speaker. The Coalition of Quebec Seniors states, "As seniors we remember well the odious means test for health and social services and fear for its inevitable return if the clawback is enacted in law. We believe that the true reason for the clawback is to abandon the principle of universality and not to reduce the budget deficit".

In talking about the cut-backs, the Vanier Institute of the Family state, "Time and again the objectives of universal family allowances are mistakenly equated with the income security objectives of social assistance payments. It is wrong to suggest that family allowances are nothing more than welfare for the middle-class and the wealthy. Family allowances and family-related tax provisions are not welfare measures. They are, rather, mechanisms to ensure an equitable system of benefits and taxation that acknowledges that the capacity of parents to pay tax is less than the capacity of others at the same income level who do not have children to support. C-28, if and when enacted, does without doubt effectively terminate Canada's universal program of family allowances. If and when it is enacted, Canada will join the United States, which is the only other industrially ad-

vanced society that does not distribute some variety of family allowance to parents".

• (1540)

I would be remiss in any speech on old age security if I did not refer to *One Voice* and their thoughts on universality. Let me just quote one small section from their brief to the legislative committee on Bill C-28, a committee that allowed so few of the people of Canada to speak because of the Conservative majority. That is very, very shameful. The quote is this, "In fact, the government could have introduced the clawback at $30,000 but it chose not to do so. Why? Because the clawbacks would then be seen not as a tax of the wealthy but for what it really is, recovery of benefits from part of the population. This is an attack on the universality of Canada's social programs".

Every one of these groups recognizes this for what it is. It is for that reason that I stand today and support the motion of the loyal opposition, a motion that we have also put forward, which motion would delete the clawback provisions within this bill.

This bill is an attack on universality. It is an attack on families. It is an attack on seniors. We on this side of the House will not prescribe to the little song, "A spoonful of sugar makes the medicine go down," because we are choking on the bits of gruel that we are thrown on this side of the House. We will not stand for it any longer.

Mr. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence): Madam Speaker, until just a few moments ago I was under the impression, quite frankly, that the government was going to proceed as it has on so many other occasions in this session in jackboot fashion, simply to put forward and perpetuate its vision of what the country would be without giving any explanation, without giving us so much as a modicum of understanding of its agenda, its direction, its purposes and what benefits there would be to Canadians one and all, to what benefits there might exist to each and every one of us, for each and every one of us to be member citizens of this great state. I dare say "great state" still because at least we have a loyal opposition that tries to penetrate at the depths of whatever legislation is being promulgated despite the wishes of all Canadians in order that we might at least see the directions in which we are being led whether we approve or no.

I say that was only until a few moments ago, until finally we heard a member of the government side. I am not sure whether he was motivated by a desire to ensure that the truth do speak and speak out loudly and forcibly when he did say, and being singular and unique amongst all the members of his caucus, that the reason we are presenting this legislation is, to be brutally frank, to ensure that those who do not require assistance no longer have it, that we no longer operate on the premise that if there are benefits that accrue to individuals who become citizens, native born or naturalized in this country, that we are no longer entitled to those benefits if we do not pass at the very first instance a means test that is defined arbitrarily, whimsically, appropriately as the government says and periodically as its whim would apply as the occasion demands and as the necessities of economics dictate.

Would that the government had had the courage to say so at the very beginning so that all Canadians would have known that the agenda of this government, that the vision of this government for Canada would be predicated on a series of principles and directions that excluded Canadians from benefiting from their input in the development and promulgation of programs beneficial to this state.

So what have we? We had utter silence over the course of the last couple of days on this debate by members on the government side until this one member decided that the truth could no longer be withheld and that he had to join in the chorus of the member for Mississauga South who did say, and I think I quote him correctly, that universality is much too expensive a principle upon which Canadians can build a society of free and secure individuals. It is much too expensive, says he. He is in agreement, of course, with the Minister of Finance who says that we must clawback whatever benefits have accrued to citizens who have contributed by dent of their efforts, by their contributions in either a pension plan or, in this other case, through family involvement in nurturing a family environment that has been the steadfast base upon which our society has been built.

So what are Canadians to think? What are they to say when before this House the Minister of Finance, in response to penetrating questions that ask for a rationale, some sort of indication as to what reason there might be for us to tax discriminately, pejoratively and with great prejudice, Canadians on the basis of age or family affiliation? What is his response? In a very

cavalier and arrogant fashion he says, "Why does the loyal opposition bother itself with the affairs of a mere 4 per cent of the Canadian population, a mere 4 per cent?"

I suppose that that kind of negative criticism by the Minister of Finance stands us in good stead. We are proud to be able to say that we have received accolades from the Minister of Finance for supporting all Canadians, be they small in number, be their numbers so minute in quantity that they need someone who truly represents democracy at its very essence. But that 4 per cent represents Canadians who have been the most productive, those who have gone through their life making sacrifices upon which this country has been built and upon which I dare say this government today still draws great benefit.

Yet the Minister of Finance and the chairman of the finance committee from Mississauga South, who is here today to listen to this debate will say, and without even a shamed-face smile, that the country can no longer afford to give benefit to those people who have deserved it by their responsibilities, by their contributions, by their efforts, by their enterprise and by the taxes that they have contributed to the revenues of this state.

One no longer knows whether to cry or to laugh. The arrogance, the gall of such a statement from the government side belies that in fact we are headed purposely towards an elitist society wherein those who are well-off are treated in a fashion that is favourable, to say the least, because they are seen to be, in the opinion of the Minister of Finance, those who are most likely to contribute greater investment and entrepreneurial resources to this country. The rest of us who do not fit into that category can look forward to facing bills and legislation such as Bill C-28 in which whatever benefits are accrued to us will be clawed back.

Why go through this charade? Why not be honest? Why not say you are no longer entitled to any benefits merely because you have contributed, merely because you pay taxes, merely because your entrepreneurial skills and your sacrifices generate great wealth upon which this society shall be based?

• (1550)

We can no longer tolerate a government that tells us one thing and does another, and thinks that it can get away with such pacts. We can no longer tolerate misleading directions—I hesitated for a moment because the word "lie" was going to utter forth from my lips and I did not want to commit an unparliamentary statement and attribute it to members opposite. But, quite frankly, the Canadian public is looking at this debate and saying, "Why have we been mislead? Why can we not have direct, straightforward debate? If we cannot afford something, say so at the very beginning. Tell us how we must pay for it. If this benefit is good, then it must be good for all of us."

Those who are less well off are no less reluctant to give equal benefits, similar benefits to those who are well off. Those who are well off enjoy that benefit because they are members of this society, not simply because they have the good fortune to have more resources, financial or otherwise, than perhaps others in Canadian society. If we establish a base of principle, that principle, that base applies to each and every one of us. There should be no discrimination, and definitely there should be no discrimination on the basis of age. Here we have the government trying to hide the fact that today those who are 65 will receive no benefits once they are at $60,000. We have seen today in Question Period the Minister of Finance refuse to give any kind of assurances or guarantees—not that they would be worth much, he has proven this much, or not that they would be worth anything at all—that that particular threshold would be reduced.

In fact, we know that this is nothing more than a Trojan horse to upset, overturn, and destroy the society we have worked so long to construct and build.

Mrs. Diane Marleau (Sudbury): Madam Speaker, today I rise to speak on Motion No. 4 which seeks to delete the clawback provision of Bill C-28. Let me begin by explaining the difference between tax back and clawback. Tax back means that you remove a certain percentage of income from taxpayers. Clawback means you remove the whole thing.

Universality means that programs are applied to everyone equally. Clawback in this case means that for a certain segment of the population you are going to remove that program. You start off by clawing back family allowances to families where one income earner

earns more than $50,000. What that says to me is that you are discriminating against families. Families, I have always believed, are the backbone of our country. We should be encouraging families, but we are not.

We are saying that if you are a one income family, that is, if one of the parents chooses to remain at home with the family but that one parent who works happens to make $51,000, at the end of three years that family will lose all family allowance benefits. This government should be encouraging families, not taking away something that they may need.

A family which earns $51,000 if they have two, three, or four children is not rich. They may not be that poor, but they certainly would need the encouragement of this government.

On the other hand, if you have a family where both parents work and the highest income is below $50,000, the one parent might make $48,000 and the other might make $40,000, they do not lose their family allowance benefits. They get it taxed back at the same rate as anyone else, but they do not lose the whole amount. Not only do they not lose their family allowance benefit, but they can claim child care expenses. But you cannot if you have a parent who stays at home. Does that encourage family life? Of course not. You are saying to the couple in this case who might make $85,000 or $88,000, "That's all right. You can keep part of your family allowance." But to the other family where there is an income of $51,000 you are saying, "No, you can't." That is unfair and that is discrimination. We all know how difficult it is to raise a family. I am totally opposed to this kind of legislation. Rather than attacking the families of our nation, we should be encouraging them in any way that we can.

One of the other provisions of Bill C–28 is that we claw back the old age pension for those who have an income higher than $50,000. At first sight it does not look too bad. But why are we discriminating against that one segment of the population? One of the members opposite was saying before that as members of Parliament we make more than $50,000 a year. That is fine. We make more than $50,000 a year, but if we go on the stock market and we make some money playing the stock market the government does not come in and tax it away at 100 per cent. All we are saying is, treat everyone equally. Do not discriminate on the basis of age. That is what is wrong with this measure.

I am going to read part of a letter that I received from a constituent. It is a letter dated December 4. It states:

> Dear Madam,
>
> In answer to a question of the Leader of the Opposition on November 29, 1989, (Hansard p.6372) the Minister of State (Seniors) said:
>
> > "We intend to improve our social programs and we are asking 4 per cent of Canada's seniors to help us reduce the deficit—"

This is his response:

> I thought that I hadn't heard right so I waited for Hansard. Now my eyes are confirming what my ears have heard. The Tories are asking the seniors to reduce the deficit! How Machiavellian and utterly despicable to now ask seniors who survived the Great Depression, who worked for $1.00 a day, who endured very patriotically two World Wars, to ask them to pay for the wasteful extravagance of this incompetent government! The seniors of this country have paid dearly in terms of money, blood and sweat for the right to a pension during the autumn of their lives. Taxing O.A.S. is fair game but the proposed clawback is immoral. Let the Government clawback the revenues of strip joints but leave the Seniors alone.
>
> Would it take the demonstrations that we have recently seen in the countries of eastern Europe to bring this government back to its senses?
>
> Yours truly,
> Andre Emery

I say to you, this is the feeling of many seniors across this country. They have not only earned the right to an old age pension, but most of them have also paid. If you can recall back a few years, there was a stipulation in the income tax return where they actually paid towards that old age security. They are not asking for special treatment, they are asking to have equal treatment.

What are we doing to the average family income in our country? We are imposing a GST. There will be no relief for these people. We are increasing the surtax and we are now clawing back family allowance benefits and old age pensions.

One of the members opposite said a little while ago, "Well, I do not need the family allowance". I would say to that member, by all means, do not accept it. The government will not keep sending it back to you if you do not want it.

Mr. Allmand: You do not have to apply for it.

Mrs. Marleau: That is right, you do not have to apply for it. Give it to some charity, they might appreciate it. But just because you do not want the family allowance does not mean that there are many families out there who do not really rely on that. That particular program is a very small amount of money that this government gives towards families, towards the children of our country.

Mr. Belsher: It costs a lot of money.

Mrs. Marleau: It may cost some money, but it is certainly worth while. By all means tax it back, but tax it back fairly, at whatever rate you tax everybody else.

• (1600)

If the members across the way were to make a windfall profit somewhere, by all means, tax it. But how would they feel if suddenly they had it all taken away?

How about if you get some kind of a pension because of a disability? How would you feel if suddenly the government came in and said: "Well, you make more than this amount of money, so because this is a special pension, we will take it all away from you. But it is okay to go and make money on the stock market. Sure, we will only take 30 per cent of that away. That is okay. But 100 per cent for that pension". That is what is wrong.

I ask the government to not only reconsider this very seriously but to add some incentives, something, some ray of light, so families can have a proper level of living and can have some hope in this country.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*Translation*]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: The hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Employment; the hon. member for Ottawa West—Pay Equity; the hon. member for Edmonton East—Indian Affairs.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

INCOME TAX ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-28, an act to amend the Income Tax Act, the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Federal Post-Secondary Education and Health Contributions Act, the Old Age Security Act, the Public Utilities Income Tax Transfer Act, the War Veterans Allowance Act and a related Act, as reported (without amendment) from a legislative committee, and Motions Nos. 4, 6 and 7.

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Madam Speaker, my first inclination, as is befitting what one would call an expression of mourning, would be to stand here for my 10 minutes in absolute silence. I would do that not out of respect for the other members of the House, but as a sincere gesture toward those people who are having their family allowances and their pensions clawed back.

I am not too sure where the best place is to start my remarks, but since we are talking about the clawback, maybe that would be the place to do it. I cannot imagine a more fitting term for this government to originate for what it is doing. There is an element of the scavenger. There is an element of the vicious claw. What a descriptive term. Claw back. Let us take away from those people the little money that we are giving them. What a descriptive term for a despicable government.

I experienced seven months of what this government did to the people with unemployment insurance and this clawback is is absolutely in character for the government. I do not know whether it is the result of lack of imagination or the result of too much imagination.

When dealing with cheaters on unemployment insurance, they are absolutely efficient in tracking down some poor person on unemployment insurance, some single mother with a couple of kids trying to put a little bit of food on her table or maybe shoelaces on the kids' shoes. They can track her down when she earns a penny more

than she is allowed under the unemployment insurance regulations.

How do they do it? They do it with computers. They simply cross-match the reports of the employers with the computers that they have in the unemployment insurance commission office. They can find those people.

I think that what they are doing here is the result of lack of imagination. If nothing else, it certainly is sloth. It is inconceivable to me that in this technological age we live in, this government cannot tax people based on how much money they make in relation to how much they ought to be taxed under the Income Tax Act. It is terrible to even suggest that there are some people who are getting money from the government which they ought not to get, to suggest that it is impossible for the government to tax back, not claw back the amount of money in excess of what we as taxpayers ordinarily pay.

There are not very many taxpayers in this country who do not realize that you have to pay taxes. Something that we absolutely object to is this erosion, it is worse than erosion, of the universality which has become such a part of the fabric of Canadian society. It is far more than an erosion. It is a devastation. The words escape me right now but it is an absolutely horrendous thing that this slothful, mean-spirited government would bring in.

It suggests that indeed, as with everything else they seem to put their hands to, government members are incompetent, so incompetent that as we take part in this debate, we find ourselves under closure again. Wonder of wonders.

This is about the tenth or twelfth time since I came to Parliament, I was going to say a year ago, and it is true, that we have been under closure. We were under closure on free trade but that was only one or two instances. Since April when we came back and started Parliament in earnest, this is the tenth or twelfth time I have risen to speak under closure.

What an unimaginative group we have over there. What a mean-spirited, unimaginative group who seem not to be able to do anything constructive, who seem not to be able to come up with imaginative programs for the creation of jobs, for the creation of well-paying quality jobs so people can have some kind of a satisfaction with what they do within society rather than flipping hamburgers and going to work for welfare as they seem to have done so well and have bragged about in connection with some programs they have in my native province of Saskatchewan. Work for welfare, can you imagine anything so obscene? I suspect that "obscene" was the word I was trying to find earlier.

One of the best examples of the incompetence of this government is the bill itself. It was so flawed by their own admission that government members had to bring in 125 amendments to their own legislation, only to withdraw them.

I suppose if you look at flawed legislation and if you look at having to withdraw amendments you make to it, you would have to conclude that what you have there is a couple of negatives. I am sure the chairperson of the finance committee can tell me—the great mathematician that he is—that two negatives make a positive.

I fail to understand how something as broad as the bill originally was without the withdrawn 125 amendments can possibly, except perhaps in the eyes of the government opposite, add up to a positive. I suspect that it may possibly be that when you are talking mathematics, two negatives do make a positive. When you are talking in terms of social programs and social legislation, when you are talking in terms of pensions for our seniors, when you are talking in terms of family allowances, I suggest that these two wrongs certainly do not make a right. It is rather obvious that the exact opposite is true.

• (1610)

How can anyone say that these people, defenseless like most wage earners are, ought to have a certain amount of their rightful earnings taken away? One of the previous speakers pointed out and, it is entirely true, that Canadians have had their taxes deducted in the past for the right to receive old age assistance when they reach the age of retirement. This government is saying no.

I suppose they have lost their computers. I suspect they are not going to be taking into account how much those people contributed, how much they ought to receive as a result of those contributions. They have thrown the computers out and they are going to be clawing back from that old age security. That is, by any definition, theft.

How can this government possibly exonerate itself from taking back money from people who have paid into a program in order that they will receive some kind of benefits when they retire? I do not suppose the government thought of that. I will not just have made government members aware of that. It has been referred to before. Perhaps there will be one or two more amendments they would like to withdraw from the legislation, and I would suspect that the only one they have left to withdraw is the legislation itself. I would suggest that that is precisely the motion which this government ought to withdraw and it ought to withdraw it now.

This is one of the most horrendous things that has happened to the Canadian public, and to do it on the backs of people who have contributed as much as they have to this society and our children who will be contributing is unconscionable.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be here in the House today to address this question that is particularly important to Canadian seniors and Canadian families. I want us to remember that we are not talking just about the clawback. We need to look at it in the economic and social context within which we are currently living.

[*Translation*]

You know very well that there is much less money for education, now. Transfers of funds have been cut not only for education, but also for health. Education is taxed, no matter what the government says, as are some health services. Therefore, when we speak of the famous "clawback" and of its impact on families, we must not consider it as a single occurence. It is there, and it is all the worse because there are other tax measures which impact in a negative way on families.

For instance, there is the goods and services tax. Now, hockey, ball games and other sports will be taxed. Parents pay much more tax than they did five years ago. There have been, I believe, 31 tax increases, and there will be 32, with the goods and services tax. And yet, we know that there is not enough room in day care centres for children, nowadays.

[*English*]

There is simply insufficient daycare space for children whose parents need to go out and work in order to earn a decent living and to provide them with the basic necessities of life. There is, as well, no tax fairness for those parents who choose to stay at home or are able to do so. That is an unfortunate reality.

The basic question that we have to ask ourselves is not only the one that I have raised already, that is, the clawback in itself being a repressive, regressive measure. I will not go through the numbers but it is also quite clear as to what will happen to well over one million Canadian families within the next decade. They will be caught within that net.

We have to ask that other question. If you look at the massive tax increases, the reduction of transfer payments and all of that within the total context of Canadian society, what message is this government sending to Canadian families? What message is it sending out about children, about our children's future?

It seems to me that we need to invest in families and in children. Clearly this clawback, in addition to many of the other regressive measures taken by government, is not going to contribute to that in any way, shape or form.

[*Translation*]

Let us now talk about seniors and the impact of the famous clawback on them.

[*English*]

I think that most of us would recognize that seniors have built this country and we owe them because of what they contributed to the nation. Seniors have invested in this country and they, rightfully so, expect a return on that investment. They have invested not only their talents and their labour, but they have also invested dollars because hon. members are not without knowing that there was, at one time in the not too distant past, a particular provision whereby people who were paying taxes at the time were paying for their senior years so that they could collect a reasonable return upon retirement. They expect a return on that dollar investment.

It is rather interesting, as some of my colleagues have mentioned, that if they had taken those dollars and invested them in a private company and 20, 30 or 40 years

later that private company were to say: "Look, we are sorry, your investment is too high in terms of what we can afford", you and I both know what would happen. They would be pursuing that company in a court of law and they in fact would be remunerated appropriately.

The other thing that I think we need to point out is that the clawback and the deindexation are really the same. Government members lost the first round when they tried to deindex and so they are trying again and it looks very much as if they are going to be successful. Let us not kid ourselves. Let us not permit us to be sidetracked. Deindexation and clawback in the final analysis are basically the same issue. They remove what is rightfully that of others from them.

The partial deindexation, as has been mentioned on a number of occasions, is something that a lot of people have difficulty in understanding. Clearly, if it is in fact looked at in terms of $50,000 a year revenue, these seem like large numbers. Today the concept might be somewhat appealing because most people do not earn $50,000 a year, but let us project to the next decade. Let us remember that those people who may be wondering if this is a good idea because they have not had the time to study it as much as they might have will be the victims of this particular initiative of government within the next decade or so. In 10 years, in 15 years, they will be the clawed backs of this country.

The seniors in this country are frightened. I speak to seniors every single week. They do not know whether or not they will be able to continue to pay their bills, whether or not they will be able to continue to have the basic necessities of life, and they feel as if they have been cheated. I sympathize and empathize with them. I think it is a shame that this government should have created that sense of fear, that sense of fright, that sense of real deep concern among those who can very often less easily defend themselves.

Let us look at the kind of country that has been created which has in fact engendered this kind of fear. We have a government whose policies have pitted one region against another. We have seen that with the CF-18 contract about which Manitoba felt grieved and, therefore, felt badly toward Quebec, and I could cite a whole lot of other examples.

The government has pitted one group against another. Other people feel if seniors are earning $50,000 a year, they should in fact not be complaining if there is a clawback. That is what I mean by pitting one group against another rather than taking the time to explain the reality of what is going to happen.

This is a government that is pitting one individual against another. We now have people who are concerned about what their neighbours are doing, whether or not their neighbours will survive, who become jealous of certain tax conditions that some enjoy while they do not.

• (1620)

This is in fact a government that has created a nation in which we are starting increasingly to doubt each other, to be less caring, to be reaching out less than we have in the past.

Quite apart from this context, if you wish, this fear that I have been describing, we know that the government has doubled the debt, in spite of the fact that revenues have increased by well over 50 per cent over the last five years. I have mentioned the 30-plus tax increases. I have mentioned the reduction of the established programs funding that will impact upon health and education.

We also have hidden taxes. The government tries to make us believe, for example, that education is exempt and that health is exempt. Well, let us look at some of those.

[*Translation*]

Let us take books, for example. Books will be taxed. Take some services. For example, if you take non-credit courses, they will be taxed. And the tax will apply in many other situations.

[*English*]

This is a country in which there are 3.5 to 5 million poor. Among those are one million children. There are over 150 soup kitchens. The government has just chopped one half of VIA Rail and there are going to be 2,700-plus unemployed. The unemployment figures are really very misleading, because many Canadians do not know that there are Canadians who live on reservations who are not a part of those figures, and that the youth unemployment rate in Newfoundland is close to 25 per cent.

This is a government that has decimated the Atlantic fisheries and has frightened farmers throughout the whole nation. Let us remember, as I complete my remarks, that this is not just a clawback. This is, in fact, a clawback that is regressive and that is frightening, one which is concerning people. We need to look at it within

the context of all of the other measures that have been taken and that has added to that fear.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I rise in my place in the House of Commons this afternoon on behalf of thousands of senior citizens in the great riding of Hamilton West.

For the record, the Conservative agenda could not be more clear. With a cruel, shocking, uncaring attitude, the government has intentionally embarked on a destructive course to dismantle the entire system of old age security in this country. It is an entitlement which Canadians long struggled for, a sacred trust—there are those words again, Mr. Speaker, a sacred trust—honoured by governments over the years.

You will notice that I used the word "entitlement". That is because the old age security is not some kind of a welfare handout, or a government payout, or, as the finance minister once called it, a benefit. It is an entitlement that seniors have paid into since 1952.

Yes, this government is clawing back. There is the image, clawing back, like some big bear, some big, ugly, hungry, wants-to-feed-his-stomach bear with a giant claw. Out it reaches to rip back, and, in essence, confiscating money that belongs to seniors.

Just a little earlier here in this Chamber this afternoon we had a member from Ontario rise in his place and say: "Hey, I haven't heard any complaints. I haven't had any calls on this proposed legislation". I invite that member to hold a town hall meeting in his riding, invite the senior citizens to come and have tea with him in the afternoon so that he can hear and be in tune to what the seniors in his riding are saying. If he does not, I will shortly be having a town hall meeting in my riding of Hamilton West. If he would like to come to my riding and hear directly from seniors, I invite him to that meeting.

Time allocation and closure, for what, the tenth or eleventh time since we began sitting in April. It is the government's way of saying let us get this unpopular measure through Parliament in a hurry because the less Canadians know the better. This government has chosen to ram Bill C-28 down our throats without full and honest discussion but, most important, without a popular mandate.

I remind those members opposite and to my right of the words uttered by their leader, the Prime Minister, on November 8 in Nova Scotia:

> As long as I am Prime Minister, social programs, especially those for the elderly, will be improved, not diminished.

Will this clawback receive full debate? No. Will Canadians across this great land be given the opportunity to consider, be given the right to have some say, some input into this clawback legislation? No. Does this government show any commitment to the social needs of this great country? No. The government has failed to understand. We can go even further and say that this government has chosen, if you can believe it, to tear down the social programs, the social obligations which have made Canada the envy of the world.

It is that principle of universality, that concept of social justice, the very idea that says no matter where you live, no matter what your religious belief, no matter what your income, whether you are rich or poor, no matter what your age, you as a Canadian are entitled to that common threshold of social programs to be found in Canada. There must be one fair Canada for all. This is not the view of the Conservative government, however. Universality is not a philosophy acceptable to a true blue Tory.

There is another image: blue, cold, harsh, unforgiving. To the old age pensioner who has worked hard to scrimp and save and sock away a little in investments for the so-called golden years, the government says: "Just gimme that back and you've got nothing to say about it". That is what they are saying. Closure, right?

Mr. Kempling: Bullshit.

Mr. Keyes: The hon. member for Burlington is using foul language to explain my point of view.

Mr. Kempling: You're sick.

Mr. Keyes: Have you been hearing this, Mr. Speaker? I think other members in the House have been hearing some of the remarks being made and I think it would be only honourable if that member apologized and withdrew those remarks.

In the end, this government then turns its back on the pensioner and says: "That will teach them for being thrifty, for being responsible, for investing in this coun-

try. Those old fools." That is what this government is saying.

This is not the Canada that I grew up in. Bill C-28 is a heartless, callous, cunning piece of legislation, sloppy in its creation, devious in its presentation, unacceptable to the parliamentary system, intolerable in its standards. Senior citizens beware. For all of you who are under 65 who have been counting on receiving old age security payments as part of your retirement income, the rules are about to change.

• (1630)

The government's own consultation paper on child and elderly benefits released in January 1985 had this to say about the idea of a surtax, another word for clawback, on old age pensions:

> A special surtax on old age security payments to return more of the benefit paid to upper income pensioners would seriously disrupt our retirement income system, both for current pensioners and those now planning for retirement, and would unduly penalize those most affected by reason of retirement income resulting from private savings in earlier years.

That is what the government paper had to say. What has changed? Is this a new dawn? The clawback takes money that rightfully belongs to Canada's seniors.

In summary, the Minister of Finance must withdraw the bill and for good measure throw in an apology to seniors.

Mr. Kempling: Bullshit. You're sick.

Mr. Keyes: You have been here too many years. You forget what kind of place this is.

Mr. Kempling: You're sick.

Mr. Keyes: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. During the course of my remarks on this important bill, a bill under closure on which we will be voting in exactly half an hour, I wanted to state my concerns. During the course of my remarks there were remarks made—

Some hon. members: Oh, come on.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Order, please. If the hon. member has a point of order I wish he would come to it at this point.

Mr. Keyes: I was about to make it, Madam Speaker. The hon. member on the other side of the House made very callous and in fact rude, vulgar remarks heard by other colleagues on my side of the House. I would think it appropriate that he apologize.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The Chair has not heard the remarks to which the hon. member for Hamilton West is referring. I am sure that if any hon. member feels that he or she should apologize, he or she will do the honourable thing.

In the meantime we will resume debate with the hon. member for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre.

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak on this bill, a bill that is going to put an end to universality in this country. This government has attempted to change the issue. It has been telling Canadians and telling us in the House today and for some period of time that it is simply taxing wealthy Canadians and that there is nothing wrong with that. Government members say that they are simply taking back what wealthy Canadians do not really need.

That is not the issue and that is not why we have been opposing this bill. In fact, as far as taxing wealthy Canadians or reducing the deficit is concerned, this bill brings in only something like $300 million to $500 million, which is relatively insignificant with respect to lowering the deficit.

We in the New Democratic Party believe in fair taxation and would certainly support real measures of reform that would bring about some real fair taxation.

The issue is universality. This issue is important because it attacks the very credibility of the government. In 1984 the Prime Minister talked about sacred trusts and approximately a year later he tried to deindex the old age pension. That was an assault on one of the most sacred trusts in this country. It was only because seniors rose up in huge numbers and opposed the measure that the government backed off. Now it is doing the same thing, except it is coming in from the back door.

The government promised before the last election that it would introduce an extensive child care program for this nation. The government made $25 billion worth of commitments that it said would be put in place after the election, but they have not been put in place. There is no child care program and most of the other $25 billion of commitments promised by this government have not been met.

Why should Canadians believe the government when it says: "Don't worry, we will take care of you"? What is going to happen down the road? In a few months or next year the government could reduce the figure for a clawback on the old age pension from $50,000 to perhaps $40,000. Or, if it is $40,000, why not $35,000?

The important fact is that we must maintain the universality of the program to guarantee that the programs will be there when Canadians need them.

The government wants to reduce the deficit. It says that it is important to have these changes made because it is spending too much money and it is having problems with the deficit. There are some very simple solutions. Three to five hundred million dollars is not a lot of money. One simple solution would be to put a fair tax on the $27 billion dollars corporations make in this country which are not taxed at all. Even in the United States under Ronald Reagan they introduced a minimum 10 per cent corporation tax.

If we introduced a 10 per cent tax in this country it would bring in $2.7 billion. That would be enough not only to pay for this this program, the $300 to $500 million, but it would certainly help pay for a proper child care program.

If this government would impose fair taxes on all Canadians, certainly on those who are making over $100,000, it would go a long way to reducing the deficit and to providing some encouragement and some incentive for Canadians to want to try and to want to work. Unfortunately, the way it stands now, middle income Canadians and small business people who are trying to get ahead are paying an unfair share of taxes.

Through the bill before the House today the government wants to change the idea of universality. It is an insidious attack on the whole concept of universality that has been so long accepted by this Parliament and certainly by this country.

The government has imposed time allocation on this bill. It has been imposing time allocation and closure ever since the thirty-fourth Parliament convened. This government has imposed more time allocation and closure in one year than virtually all governments in the history of this country. This government says that it is considerate of the people, that it listens to the people, that it wants to consult with Canadians, but its actions are totally different from its words.

It muzzles Canadians. It muzzles members of Parliament who wanted to speak on behalf of their constituents. That is simply not fair, it is not just, and it is not right. This is not a government that listens. This is not a government that is caring. This is not a government that is compassionate.

The CCF and the NDP were the parties in this country that were responsible for much of the social legislation, the social system that existed in this country before the Tories took power. Our party fought for 50 years in this House and throughout this country for this type of program.

This government, the Progressive Conservative party, has dismantled much of it in five years. It is a tragedy. This government has undone many of the achievements the NDP has contributed to this country.

We have very recently elected a new leader of our party. I know that our leader and the rest of our party certainly have our work cut out for us just to put back in place or just to regain the achievements that we fought so hard and so long to gain for the people of Canada.

• (1640)

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Madam Speaker, I have one concern about this debate, and that is that the concentration on the clawback is detracting from other provisions in the bill that equally deserve our attention, changes which are damaging to small Canadian businesses.

We have no choice. This clawback is so outrageous, so offensive to fundamental values we have taken for granted for half a century that members have no alternative but to speak out strongly and loudly and for as long as they can on it. I regret that other important and damaging measures in this bill are not receiving the attention they deserve, but I think there is no option for members of the House except to address it, to attach to it the offensive term of clawback, and to continue attacking it.

I want to talk about the effect on the family allowance. The family allowance goes back over half a century. It was brought in by government in support of families, in recognition of the additional costs to families of raising children with a reasonable level of security. When it first came in it represented, for many families, 50 per cent of

the family income. Since then it has shrunk and shrunk and shrunk and become less significant while many families with children become more dependent on the welfare system.

The partial deindexing of family allowances in the last session of Parliament was just the latest step in that process. The government claims that it is just taking the family allowance back from families that can afford it. We already do that through the tax system. We already do it by insisting that families declare this as income and that they pay tax on it. Of course if you are in a higher income bracket you automatically pay a higher rate of income tax on that income.

No income other than the allowance for children and the seniors' pension is charged tax at 100 per cent by the government. One can be a millionaire, make a windfall profit overnight, and still pay one's normal rate of tax. Nobody, no matter how rich, pays 100 per cent of tax except seniors on their old age security and families on their children's allowance.

It is hypocrisy to talk about supporting families. It is hypocrisy to talk about the importance of children when we know that over one million children in this country live in poverty. It is hypocrisy to talk about budgets for shelters for battered women. As I said to one of my colleagues over here when he had the temerity to speak on that, "Let's set up shelters for the men and leave the women in their homes with their children".

It is hypocrisy to talk about that and at the same time not to recognize that battering and assault do not happen only in poor families. It happens in well-off families. For many women the family allowance is the only income that they can call their own, that they can use as they choose, and that they can ensure is available to meet the needs of their children no matter what the family income.

I have a limited time left. I have to comment on the hypocrisy from the opposite benches about helping the poor. I do not see any help for the poor in this legislation. I just see taking away from people.

I have to comment on the poverty of elderly women. Some 72 per cent of the elderly poor in this country are women, and this extra bit of income while the spouse is still alive is often the difference between poverty for women when that spouse dies and the pension dies with him and a reasonable, if not comfortable, level of living.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Unfortunately I must interrupt the hon. member. It being 4.45 p.m., pursuant to Order made Monday, December 18, 1989, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the report stage of the bill now before the House.

Therefore the question is on Motion No. 4. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Motions Nos. 6 and 7 will have to await the outcome of Motion No. 4.

The next question is on Motion No. 10.

Mr. Butland: Madam Speaker, I ask that Motion No. 10 be withdrawn.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion No. 10 withdrawn.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred divisions on Bill C-28.

The first vote is on Motion No. 1.

Call in the members.

The House divided on Motion No. 1, which was negatived on the following division:

Government Orders

(Division No. 159)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Angus
Assad
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bellemare
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Clancy
Crawford
Dingwall
Duhamel
Finestone
Flis
Foster
Gaffney
Gauthier
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Jordan
Karpoff
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)
Laporte
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacLellan
Maheu
Marchi
McLaughlin
Milliken
Murphy
Nunziata
Parker
Phinney
Proud
Rideout
Robichaud
Samson
Speller
Stupich
Tobin
Volpe
Whittaker
Young (Gloucester)

Anawak
Arseneault
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bélair
Black
Brewin
Callbeck
Catterall
Comuzzi
de Jong
Dionne
Ferguson
Fisher
Fontana
Fulton
Gardiner
Gray (Windsor West)
Harb
Hopkins
Hunter
Kaplan
Keyes
Kristiansen
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacAulay
MacLaren
MacWilliam
Manley
Marleau
Mifflin
Mitchell
Nault
Nystrom
Peterson
Pickard
Prud'homme
Riis
Rompkey
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Stewart
Taylor
Vanclief
Walker
Wood
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—92

NAYS

Members

Andre
Beatty
Bernier
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blenkarn
Bouchard (Roberval)
Bourgault
Brightwell
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Chartrand
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Cooper
Corbett
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins

Atkinson
Belsher
Bertrand
Bjornson
Blais
Bosley
Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Boyer
Browes
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Yellowhead)
Cole
Cook
Corbeil
Côté
Crosbie (St. John's West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Domm

Dorin
Edwards
Fee
Fontaine
Friesen
Gibeau
Greene
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Horning
Hughes
James
Kempling
Landry
Larrivée
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Littlechild
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Malone
Martin (Lincoln)
McDermid
McKnight
Merrithew
Moore
Oberle
Paproski
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vankoughnet
Vézina
Vincent
White
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)
Worthy—138

Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Fretz
Gérin
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Hogue
Hudon
Jacques
Jourdenais
Koury
Langlois
Layton
Lewis
Loiselle
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacKay
Marin
Masse
McDougall (St. Paul's)
McLean
Monteith
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plamondon
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Van de Walle
Venne
Vien
Weiner
Wilbee
Winegard

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I declare the motion lost.

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Madam Speaker, I think that you would find agreement to apply the vote on Motion No. 1 to the deferred division on Motions Nos. 2 and 3, and when you call the vote on the other motions, I will have more to say. But for now, the two deferred divisions are on Motions Nos. 2 and 3. These are the votes that concern us, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Prud'homme: With the same vote.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): With the same vote, of course! The next vote is on Motion No. 2.

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie) moved:

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-28 be amended in Clause 18 by striking out lines 5 to 10 at page 24.

The House divided on the motion, which was negatived on the following division:

(Division No. 160)

YEAS

Members

Allmand	Anawak
Angus	Arseneault
Assad	Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	Bélair
Bellemare	Black
Boudria	Brewin
Butland	Callbeck
Campbell (South West Nova)	Catterall
Clancy	Comuzzi
Crawford	de Jong
Dingwall	Dionne
Duhamel	Ferguson
Finestone	Fisher
Flis	Fontana
Foster	Fulton
Gaffney	Gardiner
Gauthier	Gray (Windsor West)
Harb	Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hopkins	Hovdebo
Hunter	Jordan
Kaplan	Karpoff
Keyes	Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Kristiansen	Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)	Laporte
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)	Lee
MacAulay	MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacLaren	MacLellan
MacWilliam	Maheu
Marchi	Marleau
McLaughlin	Mifflin
Milliken	Mitchell
Murphy	Nault
Nunziata	Nystrom
Parker	Peterson
Phinney	Pickard
Proud	Prud'homme
Rideout	Riis
Robichaud	Rompkey
Samson	Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Speller	Stewart
Stupich	Taylor
Tobin	Vanclief
Volpe	Walker
Whittaker	Wood
Young (Gloucester)	Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—90

NAYS

Members

Andre	Atkinson
Beatty	Belsher
Bernier	Bertrand
Bird	Bjornson
Blackburn (Jonquière)	Blais
Blenkarn	Bosley
Bouchard (Roberval)	Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Bourgault	Boyer
Brightwell	Browes
Cadieux	Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Cardiff	Casey
Chadwick	Champagne (Champlain)
Chartrand	Clark (Yellowhead)
Clark (Brandon—Souris)	Cole
Collins	Cook
Cooper	Corbeil
Corbett	Côté
Couture	Crosbie (St. John's West)
Darling	DeBlois
de Cotret	Della Noce
Desjardins	Domm
Dorin	Duplessis
Edwards	Epp
Fee	Ferland
Fontaine	Fretz
Friesen	Gérin
Gibeau	Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Greene	Grey (Beaver River)
Gustafson	Halliday
Harvey (Chicoutimi)	Hawkes
Hicks	Hockin
Hogue	Horning
Hudon	Hughes
Jacques	James
Jourdenais	Kempling
Koury	Landry
Langlois	Larrivée
Layton	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lewis	Littlechild
Loiselle	Lopez
MacDonald (Rosedale)	MacDougall (Timiskaming)
MacKay	Malone
Marin	Martin (Lincoln)
Masse	McDermid
McDougall (St. Paul's)	McKnight
McLean	Merrithew
Monteith	Moore
Nicholson	Oberle
O'Kurley	Paproski
Plamondon	Plourde
Porter	Pronovost
Redway	Reid
Reimer	Ricard
Richardson	Robitaille
Roy-Arcelin	Schneider
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)	Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Shields	Siddon
Sobeski	Soetens
Sparrow	Stevenson
Tardif	Tétreault
Thacker	Thompson
Thorkelson	Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Tremblay (Lotbinière)	Turner (Halton—Peel)
Van de Walle	Vankoughnet
Venne	Vézina
Vien	Vincent
Weiner	White
Wilbee	Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)	Winegard
Worthy—139	

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I declare the motion lost. The next vote is on Motion No. 3.

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie) moved:

Motion No. 3

That Bill C-28 be amended in Clause 47 by striking out line 1 at page 45 and substituting the following therefor:

"(*a*) 0.05 percent of tax payable under Part 1 by".

The House divided on the motion, which was negatived on the following division:

Government Orders

(Division No. 161)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Angus
Assad
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bellemare
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Clancy
Crawford
Dingwall
Duhamel
Finestone
Flis
Foster
Gaffney
Gauthier
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Jordan
Karpoff
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)
Laporte
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacLellan
Maheu
Marchi
McLaughlin
Milliken
Murphy
Nunziata
Parker
Phinney
Proud
Rideout
Robichaud
Samson
Speller
Stupich
Tobin
Volpe
Whittaker
Young (Gloucester)
Anawak
Arseneault
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bélair
Black
Brewin
Callbeck
Catterall
Comuzzi
de Jong
Dionne
Ferguson
Fisher
Fontana
Fulton
Gardiner
Gray (Windsor West)
Harb
Hopkins
Hunter
Kaplan
Keyes
Kristiansen
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacAulay
MacLaren
MacWilliam
Manley
Marleau
Mifflin
Mitchell
Nault
Nystrom
Peterson
Pickard
Prud'homme
Riis
Rompkey
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Stewart
Taylor
Vanclief
Walker
Wood
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—92

NAYS

Members

Andre
Beatty
Bernier
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blenkarn
Bouchard (Roberval)
Bourgault
Brightwell
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Chartrand
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Cooper
Corbett
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Dorin
Edwards
Fee
Fontaine
Friesen
Gibeau
Greene
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Horning
Hughes
James
Kempling
Landry
Larrivée
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Littlechild
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Malone
Martin (Lincoln)
McDermid
McKnight
Merrithew
Moore
Oberle
Paproski
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vankoughnet
Vézina
Vincent
White
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)
Worthy—138
Atkinson
Belsher
Bertrand
Bjornson
Blais
Bosley
Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Boyer
Browes
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Yellowhead)
Cole
Cook
Corbeil
Côté
Crosbie (St. John's West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Fretz
Gérin
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Hogue
Hudon
Jacques
Jourdenais
Koury
Langlois
Layton
Lewis
Loiselle
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacKay
Marin
Masse
McDougall (St. Paul's)
McLean
Monteith
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plamondon
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Van de Walle
Venne
Vien
Weiner
Wilbee
Winegard

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I declare the motion lost.

[*English*]

The Hon. Member for Ottawa South on a point of order.

Mr. Manley: Madam Speaker, for reasons given in debate, I would like to be shown as not voting on Motion No. 2.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The hon. member has been heard and notice has been taken. The Hon. Member for Beaver River.

Miss Grey: Madam Speaker, in the interests of saving time, I would like to have it on the record that for Motion No. 2, I am voting nay.

I would like to make it quite clear to members opposite that in this particular instance I will be voting with that side.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The next question is on Motion No. 4.

Mr. Gauthier: Madam Speaker, in the interests of saving time, I would like to recommend that you seek unanimous consent to apply the vote just taken on Motion No. 1, with the exceptions on Motion No. 2 we just heard, to Motion No. 4 which I understand will also apply to Motions Nos. 6 and 7.

The House divided on Motion No. 4, which was negatived on the following division:

(Division No. 162)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Angus
Assad
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bellemare
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Clancy
Crawford
Dingwall
Duhamel
Finestone
Flis
Foster
Gaffney
Gauthier
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Jordan
Karpoff
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)
Laporte
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacLellan
Maheu
Marchi
McLaughlin
Milliken
Murphy
Nunziata
Parker
Phinney
Proud
Rideout
Robichaud
Samson
Speller
Stupich
Tobin
Volpe
Whittaker
Young (Gloucester)
Anawak
Arseneault
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bélair
Black
Brewin
Callbeck
Catterall
Comuzzi
de Jong
Dionne
Ferguson
Fisher
Fontana
Fulton
Gardiner
Gray (Windsor West)
Harb
Hopkins
Hunter
Kaplan
Keyes
Kristiansen
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacAulay
MacLaren
MacWilliam
Manley
Marleau
Mifflin
Mitchell
Nault
Nystrom
Peterson
Pickard
Prud'homme
Riis
Rompkey
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Stewart
Taylor
Vanclief
Walker
Wood
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—92

NAYS

Members

Andre
Beatty
Bernier
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blenkarn
Bouchard (Roberval)
Bourgault
Brightwell
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Chartrand
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Cooper
Corbett
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Dorin
Edwards
Fee
Fontaine
Friesen
Gibeau
Greene
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Horning
Hughes
James
Kempling
Landry
Larrivée
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Littlechild
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Malone
Martin (Lincoln)
McDermid
McKnight
Merrithew
Moore
Oberle
Paproski
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vankoughnet
Vézina
Vincent
White
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)
Worthy—138
Atkinson
Belsher
Bertrand
Bjornson
Blais
Bosley
Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Boyer
Browes
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Yellowhead)
Cole
Cook
Corbeil
Côté
Crosbie (St. John's West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Fretz
Gérin
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Hogue
Hudon
Jacques
Jourdenais
Koury
Langlois
Layton
Lewis
Loiselle
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacKay
Marin
Masse
McDougall (St. Paul's)
McLean
Monteith
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plamondon
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Van de Walle
Venne
Vien
Weiner
Wilbee
Winegard

• (1720)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I declare the motion lost.

This negative vote necessitates a vote on Motion No. 6 and a vote on Motion No. 6 would apply to Motion No. 7.

On a point of order the hon. member for Kamloops.

Mr. Riis: Madam Speaker, I would think that you might find unanimous consent to apply the votes we have been applying also to Motions Nos. 6 and 7.

Also we will have the floor apply these votes to Nos. 6 and 7 which would then be negated, and the reverse to the report stage.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The House has heard the suggestion made by the hon. member for Kamloops. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The next question is on Motion No. 6 which vote will also apply to Motion No. 7.

The House divided on Motion No. 6, which was negatived on the following division:

(Division No. 163)

YEAS

Members

Allmand
Angus
Assad
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bellemare
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Clancy
Crawford
Dingwall
Duhamel
Finestone
Flis
Foster
Gaffney
Gauthier
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Jordan
Karpoff
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)
Laporte
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacLellan
Maheu
Marchi
McLaughlin
Milliken
Murphy
Nunziata
Parker
Anawak
Arseneault
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bélair
Black
Brewin
Callbeck
Catterall
Comuzzi
de Jong
Dionne
Ferguson
Fisher
Fontana
Fulton
Gardiner
Gray (Windsor West)
Harb
Hopkins
Hunter
Kaplan
Keyes
Kristiansen
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacAulay
MacLaren
MacWilliam
Manley
Marleau
Mifflin
Mitchell
Nault
Nystrom
Peterson
Phinney
Proud
Rideout
Robichaud
Samson
Speller
Stupich
Tobin
Volpe
Whittaker
Young (Gloucester)
Pickard
Prud'homme
Riis
Rompkey
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Stewart
Taylor
Vanclief
Walker
Wood
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—92

NAYS

Members

Andre
Beatty
Bernier
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blenkarn
Bouchard (Roberval)
Bourgault
Brightwell
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Chartrand
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Cooper
Corbett
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Dorin
Edwards
Fee
Fontaine
Friesen
Gibeau
Greene
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Horning
Hughes
James
Kempling
Landry
Larrivée
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Littlechild
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Malone
Martin (Lincoln)
McDermid
McKnight
Merrithew
Moore
Oberle
Paproski
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Atkinson
Belsher
Bertrand
Bjornson
Blais
Bosley
Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Boyer
Browes
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Yellowhead)
Cole
Cook
Corbeil
Côté
Crosbie (St. John's West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Fretz
Gérin
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Hogue
Hudon
Jacques
Jourdenais
Koury
Langlois
Layton
Lewis
Loiselle
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacKay
Marin
Masse
McDougall (St. Paul's)
McLean
Monteith
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plamondon
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Van de Walle

Vankoughnet
Vézina
Vincent
White
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)
Worthy—138
Venne
Vien
Weiner
Wilbee
Winegard

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I declare the motion lost. I therefore declare Motion No. 7 lost.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance) moved that the Bill be concurred in.

The House divided on the motion which was agreed to on the following division:

(Division No. 164)

YEAS

Members

Andre
Beatty
Bernier
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blenkarn
Bouchard (Roberval)
Bourgault
Brightwell
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Chartrand
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Cooper
Corbett
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Dorin
Edwards
Fee
Fontaine
Friesen
Gibeau
Greene
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Horning
Hughes
James
Kempling
Landry
Larrivée
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Littlechild
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Malone
Martin (Lincoln)
McDermid
McKnight
Merrithew
Moore
Oberle
Paproski
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Atkinson
Belsher
Bertrand
Bjornson
Blais
Bosley
Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Boyer
Browes
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Yellowhead)
Cole
Cook
Corbeil
Côté
Crosbie (St. John's West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Fretz
Gérin
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Hogue
Hudon
Jacques
Jourdenais
Koury
Langlois
Layton
Lewis
Loiselle
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacKay
Marin
Masse
McDougall (St. Paul's)
McLean
Monteith
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plamondon
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vankoughnet
Vézina
Vincent
White
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)
Worthy—138
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Van de Walle
Venne
Vien
Weiner
Wilbee
Winegard

NAYS

Members

Allmand
Angus
Assad
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bellemare
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Clancy
Crawford
Dingwall
Duhamel
Finestone
Flis
Foster
Gaffney
Gauthier
Grey (Beaver River)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Jordan
Karpoff
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)
Laporte
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacLellan
Maheu
Marchi
McLaughlin
Milliken
Murphy
Nunziata
Parker
Phinney
Proud
Rideout
Robichaud
Samson
Speller
Stupich
Tobin
Volpe
Whittaker
Young (Gloucester)
Anawak
Arseneault
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bélair
Black
Brewin
Callbeck
Catterall
Comuzzi
de Jong
Dionne
Ferguson
Fisher
Fontana
Fulton
Gardiner
Gray (Windsor West)
Harb
Hopkins
Hunter
Kaplan
Keyes
Kristiansen
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacAulay
MacLaren
MacWilliam
Manley
Marleau
Mifflin
Mitchell
Nault
Nystrom
Peterson
Pickard
Prud'homme
Riis
Rompkey
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Stewart
Taylor
Vanclief
Walker
Wood
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—92

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I declare the motion carried.

When shall the bill be read the third time? At the next sitting of the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Government Orders

CROP INSURANCE ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed from Monday, December 18, consideration of the motion of Mr. Lewis that Bill C–48, an act to amend the Crop Insurance Act be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): It being five o'clock p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 45(5) the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred division on the motion of the Minister of Agriculture for the second reading of Bill C–48, an Act to amend the Crop Insurance Act. Shall I dispense with the ringing of the bells?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The House divided on the motion which was agreed to on the following division:

(Division No. 165)

YEAS

Members

Andre
Beatty
Bernier
Bird
Blackburn (Jonquière)
Blenkarn
Bouchard (Roberval)
Bourgault
Brightwell
Cadieux
Cardiff
Chadwick
Chartrand
Clark (Brandon—Souris)
Collins
Cooper
Corbett
Couture
Darling
de Cotret
Desjardins
Dorin
Edwards
Fee
Fontaine
Friesen
Gibeau
Greene
Gustafson
Harvey (Chicoutimi)
Hicks
Hogue
Hudon
Jacques
Jourdenais
Koury
Langlois
Layton
Lewis
Loiselle
MacDonald (Rosedale)
MacKay
Marin
Masse
McDougall (St. Paul's)
McLean
Monteith
Nicholson
O'Kurley
Plamondon
Porter
Redway
Reimer
Richardson
Roy-Arcelin
Schneider
Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth)
Siddon
Soetens
Stevenson
Tétreault
Thompson
Tremblay (Québec-Est)
Turner (Halton—Peel)
Vankoughnet
Vézina
Vincent
White
Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia)
Wilson (Etobicoke Centre)
Worthy—140

Atkinson
Belsher
Bertrand
Bjornson
Blais
Bosley
Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Boyer
Browes
Campbell (Vancouver Centre)
Casey
Champagne (Champlain)
Clark (Yellowhead)
Cole
Cook
Corbeil
Côté
Crosbie (St. John's West)
DeBlois
Della Noce
Domm
Duplessis
Epp
Ferland
Fretz
Gérin
Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)
Grey (Beaver River)
Halliday
Hawkes
Hockin
Horning
Hughes
James
Kempling
Landry
Larrivée
Leblanc (Longueuil)
Littlechild
Lopez
MacDougall (Timiskaming)
Malone
Martin (Lincoln)
McDermid
McKnight
Merrithew
Moore
Oberle
Paproski
Plourde
Pronovost
Reid
Ricard
Robitaille
St-Julien
Scott (Victoria—Haliburton)
Shields
Sobeski
Sparrow
Tardif
Thacker
Thorkelson
Tremblay (Lotbinière)
Van de Walle
Venne
Vien
Weiner
Wilbee
Winegard

NAYS

Members

Allmand
Angus
Assad
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Bellemare
Boudria
Butland
Campbell (South West Nova)
Clancy
Crawford
Dingwall
Duhamel
Finestone
Flis
Foster
Gaffney
Gauthier
Harb
Hopkins
Hunter
Kaplan
Keyes
Kristiansen
Langdon (Essex—Windsor)
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)
MacAulay
MacLaren
MacWilliam
Manley
Marleau
Milliken
Murphy
Nunziata
Parker
Phinney
Proud
Rideout
Robichaud
Samson
Speller
Stupich
Tobin
Volpe
Whittaker
Young (Gloucester)

Anawak
Arseneault
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)
Bélair
Black
Brewin
Callbeck
Catterall
Comuzzi
de Jong
Dionne
Ferguson
Fisher
Fontana
Fulton
Gardiner
Gray (Windsor West)
Harvey (Edmonton East)
Hovdebo
Jordan
Karpoff
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Langan (Mission—Coquitlam)
Laporte
Lee
MacDonald (Dartmouth)
MacLellan
Maheu
Marchi
McLaughlin
Mitchell
Nault
Nystrom
Peterson
Pickard
Prud'homme
Riis
Rompkey
Skelly (Comox—Alberni)
Stewart
Taylor
Vanclief
Walker
Wood
Young (Beaches—Woodbine)—90

• (1730)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I declare the motion carried.

Bill read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

* * *

WAYS AND MEANS

TABLING OF NOTICE OF MOTION

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Madam Speaker, pursuant to the tabling of several Ways and Means motions earlier today by the Minister of Finance that relate to the goods and services tax, I would ask that an Order of the Day be designated for each.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Cooper: Madam Speaker, I believe you will find there is unanimous consent to proceed with Bill C-31 at this point, and that we will deal with all stages, that the government will introduce four amendments to that bill and that it will pass on division.

Any time taken from the normal private members' hour to deal with Bill C-31 will be added to the regular time to make sure that private members' hour does have the full hour and that time would then be followed by the usual "late show".

I would also like to ask if the House would give their consent to allow us to release our Pages at this time, because I understand they have a much deserved Christmas party tonight and none of us would want them to be late for that.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The House has heard the suggestion made by the hon. parliamentary secretary. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Shall we all wish our Pages a nice night?

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

GOVERNOR GENERAL'S ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Right Hon. Joe Clark (for the President of the Privy Council) moved that Bill C-31, an act to amend the Governor General's Act be read the second time, and by unanimous consent, referred to a Committee of the Whole.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and, by unanimous consent, the House went into committee thereon, Mrs. Champagne in the chair.

On Clause 1—

Mr. Cooper: Madam Chairman, I move:

That Clause 1 of Bill C-31 be amended by striking out lines 9 and 10 on page 1 and substituting the following:

"Governor General for the 12 month period beginning on January 1, 1989 a salary of $83,800."

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Mr. Boudria: Madam Chairman, perhaps if we could get the attention of the House it would be a little easier to continue with the bill.

This amendment changes the amount of the bill and the Chair will have to enlighten me. Because we are increasing the amount as opposed to merely changing the retroactivity clause, does this amendment require a royal recommendation and, if so, does the Chair have that?

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: I think that, by rereading both the bill and the amendment proposed by the parliamentary secretary, the member will realize that no, it does not need the royal recommendation as we are talking about less money than was originally in the bill.

Mr. Boudria: Madam Chairman, I agree but perhaps for a slightly different reason.

I think in fact the retroactivity provision was to start on January 1, 1988 with a second clause to further add to that for 1989. What the new clause does, as I understand it, is put the amount including the multiplier effect together in order to give effect to the 1989 rate immediately, if my understanding is correct.

Mr. Cooper: Madam Chairman, the purpose of the amendment to Clause 1 is to replace 1988 by 1989 and to replace $80,000 by $83,800 which is $80,000 for the annual salary in the original bill for 1988 plus the $3,800 for the 1989 indexation adjustment.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

TheAssistant Deputy Chairman: Shall Clause 1, as amended, carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Riis: On division.

Clause agreed to.

• (1740)

On Clause 2—

Mr. Cooper: Madam Speaker, I have an amendment for Clause 2.

I move:

That Clause 2 of Bill C-31 be amended by striking out line 15 on page 1 and substituting the following:

"beginning on January 1, 1990 and for each"

There is no explanation necessary. It follows again that it is the 1990 effect.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Shall the amendment carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Shall Clause 2 as amended carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Riis: On division.

Clause agreed to.

On Clause 3—

Mr. Cooper: Madam Speaker, I move:

That Clause 3 of Bill C-31 be amended

(a) by striking out line 31 on page 2 and substituting the following:

"1, 1989 and ending on the day preceding the"

(b) by striking out line 36 on page 2 and substituting the following:

"beginning on January 1, 1989 and ending"

The purpose of this is, of course, to replace 1988 by 1989 for retroactive adjustment.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Riis: On division.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Shall Clause 3 as amended carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Riis: On division.

Clause agreed to.

On Clause 4—

Mr. Cooper: Madam Speaker, I move:

That Clause 4 of Bill 31 be amended by striking out lines 4 to 7 on page 3 and substituting the following:

"4. This Act shall be deemed to have come into force on January 1, 1989."

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Riis: On division.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Shall Clause 4 as amended carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Riis: On division.

Clause agreed to.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Shall the Title carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported.

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (for the President of the Privy Council) moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): When shall the bill be read a third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (for Mr. Mazankowski) moved that the bill be now read the third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): It being 5.45 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS—MOTIONS

[*English*]

MINING

MINERAL MARKETING AGENCY

Mr. Cid Samson (Timmins—Chapleau) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of developing, in consultation with provincial and local governments, with industry and with labour unions, a co-operative mineral-marketing agency to further promote Canadian refined minerals in the world marketplace.

He said: Madam Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak to my colleagues on a motion that asks the government to consider the advisability of developing, in consultation with provincial and local governments, with industry and with labour unions, a co-operative mineral-marketing agency to further promote Canadian refined minerals in the world marketplace.

Before I speak on the specific concept presented in this motion I would like to remind the House of the importance of the mineral industry in Canada. Canada's minerals and metals industry accounts for about 3 per cent of our gross domestic product and almost 20 per cent of total merchandise exports. The industry provides a livelihood, directly or indirectly, for hundreds of thousands of Canadians from Newfoundland to British Columbia. Some 120 communities in Canada depend largely on mining or mineral processing for their livelihood.

In 1988 the mineral industry continued to be one of the two most important primary industries supporting the Ontario economy. Approximately $50 million was spent on exploration in the Yukon and far northern British Columbia in 1988.

In British Columbia there were increases in the value of mineral production in 1988 because of new gold mines and increased prices for zinc, copper and coal. In Manitoba the exploration expenditure levels were maintained at 1987 levels at an estimated $50 million.

I would like to take a moment and remind the minister responsible for mines that the mineral development agreements that allowed for the completion of many worth-while projects are coming to an end in most of the provinces.

It is hoped that this government will look at little further than the immediate future and consider the possibility of renewing these agreements. These federal-provincial mineral development agreements are sub-agreements to the more general economic and regional development agreements.

In British Columbia alone the projects under the MDA represented a substantial part of all the scientific and geotechnical information made available to the mining industry and other interested users. They have had significant positive impact on the focus of exploration programs, the discovery of new mineral prospects and the development of cost effective and environmentally sound access routes to remote mine sites. As well, the program helped identify new markets for this province's underdeveloped industrial mineral sector.

My motion speaks of creating a co-operative mode of operation to help the sale of Canadian refined minerals. Let us look at what happens in other fields when the sale

of natural resources is organized under a co-operative model.

One model of co-operative that has proven quite beneficial in the marketing and sale of resources lies in the agricultural sector. I think of Agropur, the co-operative that regroups milk producers in Quebec as a good organizational example.

Far from me, however, to propose the exact same model for the mineral sector. Mining is a high capital venture and workers, as well as governments, have many priorities to deal with before starting to invest in a new field.

• (1750)

However, it would be feasible to study the possibility of a co-operative system that would help promote further refining of our minerals by finding markets and pooling the production.

[*Translation*]

Co-operatives work very well in Quebec, in our forests, another of our natural resources. They go back to the forties, and were consolidated and rejuvenated in the sixties. They are beginning to accumulate resources, to diversify and to become involved in downstream lumber activities.

[*English*]

Other examples of co-operatives which have been successful are the plywood co-ops in the northwest and on the Pacific coast in the States.

As well, we might want to consider the possibility of helping workers to buy existing installations for the transformation of minerals. In Virginia, the Weirton Steel Corporation was bought by its workers at a cost of $386 million in January of 1984. That was accomplished after the parent company, National Steel, wanted to close down the shop. There are other examples as well.

I know of many single industry towns that face an uncertain future due to the possibility of mine closures. The workers and their families feel powerless facing a multinational corporation that deals in hard currencies with a specific goal in mind. By helping these workers to participate in a lengthening of the cycle of production, by letting them have a say and to take part in the same effort, we can only benefit from it in the future. By regrouping co-operatives such as these under an umbrella, we could achieve a more sustainable economic development for our natural resources.

We must increase the integration between sectors and promote greater research and development activities while increasing Canadian control if we are to build these forward and backward linkages from the resource base.

The Department of Industry, Science and Technology has not done enough to promote synergy and create links between the primary sector and the manufacturing sector. More efforts must be made in that department.

Under the Ontario Mining Act, the Ontario government has the power to require companies to increase further processing of ores in Canada but it has allowed a number of specific exemptions. Falconbridge still exports nickel-copper matte to its refinery in Norway while Inco ships nickel oxide sinter and nickel sulphide to its plant in Clydach, Wales, for processing.

Take the case of copper mining in British Columbia. This is a highly unstable industry in which multinational companies produce concentrates solely for export. No copper is currently smelted in B.C., though the development of a smelter and of manufacturing facilities for the production of copper wire could be established.

It is not hard to conceive that the earth does not possess an inexhaustible source of goods for humans to use and sometimes abuse, and that we all must work towards a sustainable form of economic development that would take into account the future generations. We do not want to leave behind only stumps where trees once grew, or gaping holes with all of the richness they once contained spent and gone. We must make intelligent use of these resources that are present in a finite amount.

By promoting value-added products we extend the cycle, and this is the kind of rationalization that would provide a much needed stability.

We deal in a global economy. Some of our weaknesses when faced with strong competition have been shown through failures in the free trade agreement to protect our markets.

Not only do we have to build a stronger industry in order to counteract the problems we face because of the free trade agreement, we also have to look beyond.

If we want to compete on a world-wide scale we must become more organized and pull together. A co-operative mineral-marketing agency would, I believe, help us find new markets for refined minerals and encourage the development of more refining plants, thus helping us achieve a more rational and cost-effective use of our mineral resources.

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the chance to speak on M-73 this evening on this important matter. I would like first to spend some time reviewing the facts so that we can view this issue in perspective.

This is not to deny that there are important challenges ahead in expanding existing markets or developing new markets for Canada's minerals and metals, but simply to provide a reminder that Canadian minerals and metals producers have been operating in an export-oriented environment for some time.

The minerals and metals industry in Canada accounts for about 3 per cent of gross domestic product but almost 20 per cent of total merchandise exports. This indicates in a nutshell the special position of the industry. For while Canada is a world-class producer of many minerals, 15 per cent of the world's zinc, 21 per cent of the world's nickel, 23 per cent of the world's potash, 31 per cent of the world's uranium and 18 per cent of the world's titanium concentrates, to name just a few, our relatively small population generates a limited market for these commodities with which we are so richly endowed.

It is natural, then, that we should look beyond our borders to find customers for the output of our mines and our refineries and smelters. As a result, Canada exports a high proportion of its production of some minerals and metals—96 per cent of nickel production, 93 per cent of copper production, 87 per cent of zinc production and 90 per cent of potash production. These examples are from the high end of the scale, it is true, but a high degree of export orientation is present throughout the entire mining sector.

The fact that Canada exports significant amounts of its minerals should not be taken to imply that Canada does not take advantage of the rich resource endowment to generate economic activity and employment in the further processing of our mineral resources. As I have just suggested in referring to refineries and smelters, and as my colleague, Mr. Johnson, pointed out in the House last October during debate on another motion of the hon. member from Timmins—Chapleau, Canada has a strong processing sector and in the case of certain commodities, most notably gold, nickel, zinc, copper and aluminum, it is world class.

One hundred per cent of nickel ore produced in Canada is upgraded into nickel matte domestically. Furthermore, some two-thirds of this is refined in Canada. About 94 per cent of our gold production in 1987 and 75 per cent of silver concentrates were processed here in this country. More than 56 per cent of copper and of zinc concentrates received upgrading in Canada. We have an aluminum industry which relies entirely on imported bauxite and alumina for its feedstocks.

Here is a good example of further processing in Canada which has developed even without the stimulus of domestically available raw materials. So, it should not be thought that Canada exports the bulk of its minerals in the form of ores and concentrates.

The representatives of Canada's minerals and metals industry and this government recognize that if the sector is to continue to make a major contribution to Canada's economy and to economic development of our regions, we must be prepared to compete head to head in world markets with the world's most efficient minerals and metals producers. This is the motivating force behind the government's commitment to trade liberalization under the multilateral trade negotiations, MTN, to the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement and to tax reform.

The decade of the 1990s will be an acceleration of the dismantling of trade barriers of all types and Canada's minerals and metals industry has both the experience and the know-how to take advantage of the opportunities which will arise as a result.

Throughout the first half of the 1980s, Canada's minerals and metals industry was under intense pressure due to a combination of factors—high world capacity levels and inventory levels, a major slowdown in eco-

nomic activity, and so on—which resulted in low commodity prices worldwide. This set of circumstances produced a large number of casualties throughout the world but Canada's mining sector weathered the storm very well. Recognizing that no long-term relief would be obtained through lobbying for protectionist measures, the industry set about improving its efficiency as the only sensible way to respond.

• (1800)

It embraced new technologies and made organizational changes which led to very significant productivity gains. Improvements of up to 50 per cent in five years were not unknown. The impressive performance helped the industry through the crisis period of the early to mid-1980s but also gave it the strength to face the future with confidence. As a result, the industry has a solid basis from which to consolidate its position in the markets it currently serves and to penetrate new markets.

I have given a brief review of some of the recent history and of how Canada's minerals and metals industry is structured in relation to the international economy. In order to increase its contribution to this economy, two factors are important. First, artificial barriers which create impediments to trade must be removed. Considerable progress has been made in this direction already, but more remains to be done.

Second, as in any market, it is difficult to win any customers from the competition. Difficult, I say, but not impossible. At a minimum, one needs a competitive product at a competitive price. The policies of this government foster both of these objectives. An efficient industry combined with a fair and simple tax regime allows Canada's minerals and metals producers to deliver their product on the world market at a competitive price.

A competitive product is also important, and I will now say a few words on this subject.

We all know that price is not the only factor involved in the success of a product. The product must also satisfy the user's wants and needs. Most people recognize this in the case of consumer goods, for example, running shoes, audio cassettes, or fast food, but it is also true in the case of products of Canada's minerals and metals industry. The industry produces products with varying characteristics of size, strength, durability, corrosion resistance, weight and so on. Often, one desirable characteristic must be traded off against the other.

The mineral and metal products which are transformed by a variety of manufacturing processes into a wide range of final goods must of course meet or surpass the requirements of manufacturers and, ultimately, of the final users. This is another area of competition where Canada's minerals and metals industry has worked hard. It has tailored its products to the needs of its customers, developing new and stronger alloys, more corrosion-resistant metals and so on. These products ultimately find their way into tennis racquets, automobile parts and a large number of other products. The benefits of these research efforts are thus spread more widely. This is an increasingly important area of competition and one where much remains to be done. I have no doubt, though, that Canada's producers will meet this challenge.

I have tried to establish the main features of Canada's minerals and metals industry. I believe that it is an industry which is very outward looking and indeed it must be so. It is also fully aware that for success it requires export markets.

My colleagues will expand further on these points as they relate to the motion before us.

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to have an opportunity to speak on Private Members' Business Motion No. 73 concerning the advisability of setting up a mineral marketing agency.

Canada ranks as a leading producer and exporter of minerals and metals in the world. It has achieved this distinguished honour in overall value terms which reflect both the high tonnages and wide diversity of mineral and metal products derived from our mines. Indeed, there are only a small number of minerals and metals that are not commercially produced in Canada.

A prominent characteristic of the mining and metallurgical industry is the global latitude and integration of this sector. Production from mining through to the final processing and marketing are a global phenomenon.

Large Canadian mining companies are truly multinational corporations. They have mining and metallurgical facilities in many parts of the world and marketing is undertaken from a corporate perspective rather than strictly home country interests. In other words, a Canadian firm might mine a mineral commodity in Canada,

process it along with raw materials from other origins in another country, and market the entire output without regard to origin.

Equally significant is the fact that foreign firms have ownership interests in Canadian mining and metallurgical facilities. Earlier in our history these foreign enterprises were typically American or British. However, for several years Canada has attracted French, German and Italian companies, and more recently, Australian, Brazilian, Korean and Japanese firms. Like their Canadian partners and competitors, these companies also spread their loyalties across national boundaries. They are usually fiercely competitive and independent when it comes to corporate details relating to marketing.

Throughout its history, the Canadian industry has evolved and flourished on the strengths of exports. Certainly over the past few decades our industry has established a strong footing in the international marketplace. The larger companies in particular have created complex and sophisticated marketing organizations that are capable of identifying and taking advantage of market opportunities anywhere in the world. Some regularly trade and hedge commodities as an integral part of their business, and a few even maintain seats on the prestigious London Metal Exchange.

In countries where markets operate differently from those familiar to us in North America, such as the Soviet bloc, our companies often seek the advice and assistance of our federal and provincial governments. Such assistance may be in the form of information, arranging contracts with high-level officials, organizing mining missions and, in rare cases, even participating in the negotiating process.

Other government facilities such as the support of the Export Development Corporation in providing insurance, assistance with market studies under the auspices of federal-provincial mineral development agreements and demonstration projects such as the fertilizer mixing plant funded by the Canadian International Development Agency and donated to China have played an important role in fostering Canadian exports.

In view of the many minerals and metals produced by Canada, it should not come as a surprise that there are a multitude of very different marketing activities in place. Each corresponds to a particular case which may stem from the business ideology of individual players, the specific commodity under consideration, domestic and international practices that have a proven track record, the way in which each firm is organized, and market conditions at a particular point in time. Let me elaborate.

One of the most structured and successful co-operative marketing undertakings by a Canadian mine is Canpotex Limited. The company was incorporated in 1970. It is owned by all of the Saskatchewan potash producers, except one small company.

Under its charter, Canpotex was organized to buy, sell and deal in potash and associated and allied derivative products for export to all destinations other than Canada and the United States. The company is also engaged in the transportation of potash. It owns or leases 1,700 covered hopper cars, warehouses and docks. It ships products by chartered ships through its subsidiary Canpotex Shipping Services.

More recently Canpotex has initiated agronomic and development programs in overseas countries. In China, for example, it is engaged in organizing farmers' demonstration plots, holding harvest field days and broadcasting television and radio education programs highlighting the results of these activities.

Canpotex is by far the largest world supplier of potash to major markets in Asia, Latin America and Oceania. It is currently developing a substantial market in Europe. Canpotex is responsible for between 40 per cent and 45 per cent of Canadian potash exports that were valued at $1.365 billion in 1988.

• (1810)

Although many companies prefer to market their products independently, some join organizations which may have as an objective the global development of demand. Usually these organizations are international institutions or study groups. Membership may be limited to companies, as is the case for sulphur, nickel, cobalt, tungsten, gold and others, or it may comprise governments with industry advisers, such as the International Lead and Zinc Study Group. In nearly all cases, however, the companies contribute specified statistics and

technical data, but rarely get involved in joint marketing activities. Indeed, they carefully maintain their independence and individualities when it comes to marketing strategies and sales activities. One of the more compelling reasons for their caution is the risk of running afoul of anti-trust and competition regulations. This concern is particularly true for any company that operates in the United States.

Industry structure is a prominent factor in the case of iron ore. In North America, the steel companies own or control all of the iron ore mines. Hence the first priority of these mines is to fill the raw material requirements of their owners. Only then are they in a position to market elsewhere. The quantity available to other markets can fluctuate widely over a period of one year, and from year to year, leaving little scope for co-operative marketing initiative. Certainly, it would not be a viable basis on which to build an ongoing marketing program.

Even when considering a single commodity there can be opposing regional views in Canada on marketing strategies. Western copper producers, for example, market concentrates while those in the east largely sell refined copper. The opportunities and problems in marketing copper by these two groups can be very different. An initiative taken by one group, such as the importation of concentrates to satisfy smelter requirements in the east, can be detrimental to the interests of other groups, especially in western Canada.

As my last example, you will recall the Canadian Steel Trade and Employment Congress. This organization was initiated through a conference in 1985 with company and union leadership and with support from universities and federal and provincial government departments. The congress takes an active role in lobbying governments which, depending on the circumstances, might be domestic or foreign. It recently published a document entitled: *Steel Trade between the U.S.A. and Canada*. Membership is now confined to company and union representatives. Two task forces have been formed, one on trade and the other on employment and adjustment. These are very good moves.

I hope that these examples have made clear that the marketing of minerals and metals by Canadian firms is a highly complex subject and takes many forms. As a general rule, Canadian companies regard marketing strictly as a private sector activity. Furthermore, there are so many variables, whether viewed in the context of the industry, a specific firm or by commodity, that one cannot accept easily the notion of a single marketing approach. Indeed, the facts seem to suggest quite the opposite.

If we perceive an opportunity or a problem in the marketing of Canadian minerals and metals, we would be prudent in analyzing all the circumstances of the specific issue and only subsequently consider options that might improve it. We would then be in a much stronger and better position to judge the merits of any alternative courses of action, if any.

I would like to thank the member once again for bringing this important issue to the attention of the House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, this evening I would like to talk about the sale and international marketing of refined minerals. The Canadian mineral industry has become mainly a major producer, supplying foreign markets. In the case of certain minerals like asbestos and potash, over 90 per cent of Canadian production is exported. The percentage is over 75 per cent in the case of many other products.

In 1988, Canadian exports of minerals and metals were worth $34.8 billion. Canada is also a major importer of minerals and metals. The total value of imports in 1988 was $18.8 billion. Although some of the minerals imported are not produced commercially in this country, most are purchased as feed stock for Canadian refineries and then re-exported. Aluminum is a good example of imported minerals that are subsequently exported.

Madam Speaker, the motion before the House today concerns two issues: A co-operative mineral-marketing agency and promoting the marketing of refined minerals. I shall, if I may, concentrate on the latter.

Some minerals and metals are sold in various forms. Their form, in other words, the amount of processing that takes place before export, varies depending on the product. To a certain extent, the processing depends on the market or international marketing patterns.

A product like coal does not have to undergo any processing other than washing or enriching or both, which is usually done on the spot at most coal mining operations in the world. Potash, whether it comes from Saskatchewan or New Brunswick or any other source, is enriched and refined on the spot before being shipped for export. The situation varies where iron ore is concerned. In Australia and Brazil, the ore is so rich that it does not have to be processed into concentrate before it is sold or used in steel production. In Canada, the iron ore is low quality and must therefore be concentrated on the spot before shipping to Canadian and foreign markets.

The situation varies a great deal in the case of non-ferrous metals, and their commercial form depends on various factors: first, the product and the structure of the industry worldwide; second, the location of the mine in Canada; third, the type of ore and its metallurgical properties; fourth, the ore's by-products or co-products, including certain elements such as sulphur; and last but not least, the market.

Let us first look at the product and the structure of the industry worldwide. In the case of gold, whether it is obtained by placer mining or traditional extraction methods, the metal is recovered on the spot. The ultimate refining process takes place at the refinery of the Royal Canadian Mint.

Cooper is a different story. In Eastern Canada, the ore is concentrated, smelted and refined at Canadian facilities. In British Columbia, the ore is concentrated locally and then exported, mainly to Japan, where refineries have been built to process ore from various countries. In other words, if Canada wants to sell copper to Japan, it has to compete with other world suppliers. International competition imposes two pre-conditions: competitive prices and the South Korea are very efficient and are competitive internationally.

The second factor relates to the mines location. Some Canadian mines are in the far North of in areas far removed from Canadian smelters and refineries. When we have mines in these locations, it makes economic sense to concentrate the ore and ship it to a smelter that is readily accessible, instead of building one at the mine or nearby.

• (1820)

Madam Speaker, the third and fourth factors, namely the types of ore and its metallurgical properties, are self-explanatory. The fifth factor, namely the market, is very important in any discussion about marketing and processing minerals and metals. Everyone knows that Canada's minerals and metal production is largely exported to the United States. Canada's other major markets are Japan and the Common Market countries. What may not be as widely know is that the United States purchases a much larger share of fully processed products. Although there are a number of other factors, the fact remains that tariffs and tariff structures have had a major impact on the direction and structure of world trade in minerals and metals.

Madam speaker, generally speaking, the tariffs on imports imposed by our trading partners were structured in such a way as to establish and protect Canadian processing, semi-manufacturing and manufacturing industries.

Madam Speaker, a major initiative taken by the present governement was to negotiate and implement the Canada—U.S. Free Trade Agreement. The agreement's main objective was to create a free trade environment in which Canadian producers, whether they are involved in minerals or other industries, can compete on an equal footing with American producers, on a market reaching two million people. The agreement has eliminated trading policies whose objectives were biased. Government policies had had the effect of interfering with the free exchange of goods by our two countries.

Another measure taken by this government concerns the Uruguay round of multilateral trade negotiations currently taking place in Geneva. In September, Canada tabled proposals aimed at reducing and eliminating as far as possible the tariff and non-tariff barriers that interfere with world trade.

Madam Speaker, throught these negotiations we are trying to establish better ways to access markets in the European Community, Japan and a host of other countries. Dismantling some of the main trading barriers will

provide all the flexibility Canadian minerals and metals producers need to offer a wider range of products for exports and discourage them from building processing facilities in Canada to supply foreigh markets.

In concluding, Madam Speaker, I would like to apply my comments on government policy and mineral exports to the first item raised in the motion, namely a co-operative mineral-marketing agency. It would be difficult for this kind of agency to alter trading policies that exist in Canada and elsewhere. Consequently, the agency would be hard pressed to change the form in which minerals and metals are exported from Canada, without a system of subsidies to compensate for the harmful impact of the trading policies of other countries. Canada would also have trouble adopting a subsidy plan. First of all, it would be a very expensive undertaking, and second, Mr. Speaker, such a plan would be a contradiction of the direction in which multilateral trade negotiations in Geneva are going at the present time.

[*English*]

Mrs. Diane Marleau (Sudbury): Mrs. Speaker, I am afraid that I was too nice and too good today. I allowed my colleague to speak ahead of me and somehow lost my turn. But last is not least. It is nice to have the Conservatives owing me one for a change.

I want to say that when I read this motion I was not quite clear what exactly the member had in mind when he said that he wanted the government to consider the advisability of developing, in consultation with provincial and local governments, with industry and with labour unions, a co-operative mineral marketing agency to further promote—and I want to emphasize this part of it—"Canadian refined minerals in the world marketplace".

I was wondering whether the member was implying by this that our mineral exporting agencies that are privately owned in our mining sector do not promote its minerals properly. Is it that it is not selling its minerals? I do not understand this motion at all. I can tell you that I do understand the importance of the mining sector.

I was born in a mining town, a gold mining town, Kirkland Lake to be exact, in northern Ontario. As a child, I saw what happens when you run out of gold. The mine closes. You cannot do much about it when it is not there anymore.

When I married I moved to Sudbury, which is the nickel capital of the world. I have lived through all kinds of problems in that area. I can tell you that in the early 1980s we had a huge recession. We had a huge problem in Sudbury. There were mountainous stockpiles of minerals and the price of nickel on the world markets was extremely low. The demand was not there. You could not sell it internationally. I do not care how much you promoted it. The demand just was not there. I do not see how this kind of agency would have helped us in any way whatsoever in those years when there just was not any demand for the minerals. You can promote something all you want. If you do not have anybody who wants to buy it, what is the use?

I really would like to have at some point, if I could, further explanations as to what exactly is meant by "further promote Canadian refined minerals". I understand very much the heartache of the single industry town when its products no longer sell, when the mine is forced to close, when there are no other jobs to go to, when it becomes very devastating.

I think it is very important that the government play a very strong role in encouraging secondary manufacturing in those areas with the mineral products involved, not just secondary manufacturing but the whole service sector that is involved in the particular mineral that is being extracted. Also, as much as possible the exploration and development of new sites must be encouraged.

The hon. member to my left mentioned Falconbridge as a mine that exports the raw matte to Norway to have it refined. That is correct. They export it to Norway to have it refined. That is a long story. It stems back to the early years when Inco had the patent on processing and Falconbridge was not able to get access to it. They found out that Norway was the only country where they were allowed to get a patent. They bought an old refinery and started processing their ores there.

I would like Falconbridge to further process its ores in Canada but, on the other hand, I am a lot happier that they are developing new mines, new technologies, new environmental controls. There are a lot of jobs in that, far more so than in having just the refinery there. We know, of course, that Inco does its refining in Copper Cliff, in my riding, and that is fantastic. They are now expending large amounts of money to control pollution. Again, we certainly encourage that. This motion would not have helped Inco reach the point where it is now.

Demand has to be there and the prices have to be worth while.

It is all well and good to go down and get the mineral but if it costs you double what you can sell it for, after a while it does not work any more. You definitely do not want to keep bringing up minerals you cannot sell. That is of no use to anybody, so I do not agree with this motion. I do not see what use it would be to anyone to have a nationalized type of market-place. First of all, I do not believe in nationalizing industries because I do not think governments run things better than private enterprise. When the government gets its hands on something, we can usually be sure that if there was a profit to be made it is gone.

• (1830)

I am not at all in favour of this motion. Perhaps the member who has proposed the motion would at some point like to sit down with me and explain why he proposed it. I know that right now there are no stockpiles in Sudbury. I do not know about his area of Timmins. However I think they are doing very well. In my area they are doing just fine. They are hoping that the demand continues the way it has been and that the prices remain at a viable level.

On the other hand, they would certainly like to see the interest levels come down and they would like to see the value of the Canadian dollar come down. I met with the president of International Nickel a couple of weeks ago. He was telling me that for every one cent the Canadian dollar increases, it costs them $9 million in profits over a period of one year. I think they would really benefit from a loosening of the monetary policy. That would further enhance their product and cause even better returns on their investments.

I would suggest to the government that it seriously consider that and seriously consider listening to the finance committee's suggestion that the government do just that. It is a very strong point with me. I believe that that is far more important now than any marketing agency in a world-wide sense because metals are by and large sold across the world.

There is some hope as the developing countries are demanding some metals, and there is hope that it will continue into the nineties. For those areas with mines that have just closed down, I certainly would like to see some drastic measures in encouraging other developments in mining. That would certainly be the answer to their problems.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Côté (Richmond—Wolfe): Madam Speaker, as the member for Richmond—Wolfe, I welcome this opportunity to rise in the House and speak to this motion which favours the development of a co-operative agency. The motion is of particular interest to me since I come from a mining area, asbestos, to be precise, and I have no doubts about the altruistic intentions behind the tabling of this motion. I think the hon. member is to be commended for initiating this debate, but I would like to explain my point of view which does not quite coincide with the hon. member's philosophy. I will present my arguments, Madam Speaker.

When Prime Minister Mulroney's government came to power in 1984, it made it clear that it was prepared to let market forces prevail. In fact, the most impressive measures taken to that end were the government's decision to cancel the National Energy Program and to privatize a number of Crown corporation. We all know what happened. Today, however, despite the success of these initiatives, we have before us a motion that, if I am not mistaken, would allow governments at all levels to exercise even greater influence on market forces.

If I understand the motion correctly, the underlying philosophy is that the government is in a better position than industry to market its products, that the government has failed to consult sufficiently with all parties concerned when it develops or implements policies and strategies aimed at promoting Canadian mineral exports, and finally, that the government does not do enough to encourage those exports.

I suggest we take a closer look at these assumptions, with which I must say I disagree. More than ten years ago, Madam Speaker, the government of all major western economies, after realizing that it was necessary to do so, adopted a non-interventionist approach to markets, letting market forces develop freely so that private industry could become more competitive. That is how business function in a western society. This approach enhances the efficiency and competitive edge of the economy while accelerating the accumulation of wealth. It has been so successful in most western countries that today, we are seeing and unprecedented development in modern socialist systems. In a number of socialist countries, the economic system, entirely based on governement intervention, has literally crumbled. This revolution is not due to people adopting some new philosophy. It is the result of competitive and economic

pressures. These economies, directed by governments or government agencies, have been found to be inefficient and incapable of stimulating economic growth, so that the people they were supposed to help have finally demanded a change.

This change is evident in economic liberalization, with the government not intervening in markets.

Experience has shown that competitive initiative is the only true way to ensure sustained creation of wealth for all. Nevertheless, today, in spite of that development, we are faced with a debate on the following question: Is the government better suited than private industry to promote the sale of its own products? Note that this is not just any industry. This is not an emerging industry or a dying one which might appeal for government aid. No. We are talking about a well-established industry, Canada's mining industry, which is among the strongest in the world. We are being asked to give assistance to an industry unmatched anywhere in the world. That is paradoxical, Madam Speaker. It is even the world's largest mining industry, the most active on export markets, the technological leader. Is it credible to call for government help in such a situation, such a position of strength? Business people do not stop telling us that everything depends on globalization. I must say that our mining and metals industry went global a long time ago. It formed international partnerships and opened offices in many countries so that it could have outlets throughout the world and long-assured access to all these markets and sources.

How can the government do better than private entreprise which has established its own markets, distribution networks and contacts? I am not suggesting that the initiatives taken by the industry are always right, far from it. I am simply wondering how, at the moment, the governement could do better than our industry.

How could a Crown corporation do better? The government has sold some Crown corporations because it recognizes that the private sector is better equipped to take advantage of export opportunities. For example, a Crown corporation can find itself in a situation where it must make major investments for expansion purposes, to increase its profits and even to survive under the circumstances. Where would the funds come from if the government gave priority to its fight against the deficit? We would have to get funds to support this industry. A private company, on the other hand, could go to the money market and find quickly the needed capital to meet its objectives. Why call on a co-operative agency with the government interfering? Again, private industry can do just as well or even better under the circumstances.

This motion also seems based on the assumption that there is a homogeneous Canadian industry with the same objectives in the world marketplace. Nothing could be further from the truth, Madam Speaker. Canadian mineral producers are competing against each other as well as against foreign firms. All companies do not have the same objectives or strategies. The rivalry between them is indeed one of the best ways to make an industry competitive on the international marketplace.

• (1840)

In keeping with their development strategy, some companies have made huge investments the world over, and indeed they have reached the hallmark of excellence in certain fields. Quite frankly, Madam Speaker, I fail to see how Canadian industry would support such an initiative. As a matter of fact, industry would look upon this or any similar measure as a serious threat, and I am sure it would come out fighting mad. What I am trying to say, Madam Speaker, is that government mechanisms are ill-fitted to play the kind of role advocated in today's motion. Fully aware of that, the Conservative government wants to steer clear of the market and concentrate on governing the country. Of course one can wonder whether government does have a role in openly promoting mineral exports. The government has a role for sure, but its authority does not give it carte blanche to direct all activities.

Although the government does not have a role to play on the market itself, I agree it should create and maintain an economic or trade environment where supply and demand can operate freely to balance market pressures. We all know that no market is totally free, that such a concept is beyond reality in any case. Among other things, this brings to mind tariff barriers, customs duties, restrictions on monetary movements, regulations

governing health and environmental issues. All these conditions are as many factors which condition markets and check interventions. This is where a government can intervene. In some cases the public interest prevails as, for instance, when it comes to protecting the environment. But in other cases the government tries to sway the pendulum our way. Then it is up to the government to urge other countries to create a more equitable economic environment, and that is the role which best suits the government. This is why it was so intent on signing the Free Trade Agreement with the United States: the objective was to do away with tariff barriers, harmonize standards and regulations, and of course ease the flow of goods and people.

I spoke of government measures which affect industry as a whole but, Madam Speaker, there are others which relate exclusively to the mining industry, and that happens to be the issue this evening. Asbestos for example—I know the subject for I come from an asbestos town—is said to be hazardous. When it became obvious that some countries had asbestos regulations based on faulty perceptions of the extent of danger involved, what did the Government of Canada do? It has paid attention to the industry's requests for assistance, conveyed its view on many occasions to other countries and international organizations, and supported financially the creation of an asbestos institute. The government, therefore, actively supports the creation of an international task force on mineral products including nickel and copper, as it is already supporting the existing lead-zinc group.

As you can see, Madam Speaker, the government makes every effort to enhance metal exports. By doing so, it assumes its own responsibility. It does not act as a substitute for the industry itself. Not only does the government do a lot for the industry, but he does so together with the interested parties. Although the government is involved in a variety of programs from year to year in the area of promotion, marketing and marketing support, we must recognize that the world mineral market is cyclical. For the past two years, for instance, the world market for most minerals and metals has been quite promising. Fully aware of the problems which the industry, miners and mining towns were facing, the government took action. From 1984 to 1986, the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, in co-operation with the Canadian Mining Association, organized a series of regional lecture dealing with the need to face competition. In other words, Madam Speaker, I suggest the motion was moved in good faith. It is consistent with the vision of a political party such as the NDP, but I suggest also that it is ill-advised, in view of the framework of our economy, our political systems and our international trade markets.

[*English*]

Mr. Al Horning (Okanagan Centre): Madam Speaker, I very much appreciate the opportunity given to me today to respond to a motion brought forward by the member for Timmins—Chapleau in regard to a co-operative mineral marketing agency to promote Canadian refined minerals in the world market-place.

To reiterate the comments made by my colleagues, Canada is a world leader in the mineral industry. It is also the largest importer of minerals and metals, of which a significant portion is purchased as feedstock for Canadian refineries and then re-exported.

In view of the fact that Canada has a relatively small population and generates a limited market for its commodities, it is only natural that Canada should export a high proportion of its production of some minerals and metals. I should mention that the bulk of Canada's minerals and metals exports go to the United States and Japan. It should not be thought, however, that Canada exports the bulk of its minerals in the form of ores and concentrates because nickel ore, gold, silver, copper and zinc concentrates receive further processing in Canada.

Import tariffs have been structured to establish and protect—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I apologize but I must interrupt the hon. member.

[*Translation*]

The hour provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. Pursuant to Standing Order 96(1), this item is dropped from the Order Paper.

[*English*]

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): It is my duty to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed Bill S-12, an act to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act, to which the concurrence of this House is desired.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38(1) is deemed to have been moved.

EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Madam Speaker, on December 4, I asked the Minister of Employment and Immigration what she would do to prevent the transfer of 200 General Electric jobs from Montreal to Fairfield, Connecticut.

I pointed out that Canadian General Electric had announced the closing of its Montreal plant which had been manufacturing various types of light bulbs in Montreal for 30 years and that the company had now decided to close that plant as part of its rationalization program. As you know, Madam Speaker, General Electric is an American company with its head office in the United States but with plants all over the world including Canada.

During the election campaign of 1988 we tried to alert Canadians to this consequence of the free trade agreement. We said that with the free trade agreement American companies in difficult times would rationalize their operations by closing Canadian plants and transferring the production to their plants in the United States.

As a matter of fact, the Economic Council studied the free trade agreement in 1988 and published its report on it, a report called *Venturing Forth*. It said that it clearly indicates that without improvements in Canadian manufacturing productivity, increased U.S. competition could result in a net decline of output and employment in 17 of the 36 industries studied, virtually all of them in manufacturing. Some firms will have to merge, others will have to close. The electrical products industry would account for 40 per cent of all the job losses in manufacturing. The output of electrical products is projected to fall by 15 per cent and employment by 8 per cent.

The Economic Council of Canada said that as a result of free trade, the electrical products industry would be hit the hardest, and here we have General Electric closing in Montreal within half a year after the agreement goes into force.

• (1850)

Each time that we ask the government to do something about job losses in industries like General Electric and the others that have closed down in Montreal, the government simply ignores the question and boasts about its great record in job creation. Well, when we look at that record, it is not as good out there in the real world as the government pretends in this House, and those people who are suffering from unemployment and layoffs know that.

Look at some of the reports that have been published. I have here from 1988 a Statistics Canada report saying that 63 per cent of the jobs created in the first half of 1988 were low paying clerical and sales positions and that the majority of them were in Ontario and Quebec. The same thing is true with respect to the quality of jobs. A great majority of those jobs are either temporary, part-time, or at minimum wage or without unionization, with the result that many people who have those jobs cannot really support a family and start a home.

When the government talks about its great employment record, it always compares it to the worst year of the recession. It always points to what happened under the Liberals in 1981 and 1982. Those were the worst years of the recession and it was common not only to the Liberal government in Canada but to governments throughout the western world.

I would like to point out to the House that when you look at the Liberal record over a period of time, you will find that our record was way ahead of that of the Conservatives. For example, in the period of Liberal government from 1965 to 1980, the average rate of unemployment was 5.6 per cent over 15 years. Here we have a government that came in in 1984 following the recession when the upturn was in place, and the best it

has been able to achieve is 7.3 per cent which was in September.

Since September the rate has gone up again to 7.4 per cent in October and up to 7.6 per cent in November. The Minister of Finance himself has predicted an increase in the unemployment rate to 8.5 per cent in 1990 and other think-tanks such as the Conference Board of Canada have predicted a 9 per cent unemployment rate.

We want the government to take these job losses and these plant closings seriously, and so do the workers who are losing their jobs. It does not do these workers any good to remind them of the fact that in a general way jobs have been created in different parts of Canada. What do the workers at General Electric want to know? What do the workers in other plants want to know? I have the list of the plant closings in Montreal: Gillette, 590 jobs; Weston Foods, 360 jobs; Simpsons, 1,000 jobs; VIA Rail, et cetera, et cetera; the list goes on.

Those individuals want to know what is the government going to do to help them get similar types of jobs. They do not want to hear over and over from the Prime Minister and the Minister of Employment and Immigration what a wonderful job they have done in bringing the rate of unemployment down to 7.3 per cent, now up to 7.6 per cent.

I hope tonight that the parliamentary secretary, responding on behalf of the minister, will tell us what programs, what policies the government has to help those people who have lost their jobs to free trade, who have lost their jobs to rationalization, to structural changes. Those are real people and they want real answers to their questions.

Mr. Bill Kempling (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Employment and Immigration I want to respond in greater detail to the question of December 4 put by the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce.

Let me say at the outset that the General Electric plant that he is talking about produced bulbs for projectors. The plant was quite old. Technology has changed. People are using VCRs today, and they made the decision they did to move the balance of that reduced production to the United States.

The metropolitan area of Montreal with its diversified activities and infrastructure is a major force not only in the Quebec economy but for Canada as a whole. There has been a significant improvement in the over-all employment situation over the past five years, especially compared to the experience during the 1980-1984 period.

In the four years up to August 1984 employment in Montreal declined and the unemployment rate rose. In marked contrast there were 148,000 more people employed in Montreal in November 1989 than had been in November 1984 shortly after this government took office.

Despite vigorous growth in the labour force there were some 46,000 fewer unemployed and the unemployment rate at 8 per cent is 3.7 percentage points lower than five years ago. In the last year alone employment is up by 16,000, unemployment is down by 13,000 and the unemployment rate has dropped almost one full percentage point to 8 per cent.

The Montreal labour market is dynamic with many firms opening and expanding, more than offsetting the cases of lay-offs or closures that the hon. member cites. While there were lay-offs announced in November, there were also positive developments. These included the announcement of construction of a $250 million waste treatment plant in east Montreal, the discussion of construction of a $225 million office complex, and the expansion of a refinery in east Montreal at a cost of $200 million. This follows upon earlier announcements such as the $2.3 billion contract obtained by Bombardier with the Aerospatial of France.

Since 1985 joint action by various levels of government on the economic situation in Montreal includes two major initiatives on the part of the federal government: in 1985, the creation of the ministerial committee on the development of the Montreal region to advise the government on how to consolidate Montreal's role as a centre for development; in 1986, the creation of the committee for economic recovery and revitalization of employment in east end Montreal.

There have also been concrete initiatives by the federal government, especially Employment and Immigration Canada, to help Montreal. For example, in 1988-1989 Employment and Immigration Canada invested $87 million in the city of Montreal through programs under the Canadian Jobs Strategy. A total of

29,500 people participated in the activities of the Canadian Jobs Strategy in Montreal.

Since the beginning of this year, Employment and Immigration Canada has completed its 26 agreements under the Industrial Adjustment Service at a cost of $130,542. A further 46 new agreements have been signed this year with a commitment of $438,085 in funding by Employment and Immigration Canada.

The Industrial Adjustment Service agreements also involve spending by the province and the private sector so that the total expenditures in the Montreal area under the completion of new agreements is expected to exceed $1.8 million.

In 1988–1989, in the hon. member's riding of Notre–Dame–de–Grâce, nearly $2.4 million was committed and a estimated 550 new clients were served under the Canadian Jobs Strategy and development of UI programs. This assistance with training and other human resources development was in addition to the substantial amount of income support available through the unemployment insurance program.

PAY EQUITY

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Madam Speaker, in October of this year I posed a question in the House to the President of the Treasury Board, asking what the minister was doing to correct the deplorable situation of hospital services workers who were badly underpaid for the work they were doing, compared to comparable groups that were largely male dominated groups.

The pay and equity problem of these federal hospital services workers got some much needed attention when the government brought in Bill C–49 to force its lowest paid striking workers back to work and into binding conciliation.

I am here to give the matter more attention, and I do not plan to stop. This female dominated group had been waiting for nine years to settle its pay equity dispute, a dispute that led them in near desperation to the Human Rights Commission tribunal, which ruled overwhelmingly in their favour in 1987. The tribunal stated that these workers are undervalued and underpaid compared to a male–dominated group in the Public Service doing exactly the same work.

• (1900)

Although retroactive equalization payments of $28 million were paid out in 1988, these were only interim payments. Two years later the group is waiting for an additional adjustment of $10 million for retroactive pay from 1987 to the present and, above all, for a salary that recognizes the value of work rather than a token equalization payment. These workers are paid on average $3,000 per year less than they should be and at a salary of $16,000, $17,000 or $18,000, $3,000 is a significant amount.

Delay after delay by the government has discouraged these workers. The government was even back before the Human Rights Tribunal just in November of this year trying to argue that the tribunal had no further jurisdiction in this case. The tribunal took only ten minutes to dismiss this argument. However, with the female population of the group slowly diminishing, the government seems to be waiting until the group is no longer female–dominated so it can complain that there is no discrimination. Is this what this government considers a fair way deal with pay discrimination among its employees?

Women in the Public Service have been hearing a lot of empty promises from this government over the last five years. The wage gap between male and female Public Service employees grew in 1988 to nearly $10,000, $440 more than it had been the previous year. A female Public Service employee makes only 74 cents for every dollar a man earns, down by .8 per cent in two years.

When I raised this issue in the House the Prime Minister pointed to the appointments of women to boards and commissions, a valuable step forward but still a handful of tokens while women in general in Canadian society grow poorer and poorer. Families headed by women are four times more likely to be poor than families headed by men. Seventy–two per cent of the elderly poor are women. Four out of every 10 families headed by women are poor compared to only one out of 10 headed by a male. The end result of that is that over one million children live below the poverty line in Canada, that is one out of every six children.

The government, as the largest employer in Canada, should be in the vanguard of reversing the growing feminization of poverty. It claims women are doing better but the facts do not bear this out. Eighty per cent of women in the Public Service are still in the pink collar ghettos of administrative support workers. Professional

women in the Public Service are exactly where they were in the early 1970s. The government will say it is involved in the joint union/management study for pay equity. I would like to refer to what the Human Rights Commission had to say about the joint union/management study and pay equity in the Public Service.

It said that administrative delay and bureaucratic infighting remain more the hallmark of the program than any genuine move toward pay equity. It further said that complaints are being held in abeyance, one on behalf of approximately 50,000 employees in the clerical and regulatory group—that is that pink collar ghetto again—and another on behalf of approximately 1,500 members of the nursing group. That is nearly one-quarter of federal Public Service employees who have been before the Human Rights Commission on pay equity complaints.

The commission's report goes on to say that it cannot be ignored, that four years have come and gone and there is still a considerable way to go before there is an adequate program for dealing with sex-based inequities, let alone eliminating them. Progress has in fact been excruciatingly slow. If the federal Public Service cannot handle pay equity, what are its chances elsewhere?

Still referring to the report, the slowness of the process not only creates a bad impression, it casts a shadow on the sincerity of the commitment to the whole concept. We can see nothing to be gained by dragging out the process. Either the government means business on equal pay or it does not.

• (1905)

Government must realize that complaints to the Human Rights Commission are not the best way to deal with mass pay discrimination such as exists in the Public Service. The government must take the initiative where pay and equity exists. It must act as a model employer and initiate action, not wait to react. To date, it has not set much of an example for other employers. It must realize that women are an invaluable and essential part of the labour force who deserve to be paid fair and decent wages. If this government does not mean business on pay equity, it is clearly not ready to move out of the dark ages and into the reality of today's labour market.

Mr. Bill Kempling (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Ottawa West recently asked this government whether or not it meant business on equal pay. I want to assure my hon. colleague that not only do we mean business, but that significant progress has been made.

The "hospital services" group has been the focus of much attention with respect to this government's commitment to equal pay. Retroactive pay adjustments totalling $28 million for the period September, 1980 to July, 1987 have already been implemented. All positions at level 1 and those of seamstresses and community health representatives were re-evaluated using the classification standard for the male comparator group, "general services". Further retroactive wage increases were implemented in July, 1989 for those positions which were found to warrant a higher level.

In addition, the "hospital services" classification standard was revised to mirror the "general services" classification standard. New rates of pay for the revised classifications have been set for the period July to December, 1987 and another set of equal wage adjustments for the period July, 1987 and ongoing is currently being issued to employees.

All this represents significant work to remedy the disparity between these two groups and significant expenditure. The current equal wage adjustments are estimated to be approximately $12 million.

It is true that not all employees in the "hospital services" group received additional equal pay adjustments. When employees do not earn less wages than their male counterparts, they do not get additional adjustments. The collective agreement process for the "hospital services" group is not yet finalized. Once it is, all employees will receive some increases to their rates of pay as they presently are.

In addition, the Human Rights Tribunal, which sat November 8 to the 17, 1989 to review the implementation of the consent order, will reconvene January 22, 1990. The tribunal is examining whether the employers' actions have removed all systemic discrimination from

which the group might have suffered by being mainly female. I believe that the priority which this government has asked that the case be given has been respected.

In closing, I want to reiterate the government's commitment to equal pay for work of equal value and to assure you that it will be achieved. While at times the achievement of service-wide pay equity between male dominated and female dominated groups may appear slow, we are ensuring that our approach is sound, that all parties are given a chance to participate and that our collective bargaining structure is respected. In an organization as large and as diversified as the federal Public Service, this can be complex but it is possible.

INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): Madam Speaker, on December 1, all Petro-Canada wells on traditional Lubicon lands in northwest Alberta were stilled. They have remained dormant since. Petro-Canada and its partner, Norcen Energy Resources, voluntarily undertook to comply with the request of the Lubicon people that they halt their activities on Lubicon land as of December 1. The Lubicon people made this request which in the face of non-compliance would have become an order on December 1, as a means of bringing pressure to bear on the federal government. It is one more tactic adopted by the band in their decades old attempt to force the federal government to negotiate a fair settlement to their outstanding claims. Two days before the shut-down took effect, that is on November 29, I asked the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development the following question:

> —will the government direct its officials to make clear, and announce, the government's willingness now to resume negotiations with the Lubicon on all aspects of their claim, including a compensation package?

• (1910)

The minister, in his response, neatly side-stepped the question of negotiation of compensation, saying instead:

> —ever since we made this offer last January, we have been prepared to go back to the table to discuss the fair and comprehensive offer that was made to the Lubicons.

What he did not say was that the offer made last January specifically ruled out any negotiation of compensation for the Lubicon people. That offer included a series of disparate suggestions for various forms of assistance for which the band might apply, for guarantees of some funding into which the federal government might enter, for promises that some current federal initiatives might be reviewed in the hope that they could be made more generous in the band's interests, and for the establishment of certain trust moneys in an endowment fund for the band.

It clearly and categorically ruled out any negotiated compensation for the years of forgone federal treaty payments lost by the band because it was missed by the federal government's Treaty Eight negotiators, and for the billions of dollars in mineral wealth sucked out of the ground beneath the Lubicon's feet while they have spent the last 50 years trying patiently and reasonably to reach some fair conclusion to their claims.

Let us make no mistake, we are talking about a great deal of money here. Total forgone treaty benefits have been calculated, in a fashion approved of by the federal government's own investigator, Mr. E. David Fulton, at up to $170 million. In an affidavit filed on behalf of the Alberta government on June 30, 1983, it was estimated that: "The negative monetary impact to Alberta", and I interpolate here, of an injunction against oil and gas exploration in the 4,000 square miles of traditional Lubicon lands, "could amount to roughly $450 to $500 million annually". Another calculation has set the value of oil and gas production from traditional Lubicon lands over the last 10 years at about $5 billion.

It is useful, it is reasonable, to keep such figures in mind while we consider that the entire compensation package sought by the Lubicon people is simply that which they have been denied in consequence of sloppy work by the government's original Treaty Eight negotiators; $170 million, about a third of one year's production according to the 1983 Alberta Government affidavit. But the government has made a very generous offer of $45 million, some will protest. They will say, obviously in rejecting this generous offer and demanding an unconscionable $170 million, that the Lubicon people are just being greedy and vexatious. Are they?

Perhaps we can judge the matter better by comparing the Lubicon's position to the settlements actually achieved in consequence of recent negotiations. Let us consider just two, both of which are outstanding treaty land entitlement settlements, additions to existing treaty

settlements for existing bands with existing community infrastructure.

In the case of the Sturgeon Lake Band, the "new adherents" to the band covered by this settlement reached earlier this year, accounted for an average of almost $180,000 each in compensation and about 477 acres per person of land with sub-surface rights. Applied to the 500 plus Lubicon people, those numbers would result in a compensation package worth almost $90 million and a land entitlement of 373 square miles. In fact, the Lubicon people are asking for less than a quarter of that amount of land, about 80 square miles, and a little less than twice that much money, about $170 million. Hardly greedy, hardly vexatious, hardly out of line at all.

Or take the example, also from this year, of the Whitefish Lake Band. The 117 acres of land accorded each of its "new adherents", along with the more than $400,000 per person compensation package, would work out to 91.4 square miles for the 500-plus Lubicons and a compensation package of more than $200 million. In both instances more than the Lubicon are asking for.

A similar prorating of the comprehensive settlement negotiated with the Inuit of the central and western Arctic earlier this year would give the Lubicon a meagre $17 million in compensation but a whopping 409 square miles of reserve land. And a similar prorating of the comprehensive settlement achieved last year with the Yukon Indians would grant the Lubicon Band $18.7 million in compensation and a gigantic 1,250 square miles of land.

• (1915)

So, it is clear that the proposals of the Lubicon people are reasonable and eminently suitable for the negotiation of a fair settlement. But the House need not take my word alone for this.

Alberta Premier, Don Getty, not a man known for the reckless indulgence of the wants and wishes of the less powerful and wealthy in our society, has himself labelled the government's offer, "deficient in the area of providing economic stability for the future". Even he acknowledges that, "if you don't also build into your planning the ability to have businesses, farms, that type of thing—that will allow you to get economic development out into the future, you are going to merely have a pocket of dependency."

That, in fact, hits the very nub of the great problem with the government's current offer of last January. It is sufficient to create an economy of perpetual dependence, an economy of welfare payments, modest employment, mostly on job training programs designed to qualify people for UI payments, an economy of privation and despair, but it is not sufficient to allow the Lubicon people to create an economy of self-sufficiency, an economy in which their own productive efforts will prove sufficient to allow them to fend for themselves and retain and enhance their own unique society.

Is it any wonder then that the Lubicon people are willing to fight for a decent settlement? Is it any wonder that they are prepared to close off fossil fuel production on their lands? Is it any wonder that they are willing to blockade roads? Is it any wonder that they are willing to enlist the aid of sympathizers around the globe?

The federal government is fighting for a few million dollars. The Lubicon people are fighting for their very lives and the lives of their people for all time to come. All that is required for them to secure their future is a bit of generosity and good will, a bit of fairness and a sense of justice on this government's part. So far, to the shame of all Canadians, it seems, that has been too much to ask.

And so again I ask the parliamentary secretary, will the government direct its officials to make clear and announce the government's willingness now to resume negotiations with the Lubicon on all aspects of their claim including a compensation package, or will its heart remain as hard as that of the Bible's Pharaoh, a truly beknighted gentleman whom, increasingly, the government comes to resemble.

Mr. Bill Kempling (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, that is quite an act to follow.

The member from Edmonton East has said that the Lubicon Lake band has, by threat, forced the shutting down of oil production, I use his words, "on their traditional lands." The fact is that 18 wells have been shut in. They are not in the 95 square miles the band has selected as its reserve. As to traditional lands, they are also the traditional lands of other native communities. In fact, I am informed most of the wells are near the trap lines registered to members of the Woodland Cree band. There will be perhaps 100 families living on the Lubicon reserve. They are the twenty-ninth largest band in the province and they will have the sixth largest reserve.

Not only will they have $35 million to build a community—that alone would employ a considerable number of their people—but they will also have $10 million dollars as seed capital to create band businesses. They will have 79 square miles of oil and gas rights. Moreover, they will have ongoing access to all federal and provincial programs.

We will respect their right to sue for the remainder of the $170 million they are demanding in compensation. This is hardly the take-it-or-leave-it offer the member suggests. It would give them a modern community and a real economic opportunity. This would leave them the right to prove their claim for more, as others must prove their claims.

Instead, it would appear that the chief and his advisors have declared themselves above the law in the mistaken belief that by doing so someone will offer them $170 million. Behind that unfortunate leadership there is a real social and economic need which must be addressed, if the band will allow it.

For that reason our negotiators are working with the province to make refinements in the areas where the province feels it can provide support. Our offer to the Lubicon is fair and comprehensive. We are still ready, as we have been for 11 months, to meet with the band should the leaders sincerely wish to negotiate.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 7.20 p.m.